

## Awards for Learning, Development and Research

<b>Name of award holder</b>	Alisha Knox
<b>Award category</b>	The Barbara Tyldesley Student Award
<b>Year</b>	2024
<b>Title of project</b>	Work the world overseas placement Tanzania.

Alisha Knox, a second-year occupational therapy student, received the Barbara Tyldesley Student Award in early 2024 to support her elective placement. This award helped fund her six-week overseas placement at Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania, which took place from May 18 to June 29.

Muhimbili is a major national referral and teaching hospital, serving between 1,000 to 1,200 outpatients and inpatients weekly. With a workforce of around 2,700 staff, the hospital includes approximately 15 occupational therapists working across departments such as physical health, psychiatry, and paediatrics. These departments manage a wide range of conditions, including cerebral palsy, stroke, Parkinson's disease, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, depression, and schizophrenia.

Alisha began her placement in the physical health department, where she observed that the core values of occupational therapy closely mirrored those in the UK. However, local therapists highlighted the challenges posed by limited resources, often requiring creative problem-solving. One example was using plastic bottle lids for fine motor skill rehabilitation in stroke patients—a simple yet effective approach.

In the paediatrics department, Alisha participated in sessions focused on autism and physical disabilities, which alternated daily. Therapists engaged children in various activities, with significant involvement from mothers who had been learning alongside their children. Alisha contributed to tasks such as counting in Swahili, fine motor exercises, and colour sorting, helping her better understand each child's abilities and needs.

The psychiatric unit included both inpatient and outpatient services. During outpatient sessions, Alisha observed patients engaging in skill-building and social activities like cleaning and sewing. In the inpatient setting, she took part in events such as dance mornings, which promoted physical activity, motivation, and social interaction. Alisha found these experiences particularly rewarding.

Her time in Tanzania offered invaluable learning opportunities and broadened her perspective on occupational therapy in a different cultural context. The placement boosted her confidence and enriched her understanding of the profession, leaving her with lasting memories. Alisha expressed deep gratitude for the Barbara Tyldesley Student Award, which made this transformative experience possible.