

# Entry requirements and training (occupational therapist)

This page has information on the entry requirements and training needed to become an occupational therapist.

To practise as an occupational therapist, you must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council ([HCPC](#) <sup>[1]</sup>). To register with the [HCPC](#) <sup>[1]</sup>, you first need to successfully complete approved degree-level training in occupational therapy.

You can train through an approved full-time or part-time pre-registration university course in occupational therapy or a degree apprenticeship in occupational therapy.

## Approved pre-registration university programmes

This is usually a BSc (Hons). Courses take three or four years .

There are also part-time/in-service courses if you are working in a relevant senior occupational therapy support role and your employer is willing to support you.

Courses differ but all involve a lot of practical work with patients.

To get onto a full-time occupational therapy degree course you usually need two or three A levels, along with five GCSEs ([grades A-C](#) <sup>[2]</sup>), including English language, maths and science.

You may also be able to get onto a course with alternative qualifications, including:

- BTEC, HND or HNC which includes biological science
- relevant vocational qualifications
- science-based access course
- equivalent Scottish or Irish qualifications

If you already have a relevant degree and healthcare experience, you can take a postgraduate Masters in occupational therapy. These courses usually take two years.

Each institution sets its own entry requirements - whether you are applying for an undergraduate or postgraduate (accelerated, graduate-entry) programme, so it's important to check carefully.

# Degree apprenticeship in occupational therapy

A degree apprenticeship standard in occupational therapy has been approved for delivery. To get onto a degree apprenticeship, you will need to apply for an apprentice position with a health care provider. You will usually need level 3 qualifications to get onto a degree apprenticeship.

You can search for vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) [3] and [Find an Apprenticeship website](#) [4].

## Work experience

Wherever you study or train, you will need to show that you have an understanding of occupational therapy. It is a good idea to spend some time with a registered occupational therapist to see what the work is like.

## Registration

Once you've successfully completed an approved programme, you are then eligible to apply for registration with the [HCPC](#) [1]. 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.

## Want to learn more?

- [Find occupational therapy courses on our course finder](#) [5]
- [Find out more about the role of an occupational therapy support worker](#) [6]
- Skills required

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You'll need a range of skills to be a occupational therapist including:

- excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- good organisational skills
- patience and enthusiasm
- creative ability to find solutions to problems
- ability to work well within a team

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### Links

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

[2] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Grades\\_A-C](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Grades_A-C)

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

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

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

[6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/occupational-therapy-support-worker>