



College of Operating Department Practitioners

What is an Operating Department Practitioner?

Operating Department Practitioners (ODPs) are healthcare professionals who, on qualification, are registered with the Health Professions Council. They provide skilled assistance to surgeons and anaesthetists in carrying out intricate and complex procedures and work alongside nursing colleagues in order to provide a high standard of patient focused care throughout the patient's perioperative journey.

What type of work does an Operating Department Practitioner do?

ODPs are required to provide high standards of patient care and carry out a wide range of roles in the following clinical settings:

Anaesthetics

- Working as part of the multi-disciplinary team to plan, deliver and evaluate the care of patients undergoing surgical or anaesthetic procedures
- Exercising communication skills in order to help alleviate patients' anxieties and to ensure that safe and effective care is delivered at all stages of the patients' perioperative journey.
- Ensuring that the highest infection control and prevention standards are maintained
- Assisting the anaesthetist with the care of the patient before, during and whilst emerging from anaesthesia
- Preparing and checking equipment needed for the safe administration of anaesthesia
- Undertaking clinical skills such as airway management and patient monitoring

Surgical

- Working with other members of the theatre team to safely position patients for surgical and anaesthetic interventions
- Maintaining an aseptic environment
- Preparation of instruments and equipment for invasive procedures
- Scrubbing up, gowning and gloving to assist in surgical procedures
- Anticipating the requirements of the surgical team and responding effectively
- Performing swab, needle and instrument counts, and other checks to ensure the safety of patients during surgery
- Managing surgical wounds and drains



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Post Anaesthetic Care

- Caring for the psychological needs of patients following anaesthesia and surgical interventions
- Monitoring and managing patients' physical and physiological needs, including pressure care, pain, temperature and fluid balance, following surgery and anaesthesia
- Working alongside members of the surgical, anaesthetic and pain teams to ensure continuity of post-operative care
- Ensuring the safe handover of care of patients to staff in wards and other areas
- Care of critically ill patients awaiting transfer to high dependency or intensive care units

ODPs are important members of the multi-disciplinary health care team, and are responsible for meeting the physical and psychological needs of the patients they care for. The majority of ODPs spend their time working in operating theatres, and so most of their patients are undergoing surgical procedures. However, there is increasing recognition of ODPs skills and they can also be found working in other critical care settings such as Accident & Emergency, Resuscitation, Maternity, Endoscopy and Intensive Care Units.

Shift patterns

ODPs usually work 37.5 hours per week. This includes shift work to cover evenings and weekends. They may also do some on-call work for emergencies. Some overtime may be necessary. It is possible to work part time.

Salary and other benefits

In common with most nursing and other non-medical health care professionals, on qualification ODPs working in the NHS will normally be paid at Band 5 of the Agenda for Change scales.

- A newly-qualified ODP working in the NHS earns between £20,710 and £26,839 a year.
- With experience, earnings can rise to around £33,436.
- A higher level theatre practitioner can earn up to £39,273.



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Skills and personal qualities

An ODP must be:

- caring and professional
- highly motivated and conscientious
- a good communicator and team worker
- effective under pressure
- emotionally resilient
- dexterous and technically adept
- in good general health

How do I become an Operating Department Practitioner?

Twenty seven Universities (see below for contact details) within the UK deliver the Diploma of Higher Education in Operating Department Practice. On successful completion of this programme, you will have a qualification for employment within operating departments and are eligible for statutory registration with the Health Professions Council.

For some Universities you will need to apply through the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS). Others may require a direct application. Check with the University for details.

Entry requirements

Academic entry requirements vary between Universities however these are generally set at 160 UCAS points. Typically this would be a minimum of five GCSEs at grades A-C (or equivalent) to include English, Mathematics and a Science based subject or AS level (or equivalent) and A level qualifications.

Applicants may be given recognition for any relevant experience or they may be able to enter with alternative qualifications (e.g. an NVQ in Healthcare or an appropriate access course).

It is essential that you contact the individual University to check their entry requirements. Acceptance will also be conditional on a satisfactory health check and an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure clearance. Evidence of a good command of written and spoken English is also required. (Overseas students please note - If English is not your first language you must demonstrate an IELTS score of 7.0 for HPC registration purposes.



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Training

Training varies between Universities ranging from a two or three year full time programme (Oxford Brookes University offers a part time programme). During the course, students divide their time between study within the University and clinical practice placements in participating hospitals. Assessment is undertaken in both theory and clinical placement. Typically, theory assessment is by written assignments, presentations, oral viva and examinations. Clinical practice will be assessed through the completion of competency schedules and the production of a supporting portfolio of evidence.