

Entry requirements and training (art therapists/art psychotherapists)

This page has information on the entry requirements and training to become an art therapist/art psychotherapist

To be an art therapist/art psychotherapist* you need professional experience in an area of therapy or health care. This may be from working in, for example, [nursing](#), ^[1] [social work](#) ^[2], special needs or [psychotherapy](#). ^[3] Or you may have voluntary experience of working with people in a therapeutic setting.

*The titles 'art therapist' and art psychotherapist' are inter-changeable in the UK.

You will usually need a first degree in art or a relevant subject.

To practice as an art therapist, you must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council ([HCPC](#) ^[4]).

In order to register with the [HCPC](#) ^[4], you must first successfully complete an approved Masters degree in art therapy or art psychotherapy. Courses take two to four years. Some are offered on a full-time basis, others are offered part-time. They cover the psychology of image making, therapeutic relationships, the importance of boundaries and psychological and psychotherapeutic practice.

You will usually need a first degree in art or a relevant subject. You may be accepted onto a course without an art degree, if you have a strong art background. Those accepted onto the courses are usually mature, flexible people who have had experience of working in mental health, education, special needs or social services before applying. You will need to show a portfolio of your art work.

Degree apprenticeship

A level 7 apprenticeship for arts therapists (art therapists/art psychotherapists, dramatherapists and music therapists) has been approved for delivery. To get onto a level 7 apprenticeship, you will need to apply for an apprentice position with a health care provider. You can search for vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) ^[5] and [Find an Apprenticeship website](#)

Once you've successfully completed a programme approved by the [HCPC](#) [4], you are then eligible to apply for registration with the [HCPC](#) [4]. Once registered as a practitioner, you'll be required to retain your name on the register by keeping your knowledge and skills up to date and paying an annual retention fee.

The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) runs Introduction to Art Therapy and Foundation Art Therapy courses which could help you decide if this is the right career area for you. [Find out more on the BAAT website](#) [7]

Want to learn more?

- [Find art therapy courses on our course finder](#) [8]
- Personal characteristics Expand / Collapse
Art therapists need to be
 - creative
 - flexible
 - resourceful
 - non judgemental
 - resilient in dealing with other people's strong emotions
 - sensitive and mature
- Skills required Expand / Collapse
Art therapists need
 - artistic skills and ideas
 - excellent communication skills
 - to be able to work with people from all walks of life
 - to be able to reflect on their own emotions
 - business skills for private practice

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/art-therapistart-psychotherapist/entry-requirements-and-training-art>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>

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

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/psychotherapist>

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

[5] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>

[6] <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

[7] <https://www.baat.org/courses-conferences/introduction-and-foundation-courses>

[8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course>