

Return to practice webinar

12.00–13.00

Thursday 30 January 2025

Please note that we'll record this webinar.



Welcome!

- Whilst we're waiting to start, please pop your name in the 'Chat' and say whether you are:
- thinking about returning to practice
- in the process of returning to practice
- thinking about providing a supervised practice placement/supporting a returner
- interested in learning about returning to practice

Welcome to our return to practice webinar!

The webinar is being run by three occupational therapists, two of which have returned to practice (RTP) following a career-break away from occupational therapy

- Roxanne Mitchell-Nembhard, Specialist Occupational Therapist, NHS Lanarkshire
- Rachael Harrison, RCOT Professional Advisor
- Anne Keen, RCOT Professional Advisory Service Manager



This webinar will:

- provide essential information regarding returning to practice and re-registering with the HCPC
- give you the opportunity to hear from OTs who have been through the process
- have a chat function for you to ask questions
- be recorded so you can listen back in your own time

What does RTP involve?

- To practise as an occupational therapist in the UK, you must be registered with HCPC
- If you've been off the HCPC register for 2 years or more, you will need to update your skills:
 - Off the register for less than **2 years = no updating**
 - Off the register for **2–5 years = 30 days of updating**
 - Off the register more than **5 years = 60 days of updating**
 - These are minimum requirements

HCPC – updating knowledge and skills

- Supervised practice
- Formal study
- Private study
- Updating – is about making sure your skills and knowledge are up to date. You don't have to do all three areas. Private study must not take up more than half of your period of updating
- From 1 February 2025, you have one year to complete your updating from when you start it.

Change in updating period

- **From 1 February 2025**, the 12-month updating period for return to practice applications will be reinstated.
- The updating period was temporarily extended to 24 months due to COVID-19. It is now returning to its original length of 12 months. This means you won't be able to include updating activities that took place more than 12 months before you apply.
- A **grace period** is in place to cover applicants who started their supervised practice or formal study **before** 1 February 2025. They will have 24 months to use these activities in their application.

Change in updating period

- This does not apply to private study activities, which must take place less than 12 months before the application.
- Applicants who start their supervised practice, formal study or private study on, or after, 1 February 2025 will have a 12-month updating period.
- [Our requirements if you are returning to practice | The HCPC](#)

As a returner, what do I need to know?

- You are responsible for your updating and for making sure you meet the HCPC standards before you return
- You need to submit the HCPC RTP forms and the HCPC readmission paperwork
- Consider becoming a member of RCOT [RCOT Membership: Sign Up & Discover the Benefits Today](#)
- We can support you all the way!

Why should we support returners?

- It takes a small amount of effort and time to provide a valuable supervised practice placement
- In return, vacancies can be filled by dedicated and experienced staff
- They, in turn, can support more returners

As a supervisor, what do I need to know?

- As a supervisor, you should only supervise activities that are within your scope of practice/competence
- You need to have been on the HCPC register for a minimum of three years and not be subject to any fitness to practice proceedings or sanctions
- It's more straightforward than you may think:
 - you don't have to judge the returner's competencies
 - you don't have to assess their fitness to practice

As an employer, what do I need to know?

- As an employer, it is very beneficial to support returners
- It is a quick, relatively cheap way to fill vacancies and retain staff
- Flexible – fixed term/permanent/bank contract, Band 3 or 4, agency, voluntary or RTP scheme/course

How can supporting returners improve recruitment and retention?

- Returners are motivated to return to work
- They are a ready-made workforce
- Returners are qualified and often very experienced
- They can fill job vacancies
- Returners view employers that host supervised placements in a favourable light which improves staff retention

RCOT website resources

[RTP webpage](#) includes three resources which are available to members and non-members:

- Guide for a returner
- Guide for a supervisor
- Guide for an employer/placement provider

RTP across the four nations

- England – [Return to Practice: allied health professionals, healthcare scientists and practising psychologists | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/return-to-practice)
- Northern Ireland – enquiries should be made locally. Trusts may take requests on a case-by-case basis and try to support where possible

RTP across the four nations

- Scotland – [returning to an AHP career, NHS Scotland](#)
- Wales – the updating arrangements are managed individually by Heads of Departments within Health Boards/Trusts [Return to practice for allied health professionals and health care scientists – HEIW](#)

Roxanne's return to practice journey



My RTP journey

- Previously worked at different levels of seniority including Head/Team Lead of Stroke Unit
- Career break (lived abroad and started a family)
- Family grew so...re-joined RCOT
- Thinking about returning to practice
- RCOT return to practice study day
- Requirement: 60 days of updating

What did I do?

- 30 days clinical supervision and 30 days non–clinical
- Supported by RCOT
- Contacted by Professional Lead OT for my Health Board
- Supervision/supervisor
- Voluntary/self-funded in a Rehab Assistant post, shadowing different areas of OT
- Maintained a daily record, using Excel spreadsheets, journals, critical analysis logs, online course

The outcome

- Completed 60 days of updating
- Filled the HCPC paperwork in and submitted it
- Registered with the HCPC
- Bank as a Band 5 initially. Support, confidence building and supervision. Progressed to Bank Band 6; very beneficial
- Variety of roles across my Health Board
- Secured permanent role in specialist area of interest
- Encourage others – webinar, HCPC blog, article in *OTnews*
- OT is still OT – you can do it!!!

Rachael's return to practice journey



My RTP journey

- Qualified over 30 years ago as an occupational therapist
- Worked as a Basic Grade, Senior II, Senior I, Lead OT, Education and Therapy Lead, Head of Occupational Therapy, Hospital Director and Service Director
- Got married and had children
- Made redundant from Director job, took a career break and came off the HCPC register
- Read the HCPC RTP guidelines – 30 days of updating

Fast forward to 2022

- Made the decision to RTP. Found it difficult to identify a supervised placement
- Considered Health Education England (HEE) and RTP courses
- Re-joining RCOT helped my focus – identified learning needs
- The stars aligned – I saw a tweet from RCOT, advertising a 20-day RTP placement at RCOT. The experience was amazing! I did more than 30 days of updating and completed the HCPC paperwork. Their decision was quick – I was back!

As a returner, my advice is

- Decide – do I want to return?
- Review the HCPC information. Determine 0, 30 or 60 days
- Review the RCOT website and RTP returner handbooks
- Find out what is available to support you in your home nation/consider a distance learning course at a University
- Determine your learning needs and GO FOR IT! It is about you! Do not lose sight of what you already know

Guidance and support from RCOT

- Professional Advisory Service (PAS) is here to support you
- We are open Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm.
- professional.advisoryservice@rcot.co.uk or 020 3141 4630
- [About the Professional Practice Enquiries Service – RCOT](#)

Additional resources

- [Returning to practice – hcpc UK.](#)
- [CPD @ RCOT – RCOT](#)
- [Workforce Strategy – RCOT](#)
- [A - Z of Occupational Therapy \(Members Only\) – RCOT](#)
- [Topics – RCOT](#)
- [Welcome to the RCOT Digital Library - RCOT](#)

Thank you

Any questions?