

# Operating department practitioner

Join the team and make a difference

**Operating department practitioners (ODPs) are key members of the surgical team. They work closely with surgeons, anaesthetists and theatre nurses, ensuring equipment and instruments are prepared, assisting the surgical team and monitoring the condition of the patient before, during and after an operation.**

## What will you be doing?

There are three phases to surgery: anaesthesia, the operation and recovery. You will be involved in all three, monitoring the status and comfort of the patient through the whole process. Before surgery begins you will have prepared the equipment and drugs needed to anaesthetise the patient and maintain breathing during the procedure. During surgery you will be working closely with the surgeon, handing over the instruments and any other devices needed, and maintaining strict aseptic conditions to prevent infection. In the recovery phase you will be with the patient as they awake from the anaesthetic, checking to make sure they can be safely returned to the ward.



It's a busy and varied role. One minute you could be handling high-tech equipment that's keeping a patient alive during major surgery. Then you could be holding their hand as they regain consciousness, providing reassurance and ensuring that all their vital signs are good. You'll be working as part of a highly-skilled, tightly-knit team where it's critical that everyone knows what they are

### Where will you work?

ODPs work mainly in hospital operating suites, and may work in:

- A & E units
- cardiac units
- plaster clinics

### What skills and qualities will you need?

- strong organisational skills
- being a good team player
- the ability to work under pressure
- being meticulous in your preparation
- good communication skills
- a responsible, professional approach
- very good problem solving skills

doing, and time is often of the essence. So you'll need to be able to handle pressure well.

### What entry routes are available?

To work as an ODP, you must have a diploma in operating department practice. This should be a course recognised by the Health Professions Council (HPC). Approved diploma courses are offered by a range of higher education institutions and usually take two years, combining study with direct practical involvement. There are also longer part-time courses (up to five years), and extended courses leading to degree-level qualification. The NHS provides financial support to eligible students on NHS-funded courses. For more information, visit [www.nhspa.gov.uk/sgu](http://www.nhspa.gov.uk/sgu)

Once you have your diploma or degree, you will need to register with the HPC to practise as an ODP.

### How can you develop your career?

As your professional experience increases you can move into more senior roles, leading ODP teams in a theatre unit, or specialising in an area such as transplants, orthopaedics or baby care.

As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation, as part of the Career Framework.

**For more information on the range of opportunities available in the allied health professions, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications). This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each role. You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)**



For more information about this initiative please see the *Careers in the allied health professions* booklet.

### Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff in the allied health professions except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: theatre practitioner (Band 5); theatre practitioner higher level (Band 6 & 7). To find out more about pay bands, and to see the most up-to-date salary information, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)

**To find out more about careers in the allied health professions, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working)**

**For more information on the professional bodies relevant to the allied health professions, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)**