Programme Specification

MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)

School:	Science, Technology and Health
Subject area:	Occupational Therapy
Entry from academic year:	2024-25
in the month(s) of	January
Awarding institution:	York St John University
Teaching institution:	York St John University
Delivery location:	York
Programme/s accredited by:	Accredited by the Royal College of Occupational Therapy Approval by the Health and Care Professions Council
Exit awards:	MSc Applied Health Sciences Postgraduate Diploma Applied Health Sciences Postgraduate Certificate Applied Health Sciences
UCAS code / GTTR / other:	Not applicable
Joint Honours combinations:	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark statement(s):	Not applicable
Mode/s of study:	Full time for 2 years and 1 month
Language of study:	English
Paired with Foundation Year	No
Study abroad opportunities:	No
Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:	No

Introduction

Occupational therapy is a rewarding, challenging, and fulfilling career. This programme will enable you to be a competent, confident practitioner, with the knowledge and skills required to practice in both traditional and emerging settings, with persons, groups, and communities, both nationally and internationally. York St John's Values and 2026 strategy in promoting equality, social justice, and challenging prejudice are well aligned with the values of Occupational Therapy and these are central to all aspects of the programme.

Our course:
This is a two year, accelerated programme which is designed and mapped around pre-registration standards set out by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT 2019), the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT 2016) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC 2013) and, as directed, includes delivery over 45 weeks per year and the inclusion of 1000 hours of practice education. Successful completion of this programme, therefore, means you are eligible to register with the Health and Care Professions Council to practice under the protected title of 'occupational therapist'.

The programme will support you to become an evidence-informed practitioner with a strong grasp of contemporary theory. You will be able to critically analyse the complex relationships between occupation, health, and wellbeing and understand occupational participation and engagement as a social justice issue.

You will develop skills in carrying out occupational therapy assessments and interventions aimed at enabling individuals, groups, and communities, with a range of health and/or social issues or circumstances to participate in everyday life and society. You will learn how to work *with* people, partners and the community to identify how inequity and injustice impacts on their participation. And explore how Occupational Therapy research and practice can expose and challenge these injustices towards a more socially just society. You will develop a global outlook, and the ability to recognise and respond to the changing demands of practice in health, social care, and education, so that you can contribute to the development of services and be an ambassador for the profession.

You will be taught by staff who have extensive clinical and research expertise in a wide range of settings, including a Professor in Occupational Therapy, in specialist teaching spaces: a virtual tour of our facilities can be found here. The programme is also supported throughout both years of study by visiting clinicians and service users. All academic staff are active in research and /or practice and many are engaged in research/practice projects with community partners aimed at improving participation of marginalised groups, therefore, contributing to York St John's mission to 'stand up for social justice'. Examples of this include work with Refugee Action York to provide a community allotment space for refugees, the facilitation of the York Autism Community of Practice and involvement in a Dance for Dementia group. This experience and expertise informs teaching throughout the programme.

Specific features of our programme:
Occupational and Social Justice: You will explore occupational participation as a 'right' and the professions aspiration towards equitable access to meaningful engagement in occupations for all people (occupational justice). You will also explore how this aligns with broader social justice principles of creating an inclusive world.

Whole person teaching and learning: We will focus on people as whole occupational beings. This fits with the philosophy of our occupational therapy profession and is also what service users who have helped design our programme have recommended: they want to be understood as a person and not by their diagnosis. This means there are no modules which are focussed solely on medical conditions, basic sciences, or the application of policy. Instead, you will learn about these in an integrated way, applied to case examples of people or groups of people.

Problem Based Learning (PBL): PBL is our main teaching and learning approach. It creates a challenging and inspiring learning environment and will support you to develop skills that are essential for practice, such as communication, digital literacy, team working, and leadership. Our cohort size also fosters a community of learners.

Contemporary placement: One of your four professional placements will be a 'contemporary placement', which will give you an insight into the diversity of occupational therapy practice. This may be:

- Role emerging: a setting that has scope for future occupational therapy provision, e.g., in a domestic abuse shelter, or a homeless person's unit
- A new area for occupational therapy practice: e.g., with an occupational therapist working with refuges and asylum seekers
- A placement with an occupational therapist in a leadership or research role

For your final placement there will also be some opportunity for international placements.

Research: You will undertake a primary research project either of your choice or there is the opportunity to join academic staff in their research projects in the Students as Co-Researchers (SCoRe) initiative. This initiative allows students to join staff research projects.

Leadership: You will develop skills in business and service development. You will have the opportunity to mentor another student in University and/or on clinical placement. You will complete an NHS leadership course and complete fieldwork educator training so that when you complete the programme you are able to support/supervise other students/staff.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) portfolio: You will develop self-awareness and the ability to reflect on your practice. You will construct a portfolio of evidence of your development, which demonstrates that you meet the standards required for professional registration.

Interprofessional learning: You will have opportunities to learn alongside other healthcare students at York St John University (nursing, physiotherapy and paramedics) and students from the business school.

Assessment that is 'socially just' (accessible to a range of learner needs) and 'real world': You will engage in assessment that is inclusive and that mimics skills/tasks undertaken in professional practice.

Admissions criteria

Your application will be considered on an individual basis, taking into consideration your previous academic achievement, your work experience and insight into the occupational therapy profession.

You would normally require a second-class honours degree in subjects of science, social sciences and/or healthcare and experience of undergraduate level research.

If you wish to apply and have a second-class degree in a subject not covered above and are able to evidence experience in health, social care and/or education, which is judged to be acceptable by York St John University, you will also be considered.

Admission to the course is dependent upon successful completion of all of the following selection processes:

- Academic entry requirements being met – application is direct to the University
- Satisfactory application form and personal statement
- Successful interview on the selection day
- Satisfactory references
- Receipt of a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.
- Satisfactory medical screening, including evidence of up to date vaccinations and immunisation.
- Students previously enrolled on any professional health programme, must submit a self-declaration confirming there were no previous fitness to practice concerns.

During, and on completion of the programme, you will be required to declare any convictions, cautions or allegations to the University and relevant professional body prior to application for registration.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test, or an equivalent qualification, accepted by the University (see https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of Recognition of prior learning (RPL). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing, the process of which is outlined in the Admissions Policy. Application for RPL will be considered on an individual basis by the Occupational Therapy Admissions Tutor. A maximum of one third of the total pre-registration programme may be considered RPL.

Where a student is applying to transfer from another Occupational Therapy Programme delivered by a different education, more than one third may be considered for RPL. In such cases, the student must:

- Meet the YSJ admissions requirements
- Demonstrate that the teaching learning and assessment strategy of the releasing programme is commensurate with the stage of the YSJ programme they are applying for admission to
- Ensure the releasing education provider details any issues related to professional misconduct or fitness to practice

Immunisations and Vaccinations

Compliance with immunisations is mandatory and essential for placement attendance, with some placement settings also requiring proof of COVID vaccinations.

Programme aims

The aim of the programme is to provide you with an exceptional educational experience that enables you to become a competent, evidence informed, ethically minded and reflexive occupational therapist, who is capable of leading practice that positively contributes to the participation or engagement in the occupations of their everyday lives.

Programme Level Learning Outcomes

There are Programme learning outcomes (PLO's) that are assessed across the programme in University based and practice-based modules. Module outlines will indicate which PLOs are being assessed in each module. On starting the course, you will be given a student handbook which will show you how these PLOs outcomes map to HCPC standards of proficiency (2013).

The PLOs for the programme are as follows:

7.1	Critically evaluate the nature and meaning of occupation
7.2	Critically evaluate the relationships between occupation, health, and well-being
7.3	Critically evaluate philosophy, theories and models underpinning occupational therapy practice
7.4	Critically evaluate the process of assessment in contemporary evidence-informed occupational therapy practice
7.5	Critically evaluate and demonstrate a commitment to ethical, reflective and evidence-informed professional practice
7.6	Demonstrate the ability to reflect on personal and professional skills and values
7.7	Demonstrate commitment to life-long learning, and reflection
7.8	Critically evaluate and reflect upon the application of the occupational therapy process in contemporary evidence-informed practice
7.9	Critically evaluate a range of evidence and discuss its implications for occupational therapy practice
7.10	Demonstrate own professional communication skills (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, written, face-to-face and online), recognise barriers to communication and demonstrate efforts to make communication accessible and achievable for people with whom you work

7.11	Demonstrate professionalism, person-centred practice and sensitivity to equality, diversity and inclusivity
7.12	Demonstrate the ability to make reasoned judgements, and practice decisions/recommendations
7.13	Demonstrate appropriate observations of people, environments and occupations
7.14	Understand the need to collaborate effectively and demonstrate the ability to work in partnership with service users, families, carers, the team and wider services
7.15	Manage workload effectively and take initiative in contributing to the effective delivery of services
7.16	Demonstrate an ability to work within legal and ethical boundaries of the profession to deliver safe, inclusive, culturally relevant, anti-racist, anti-discriminatory, and anti-oppressive occupational therapy
7.17	Actively engage in supervision with practice placement educator
7.18	Be able to select appropriate assessment tools, gather assessment information and analyse it accurately
7.19	Be able to plan, implement and evaluate occupation-centred interventions
7.20	Critically evaluate the political, socio-cultural, economic, and institutional environmental barriers to participation of groups of people in their communities
7.21	Critically evaluate the impact of inequity, poverty, racism, discrimination, exclusion, identity, social difference, and diversity on health and wellbeing
7.22	Advocate and promote people's rights to access and participate in occupation to enhance and maintain health and well-being
7.23	Identify a research need in the occupational therapy or occupational science literature and explain and justify the rationale, research question, aims and objectives to address this need
7.24	Critically evaluate theory and synthesise literature into a literature review for your own research project
7.25	Critically evaluate the ethical principles which underpin your own research project
7.26	Justify and critically evaluate the research paradigm, design, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis methods for your own research project
7.27	Demonstrate an understanding of rigour and bias, and critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of your own research project
7.28	Present and critically evaluate your research findings and their implications for professional practice/research
7.29	Demonstrate critical reflection in the delivery and evaluation of occupational therapy practice
7.30	Demonstrate the use of and critique of evidence to inform the occupational therapy process
7.31	Critically evaluate health and social care systems, policy, and legislation priorities and their impact on the advancement of occupational therapy services
7.32	Critically evaluate and identify opportunities for service improvement /development
7.33	Evaluate and apply models of leadership and change management to occupational therapy practice
7.34	Manage workload and a small caseload effectively within your scope of practice

Programme structure

The programme structure is found in Table 1. There is a combination of academic modules and practice placements (minimum 1000 hours). Practice placements have been placed deliberately to avoid the same placement times as the undergraduate occupational therapy programme to optimise possibilities for students and practice educators.

Table 1: Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Year Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
OCT7012M	7	Year 1 Sem 2[1]	Occupational Beings	10	C	NC
OCT7013M	7	Year 1 Sem 2	Theory and Foundations of Occupational Therapy	20	C	NC
OCT7014M	7	Year 1 Sem 2, 3,& 1 Year 2 Sem 2, 3, 1	Advancing Professional Skills	20	C	NC
OCT7015M	7	Year 1 Sem 2, 3, 1	Contexts of Professional Practice	40	C	NC
OCT7016P	4	Year 1 Sem 3	Professional Practice Placement 1a	0	C	NC
OCT7017P	4	Year 1 Sem 1	Professional Practice Placement 1b	0	C	NC
OCT7018M	7	Year 1 Sem 2, 1 Year 2 Sem 2, 3, 1	Evidence-informed practice, service evaluation and research	40	C	NC
OCT7019M	7	Year 2 Sem 1, 2	Contributing to communities	20	C	NC
OCT7020P	5	Year 2 Sem 2	Professional Practice Placement 2a	0	C	NC
OCT7021M	7	Year 2 Sem 3, 1	Service Development and Leadership	30	C	NC
OCT7022P	6	Year 2 Sem 3,1	Professional Practice Placement 2b	0	C	NC

Learning, teaching and assessment

The learning, teaching and assessment strategy for this programme provides a balance between active learning, shared learning, group reflection, formative feedback (tutor and peer) and summative feedback against the module learning outcomes. The programme has been designed around programme level learning outcomes across the two years with these overall learning outcomes aligned to the Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC, 2016) 'Standards of proficiency - Occupational Therapists' and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists' (RCOT, 2021) 'Professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics', required for competent practice at graduate level. The aim of this learning, teaching and assessment strategy is to develop innovative, inclusive and high-quality teaching, learning and assessment practices that actively engage you and lead to an exceptional learning experience for students and staff.

A focus is placed on problem-based learning (PBL) which encourages you to be active participants and independent inquirers who take responsibility for and 'own' your learning experiences (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2004). While the PBL approach facilitates active and deep learning, you will be supported

[1] OCT7012M starts in week 15 of semester one.

throughout your learning journey by module tutors and wider University support systems. Members of the occupational therapy academic team have undertaken a research project with students who have completed the Pre-registration occupational therapy MSc programme at York St John University (YSJU) and from this a YSJU guide to PBL has been devised to support you in engaging with this learning approach. PBL is usually undertaken in a two-week cycle with 'Triggers'; the keystones for which are the problem-based sessions at the start and end of each week. This is best illustrated by considering a weekly student timetable as illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Sample student timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM	Study	PBL Session	Study	Taught Session	PBL Session
PM	Study	Taught Session	Study	Taught Session	Study

A blended approach to teaching and learning using a mixture of face-to-face, online and independent study is used throughout the programme and practical skills-based sessions, specifically designed to deepen your learning, are utilised to facilitate theory into practice. This blended approach offers flexibility of learning opportunities and is inclusive of students with different learning needs, those with caring responsibilities, part time jobs and those travelling long distances to University. In line with the NHS Digital Skills Framework (2019), you will learn to be professional in your use of social media and develop the knowledge and skills in the use of a range digital resources to achieve the level of digital fluency that is required to work within contemporary and future health and social care systems.

There is a recognised need throughout the programme that developing employability in graduates is essential and, in accordance with York St John University's strategic aims, transition to practice and employment skills are embedded throughout the programme-long OCT7014M and, in Year 2, leadership skills are explored and developed further to facilitate employability inOCT7021M.

Assessment consists of on-going formative feedback over the duration of the programme and summative assessment for each module. Summative assessments include presentations, essays, reports, practicals, and self-reflection. Formative feedback and assessment are provided by academic staff verbally and/or in written form during PBL and taught sessions, and in group and individual tutorials. Within these sessions, there are also opportunities to give and receive peer feedback both online and in person, in written and verbal formats in order to develop your reflexivity and self-assessment skills. Table 2 outlines the types of module assessment.

Table 2: Module assessments

Year One	**Year Two**
OCT7012M: Occupational Beings Assessment: Creative artefact – Choice from a range of written and digital forms, to be agreed with tutor. (A verbal presentation OR a written assignment)	**OCT7019M: Contributing to communities** Assessment: A written blog or article for the OT newsletter
OCT7013M: Theory and Foundations of OT Assessment: A written assignment applying theory to a specified area of practice	**OCT7020P: Placement 2a** Assessment: Assessed in Practice

OCT7014M: Advancing Professional Skills Assessment: A written reflection on the professional standards and a personal development plan	
OCT7015M: Contexts of Professional Practice Assessments: An observed clinical interview with professional notes write up, and a verbal reflection on a case example from practice.	**OCT7021M: Service Development & Leadership** Assessment: A service development plan
OCT7016P: Placement 1a Assessment: Assessed in Practice	**OCT7022P: Placement 2b** Assessment: Assessed in Practice
OCT7017P: Placement 1b Assessment: Assessed in Practice	
OCT7018M: Evidence-informed practice, service evaluation and research Assessment: OT Journal article	

While on the programme you will have access to multiple sources of support. You will have an induction at the start of the programme, necessary study skills teaching embedded within modules, and you will be allocated an academic tutor and a peer mentor. As well as individual and group tutorial time, support is offered by Central Services on study skills such as finding resources, referencing, critical thinking, critical writing, time management, planning assignments, proofreading and presentation skills. Central services also offer support in disability support, wellbeing and welfare, careers and digital training.

The assessment strategy has been designed with reference to a social justice perspective to maximise accessibility to all learners. The have also been designed to ensure authenticity, criticality and creativity; inspiring you to develop new concepts and thoughts on contemporary occupational therapy practice. The assessments are authentic, allowing you to experience real-life practice situations with the opportunity to receive feedback on your knowledge, skills, values and professional practice which in turn will inform your future practice. By using active, collaborative, reflective and dialogic approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, you will develop into independent and lifelong learners.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general regulations for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.
Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Students will be eligible for the award of the **MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)** when they have:

- Passed all modules specified for the programme of study in the programme specification
- Passed all 4 occupational therapy professional practice placements

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- Students will only be offered one resit opportunity for failed University based modules; failure of a resit will result in termination of the student's enrolment on the programme.
- Students must successfully complete and pass a minimum of 1000 hours of professional practice placement. Completed hours of a failed placement do not count towards the overall minimum requirement of 1000 hours.

- Placements are sequential as learning outcomes are progressive, so each has to be passed before progressing onto the next one.
- Students will be offered a resit opportunity for a failed placement but will be withdrawn from the programme if they fail a second attempt at any placement. Students will also be withdrawn from the programme if they fail their first attempt at consecutive placements.
- If a student fails a placement on substantiated fitness to practice grounds, will be denied a resit/retrieval attempt.

Students will be eligible for the award of the MSc in Applied Health Sciences in the event of gaining 180 credits but failure to pass a practice placement component. The award of MSc in Applied Health Sciences does not carry eligibility to apply for admission to the Health and Care Professions Council register.

Additional interim awards, which also do not carry eligibility to apply for admission to the Health and Care Professions Council register are:

- Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Health Sciences with 120 credits
- Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Health Sciences with 60 credits

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- University mission and values
- University 2026 Strategy
- QAA subject benchmark statements
- Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications
- Professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics (RCOT 2021)
- Learning and development standards (RCOT 2019)
- NHS Long Term Plan (2019)
- Sustainability Matters: Guiding Principles for Sustainability in Occupational Therapy Practice, Education and Scholarship (WFOT 2018)
- Standards of Education and Training guidance (HCPC 2017)
- Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (HCPC 2016)
- Minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists (WFOT 2016)
- Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (QAA 2014)
- Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapy (HCPC 2013)
- Digital Framework for Allied Health Professionals (2019)

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