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Assistant psychologist

Assistant psychologists work in a variety of roles to support people with mental health conditions.

You'll work as part of a multidisciplinary team. You'll provide clinical support to patients and will be supervised by a psychologist.

Two psychologists talking

Life as an assistant psychologist

You'll be part of a team that could include [clinical](#) ^[2], [counselling](#) ^[3], [forensic](#) ^[4] or [health psychologists](#) ^[5] along with [social workers](#) ^[6], [occupational therapists](#) ^[7], [mental health nurses](#) ^[8] and [psychiatrists](#) ^[9].

You could be involved in:

- carrying out various assessments and behavioural observations
- contributing to multidisciplinary discussions about a patient's diagnosis, treatment, risk assessment and care plan
- finding out more about a patient's background by reading notes, investigating histories etc
- carrying out treatment and intervention programmes with patients or groups of patients
- working with patients' carers, relatives and others involved in their care including mental health workers
- researching and gathering information

You'll be supervised by a registered practitioner psychologist with overall clinical responsibility for the patients you work with.

You will also be provided with ongoing supervision to help you engage in self-reflection, seek and respond to feedback, and develop your professional knowledge and skills.

You'll need to keep clear written records, draft reports, letters and summaries of assessments and observations of treatments.

How much can I earn?

If you're employed by the NHS, you'll be on a national pay and conditions system called Agenda for Change ^[10] (AfC ^[11]).

There are nine pay bands and you'll usually be paid at band 4 or 5, with opportunities to progress with experience.

Terms and conditions can vary if you are employed outside the NHS.

How about the benefits?

As an assistant psychologist you can:

- make a difference
- work flexible and part-time hours

If you're employed by the NHS, you'll also have good holiday entitlement and access to:

- an excellent pension scheme
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

You'll need a range of skills to become an assistant psychologist. These include:

- a knowledge of psychological theory
- an interest in how people think and behave
- the ability to relate to a wide range of people, both patients and colleagues
- a sympathetic and patient attitude
- good writing and organisational skills

You'll also need to be able to demonstrate the values of the NHS Constitution ^[12].

Entry requirements

You'll usually need an accredited degree in psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society ^[13] (BPS) which enables eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership ^[14].

Universities are usually flexible about which A-levels or level 3 equivalents you need to be accepted onto a psychology degree course.

How to become an assistant psychologist

First, you'll need to complete a degree course in psychology.

Visit the British Psychological Society ^[15] (getting started section) for more information about what to study at school or college and how to find an accredited degree course.

The exact qualifications and experience required to be an assistant psychologist role will vary. Employers will indicate in the job description/person specification the qualifications they will accept.

You can find current vacancies below.

Where a career as an assistant psychologist can take you

As your career progresses and you gain practical experience, you could go on to train in one of the psychological practitioner, psychological therapist or psychologist roles.

When thinking about your career plans, it's important to note that a two-year psychological professions funding rule policy was implemented on 1 April 2022. This means that if you start NHS-funded psychological professions training from April 2022, you won't be eligible for NHS funding for further psychological profession training for two years from the expected completion date of your first training, where it would lead to a change in your job role. ?

Visit the [funding for psychological professions training programmes web page](#) ^[16] for more information about NHS funding.?

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Other roles that may interest you

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- [Mental health nurse](#) ^[8]
- [Health psychologist](#) ^[5]
- [Psychological wellbeing practitioner](#) ^[17]

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