

Occupational therapist

As an occupational therapist, you'll help people who have difficulties carrying out day-to-day activities because of a disability, illness, trauma, ageing, and a range of long-term conditions.

"Occupational therapy allows you to make a difference to people's lives across the community which is something that really appeals to me about the career." Rachel Rule, occupational therapy student.

[Read Rachel's story in full](#) [1]

Working life

Accidents, illness, disability, mental health issues and ageing affect millions of people, making it harder for them to do everyday things, along with activities they enjoy. As an occupational therapist, you'll help all kinds of people overcome all kinds of challenges, so they can live as fully and independently as possible. This might involve learning new ways to do things, or making changes to their environment to make things easier.

In the role, you could help:

- someone adapt to life after major surgery.
- people with mental illnesses or learning disabilities with everyday activities such as work or volunteering.
- elderly people stay in their own homes by providing adaptations such as level access showers or stair lifts.

You'll find solutions to everyday problems, such as:



- advising on how to approach a task differently.

- using equipment or assistive technology.
- adapting the living or working environment.
- finding strategies to meet your patient's goals.

As well as working with individual patients and their families, you could also work with groups, or as part of a multidisciplinary team in hospitals, clinics, charities, prisons and social services departments.

Entry requirements

To become an occupational therapist, you'll need a degree in occupational therapy, which usually takes three years full time or up to six years part time. In postgraduate studies, it's possible to gain a Masters degree in one to two years. Once you've successfully completed your degree, you'll need to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC [2]) before you can start practising. The other option is to apply for an apprenticeship degree.

Entry requirements for an undergraduate course are typically:

- two or three A levels
- five GCSEs (grades 9-4/A-C), including science.

Or equivalent qualifications:

- a BTEC, HND or HNC, including biological science
- a relevant NVQ
- a science-based access course
- equivalent Scottish or Irish qualifications.

When applying for a occupational therapy degree, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

New annual payments

You'll receive at least £5,000 a year to help fund your studies, through the NHS Learning Support Fund. The best part? You won't have to pay a penny back.

Degree apprenticeship

There are a growing number of degree apprenticeships. Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn a living while gaining your qualification. Your employer and the government will pay the tuition fees, so apprenticeships aren't eligible for student grants.

Must-have skills

Don't forget – academic qualifications aren't everything. You'll need to be a natural 'people person' who is able to make anyone feel quickly at ease. Creativity and the ability to balance patience with enthusiasm is also needed. You'll need to enjoy teamwork and be able to think quickly on your feet too.

Training and career development

Once you've qualified, you'll have annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) check-ins, where we'll discuss your career aspirations and plan how we can help you to achieve them, so you're always moving forward. You'll be encouraged to join the British Association of Occupational Therapists where you'll gain professional indemnity coverage and a trade union membership.

You'll also be able to specialise in areas such as elderly care or paediatrics. You could move into research or education, and there are opportunities overseas. Or with experience, further qualifications and training, you could apply for more specialist and senior posts.

Pay and benefits

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours with the need to work flexibly over a seven day period. As an occupational therapist, you'll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC) pay system [3], typically starting on band 5.

You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

- Expand / collapse
Live vacancies
 - View Vacancy [4]

HCOP OT Assistant Practitioner

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

- **Salary:**

£21892.00 to £24157.00 a year

- **Type:**

Permanent

- **Employer:**

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

- View Vacancy
- View Vacancy [5]

Band 3 - Paediatric Occupational Therapist Assistant

Guildford /Farnham Surrey, GU1 1 JL

- **Salary:**

£19,737 - £21,142 Pro Rata + 5% HCA

- **Type:**

Permanent

- **Employer:**

CSH Surrey

- View Vacancy
- View Vacancy [6]

Occupational Therapist

Stoke-On-Trent, ST10

- **Salary:**

£36,000 - £38,000

- **Type:**

Permanent

- **Employer:**

Elysium Healthcare

- View Vacancy
- View Vacancy [7]

Occupational Therapist

Hatfield, AL9

- **Salary:**

£31,365 - £37,890 + £5,000 Welcome Bonus

- **Type:**

Permanent

- **Employer:**

Elysium Healthcare

- [View Vacancy](#)
- [View Vacancy \[8\]](#)

Occupational Therapist

Potters Bar, EN6

- **Salary:**

£27,000 - £30,000 (DOE) + Benefits

- **Type:**

Permanent

- **Employer:**

Elysium Healthcare

- [View Vacancy](#)
- [View Vacancy \[9\]](#)

Occupational Therapist

Worthing Hospital, Worthing, BN11 2DH

- **Salary:**

£24,907 - £30,615 per annum pro rata

- **Type:**

Fixed term

■ **Employer:**

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

■ View Vacancy

Expand /
collapse

Find your course to become an occupational therapist

Region

- Any -

Type of qualification

- Any -

Full or part time

- Any -

Search

Displaying 1 - 5 of 58 matches

MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)

Teesside University

View course Opens in a new window
[10]

Region **North East**

Type of course
Postgraduate/accelerated programme

Full or part time
Full time

Duration
2 years

Contact details
shlsadmissions@tees.ac.uk [11] **01642 384110**

Course webpage
http://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Profession... [12]

Admissions address

Middlesbrough

Tees Valley
TS1 3BA

Course webpage

http://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Profession... [12]

Accelerated courses are for graduates with a relevant degree. See our FAQ for more information [13].

BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy

Teesside University

View course Opens in a new window

[14]

Region **North East**

Type of course

Undergraduate

Full or part time

Full time

Duration

3 years

Contact details

shlsadmissions@tees.ac.uk [11] **01642 384110**

Course webpage

http://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professio... [15]

Admissions address

Middlesbrough

Tees Valley

TS1 3BA

Course webpage

http://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professio... [15]

BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy

Huddersfield, University of

View course Opens in a new window

[16]

Region **Yorkshire and The Humber**

Type of course
Undergraduate

Full or part time
Full time

Duration
3 years

Contact details
study@hud.ac.uk [17] **01484 473566**

Course webpage <https://courses.hud.ac.uk/2021-22/full-time/undergraduate/occupational-therapy-b...>
[16]

Admissions address

Queensgate
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD1 3DH

Course webpage <https://courses.hud.ac.uk/2021-22/full-time/undergraduate/occupational-therapy-b...>
[16]

PgDip/MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration mode)

London, South Bank University

View course Opens in a new window
[18]

Region **London**

Type of course
Postgraduate/accelerated programme

Full or part time
Full time

Duration
2 years

Contact details
course.enquiry@lsbu.ac.uk [19] **0800 923 8888**

Course webpage <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/occupational-therapy-pre-registratio...>
[18]

Admissions address

Southwark Campus
103 Borough Road
London
SE1 0AA

Course webpage <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/occupational-therapy-pre-registratio...>
[18]

Accelerated courses are for graduates with a relevant degree. See our FAQ for more information. [13]

BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (part-time)

London, South Bank University

View course [Opens in a new window](#)
[20]

Region **London**

Type of course
Undergraduate

Full or part time
Part time

Duration
4 years

Contact details
course.enquiry@lsbu.ac.uk [19] **0800 923 8888**

Course webpage <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/occupational-therapy-bsc-hons-full-t...>
[20]

Admissions address

Southwark Campus
103 Borough Road
London
SE1 0AA

Course webpage <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/occupational-therapy-bsc-hons-full-t...>
[20]

○ Load more [21]

Register for your guide to becoming an occupational therapist

We'll email you a step-by-step guide to help you on your way to joining us

Let's go [22]

Other roles that may interest you

- Art therapist/art psychotherapist [23]
- Music therapist [24]
- Mental health nurse [25]
- Social worker [26]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist/real-life-story-rachel-rule>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>

[4] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/916405554>

[5] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/916377681>

[6] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/916381860>

[7] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/916371221>

[8] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/916391378>

[9] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/vacancy/916396316>

[10]

[http://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/MSc_Occupational_Therapist_registration\).cfm](http://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/MSc_Occupational_Therapist_registration).cfm)

[11] <mailto:shlsadmissions@tees.ac.uk>

[12]

[http://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/MSc_Occupational_Therapist_registration\).cfm](http://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/MSc_Occupational_Therapist_registration).cfm)

[13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course/faqs-about-our-course-finder>

[14]

[http://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/BSc_\(Hons\)_Occupational_Therapist_registration\).cfm](http://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/BSc_(Hons)_Occupational_Therapist_registration).cfm)

[15] [http://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/BSc_\(Hons\)_Occupational_Therapist_registration\).cfm](http://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/BSc_(Hons)_Occupational_Therapist_registration).cfm)

[16] <https://courses.hud.ac.uk/2021-22/full-time/undergraduate/occupational-therapy-bsc-hons>

[17] <mailto:study@hud.ac.uk>

[18] <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/occupational-therapy-pre-registration-pgdip-msc>

[19] <mailto:course.enquiry@lsbu.ac.uk>

[20] <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/occupational-therapy-bsc-hons-full-time>

[21] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/210?page=1>

[22] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/allied-health-professionals-registration>

[23] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/art-therapistart-psychotherapist>

[24] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/music-therapist>

[25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse>

[26] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/social-worker>