

Operating department practitioner

Join the team and make a difference

Operating department practitioners (ODPs) are key members of the perioperative team. To practise, ODPs have to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). They work autonomously but also with other healthcare professionals to ensure that patients receive the highest standards of care throughout their perioperative journey: preoperative assessment, admission, anaesthesia, surgery, post-anaesthesia recovery and discharge to hospital ward or home.

What will you be doing?

The role of the ODP is varied and dynamic; you will be working in collaboration with surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and the wider multi professional healthcare team to ensure patient comfort and safety. During your education, your studies will focus on three key aspects of care.

Anaesthetic

In the anaesthetic aspect of care, you will work in partnership with the anaesthetist; preparing specialist equipment and communicating effectively to assess, plan, deliver and evaluate patient care. You will ensure patient wellbeing by providing emotional support, monitoring vital signs and responding to the patient's changing needs.



Surgical

In the surgical aspect of care, there are two key roles, commonly known as the scrub practitioner and circulating practitioner. While the scrub practitioner forms part of the sterile operating team, the circulating practitioner's role is of equal importance in providing support to this team, liaising and coordinating with other areas within the care setting. Both these roles require communication skills, a detailed knowledge of human anatomy, infection prevention and surgical techniques to provide effective support to the operating team. The priority at all times is patient safety.

Where will you work?

ODPs work mainly in hospital operating suites, but their skills are recognised and transferable to other areas, such as:

- emergency departments (A&E)
- intensive and high dependency care settings
- trauma and medical emergency response teams
- transplant teams.

What skills and qualities will you need?

- caring and compassionate nature
- ability to work well as part of a team
- ability to work in a pressurised and rapidly changing environment
- thoughtful and conscientious approach to working
- good communication skills
- excellent problem solving and organisational skills

Post-anaesthetic

In the post-anaesthetic room, ODPs take the lead in delivering individualised patient care. This role includes ongoing assessment and support of the patient's physical, emotional and comfort needs, diagnosis, and management of changes to the patient's condition. Once the patient is stabilised and ready for discharge, the ODP will initiate and implement transfer protocols.

Compassion, versatility and adaptability are key features for today's ODP, coupled with a commitment to life-long learning to allow you to continually develop your professional practice.

What entry routes are available?

To be eligible to apply for registration as an ODP, as a minimum, you must have undertaken the Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE) in Operating Department Practice. Many universities now offer degree level qualifications. These courses are offered by universities across the UK and will require a minimum of two years' study, involving both academic and clinical placement components. All ODP courses must be approved by the HCPC.

The NHS provides financial support to eligible students on NHS-funded courses. For more information, visit www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students

Once you have your diploma or degree, you will need to apply for registration with the HCPC to practise as an ODP.

How can you develop your career?

Continuing professional development is a requirement for all ODPs and there are exciting and diverse opportunities for career



development. ODPs are able to work in a range of specialist areas, lead multidisciplinary teams and develop to advanced roles, such as physician's assistant (anaesthesia) or surgical care practitioner.

In addition to the clinical career routes, ODPs can also follow paths into healthcare management and education.

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This pay system applies to all NHS staff except doctors, dentists and very senior managers. Here are some examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: theatre practitioner/ODP (band 5), theatre practitioner higher level (band 6 & 7) and theatre manager (band 8). To find out more about AfC pay bands, and to see the most up-to-date salary information, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payrates

For more information about a career as an ODP, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/ODP
You will also find information about entry requirements and training for ODPs. You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at www.jobs.nhs.uk

For more information on the professional bodies relevant to ODPs, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/ODPcontacts