

# ANNUAL MONITORING OF ACCREDITED PRE-REGISTRATION PROGRAMMES

COMPILED ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/19

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Tel: 020 7357 6480

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Royal College of  
Occupational  
Therapists



# REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MONITORING OF ACCREDITED PRE-REGISTRATION PROGRAMMES ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/19

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## INTRODUCTION

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) is responsible for the accreditation of pre-registration programmes delivered by higher education institutions (HEI). Programme accreditation is in accordance with the Royal College's (2014) Learning and development standards for pre-registration education (2014) and quality monitoring processes. Pre-registration programmes accredited by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists are automatically approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) and are entered in the WFOT list of approved educational programmes ([www.wfot.org](http://www.wfot.org)). The entries are updated as programmes are newly accredited or re-accredited.

Pre-registration programmes were delivered in 36 higher education institutions during 2018/19. They were distributed as follows:

Nation	HEIs	Total No Programmes/ pathways	BSc	BSc (part time)	Degree Apprentices hip	MSc	PGDip/MS c	MOccTh
England	29	59	27	7	6	18	1	0
Northern Ireland	1	1	1	0	n/a	0	0	0
Scotland	4	7	3	0	n/a	2	1	1
Wales	2	3	2	0	n/a	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

New Pre-registration programmes were started at the following HEIs:

- Two full time BSc programmes were accredited at the University of Central Lancashire and the University of Sunderland (both new providers).
- BSc degree apprenticeship programmes were accredited at the following six established providers: Canterbury Christ Church University, Coventry University, Sheffield Hallam University, University of Brighton, University of East Anglia, and University of Northampton. In total 155 places were accredited for the apprenticeship route during the academic year 2018-19. The degree apprenticeship was developed with the formation of the Occupational Therapist Integrated Degree Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group, of which RCOT took an active role. The integrated degree apprenticeship standard was approved on 7 December 2018. The first apprentices enrolled in their studies in April 2019.
- Four pre-registration master's programmes were accredited at the following HEIs: Coventry University; Edinburgh Napier University; University of Salford; and the University of Southampton.

Pre-registration programme delivery offers combinations of full-time, part-time, apprenticeship, undergraduate, graduate entry, accelerated and MOccTh attendance at a Higher Education Institution.

The qualifications gained by the learners continue to range from a bachelor's degree with honours to a master's degree.

Annual Monitoring Reports were submitted by all HEIs for this monitoring period as required under the terms of RCOT accreditation. 20 Full programme reports (England 19; Northern Ireland 0, Scotland 0; Wales 1), 19 Light programme reports (England 14; Scotland 4; Northern Ireland 1; Wales 0) from 36 HEIs as some deliver more than one programme. The following report has been compiled based on the information submitted within those reports and is therefore an indicator of the national picture. Some data presented has been collated from all HEIs from all four nations and is highlighted as such at the relevant points.

The RCOT continues to review and evaluate the value and purpose of the data requested from programme teams in producing this combined report. Should you wish to provide any feedback, please contact the RCOT Education & Research Department ([QA@rcot.co.uk](mailto:QA@rcot.co.uk)).

The RCOT has reviewed the annual quality monitoring reports for the 2018/19 monitoring period and confirms the ongoing accredited status of all pre-registration programmes. New standards were published in September 2019 and therefore outside the academic year in question.

## SECTION 1 – Programmes

During this monitoring year 12 (BSc and MSc) pre-registration programmes were successfully re-accredited and a further 12 new programmes gained accredited status at a total of 16 HEIs. Two of the HEIs were new providers: one new provider for Scotland and one for England. The new programmes accredited consisted of a BSc part time route (n=1), BSc full time (n=2), MSc (n=3) and the introduction of the BSc Degree Apprenticeship route for England (n=6).

### 1.1 New BSc (Hons) degree apprenticeship route

The Institute for Apprenticeships approved the standard for the Occupational Therapist (Integrated Degree) Level 6 and 7 in December 2018. Six HEIs applied for accreditation during the academic period 2018-19, with one commencing programme delivery during this period. Table 1 identifies some of the key differences between the programmes at each HEI.

**Table 1: Accredited BSc (Hons) Degree Apprenticeship programmes 2018-19**

HEI	Start Date	Approved numbers	Number commenced programme Sept 2018-19	Length of programme including End Point Assessment	Pattern of delivery
Brighton University	Sep-19	15	0	4 Years	Day release
Canterbury Christ Church	Jan-20	35	0	4 Years	Day release
Coventry University	Sep-19	25	0	4 Years	Day release
University of East Anglia	Sep-19	20	0	2 years 6 months (with level 4 APEL)	Day release
University of East Anglia	Sep-19	20	0	3 years 9 months	Day release
Sheffield Hallam University	April 2019, January thereafter	15	14	2 years 6 months	Block release
University of Northampton	Sep-19	10	0	3 years	Day release
	<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>14</b>		

## 1.2 Applications and funding

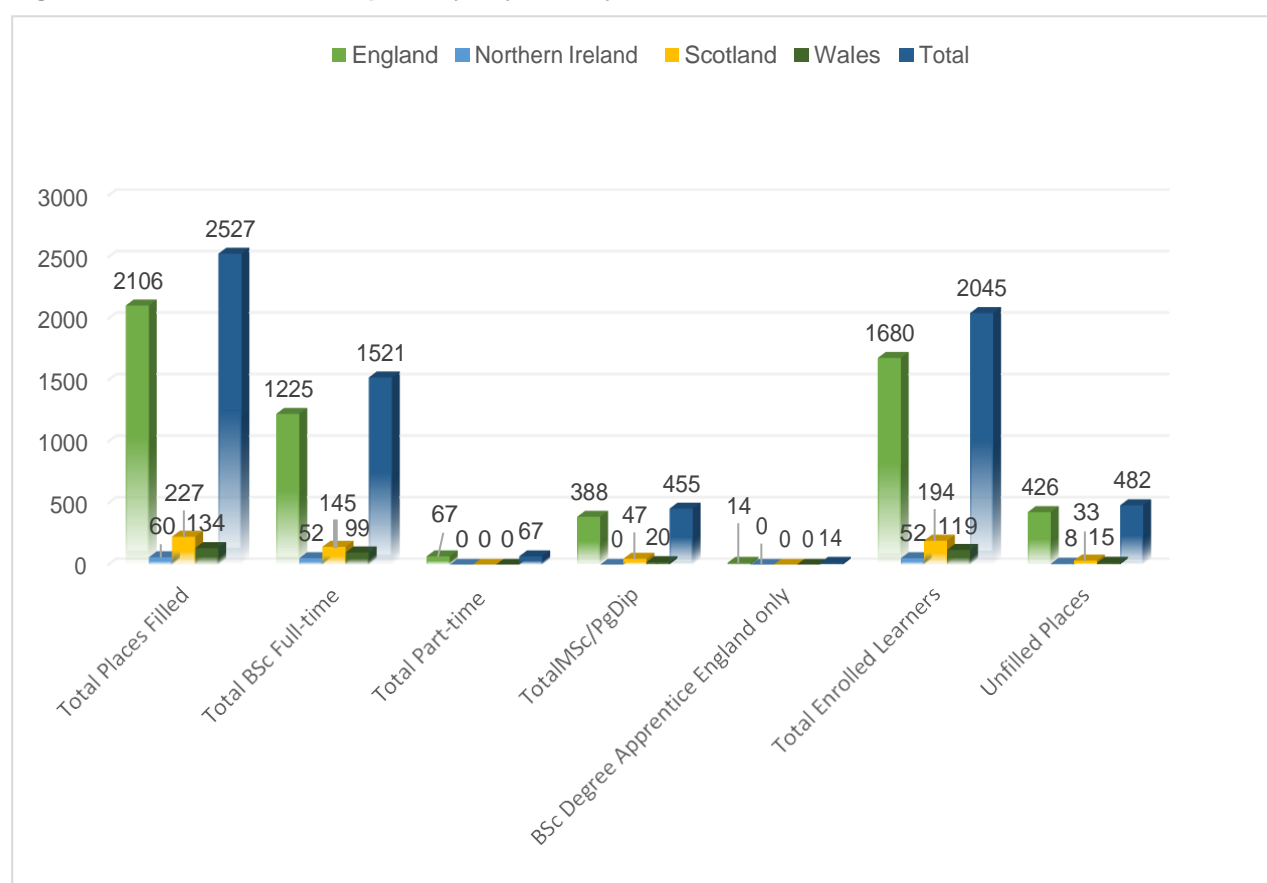
There were a total of 2552 RCOT accredited places on pre-registration programmes during 2018/19; 428 (16.7%) of these places were not filled. Of these unfilled places, 92.4% were in England and 4.8% Scotland, 2.3% Northern Ireland and 0.5% Wales. Unfilled places were attributed to factors such as new courses having not yet reached their full capacity, reduced teaching staff affecting capacity and insufficient applicants meeting recruitment criteria. The high incidence of unfilled places in England may also be explained by the change in funding the previous year. It seemed that while some HEIs did not recruit to their full capacity of accredited places others had no difficulty. Some HEIs exceeded their accredited places and needed to seek RCOT's retrospective approval for this major change. In 2017/18 474 (18.7%) of the available 2527 accredited places were not utilised meaning an overall increase in 25 places being filled for 2018/19.

This is the second year that NHS and Government funding and bursaries ceased in England with prospective occupational therapy learners applying for student loans. In Northern Ireland the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) continued to fund learners as long as they had lived there for three years; in Scotland the Students Award Agency Scotland (SASS) funded

Scottish occupational therapy learners to study on Scottish university programmes and in Wales the Workforce Education and Development Services (WEDS) provided funding for study there.

Where known, 5495 (7234 in 17/18) applications were made via UCAS, for full time undergraduate places excluding apprentices, and 1719 (1824 in 17/18) directly to HEIs. This demonstrates a downward trend in both areas and may be attributable to the loss of government and NHS funding in England or the increase in MSc programmes. From those HEIs completing the AMR report 1526 places were offered and 1459 enrolled at the start of the academic year, which included those who had been allocated places during the UCAS clearing process. Care should be taken when drawing conclusions regarding the data as four HEIs, delivering to learners in 18/19, were not required to complete any AMR (due to their place in the accreditation cycle). In total, across all four nations, there were 2134 learners who enrolled at the start of the academic year. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of learners in 2018/19 according to their chosen pre-registration pathway and country of study. Comparing the data for 17/18 we can identify that filled places decreased by 96, between 17/18 (n= 2527) and 2018/19 (2431), with an increase of 69 (524) post graduate pre-registration places in 2018/19.

**Figure 1 Learner intake to all pathways by country 2018/19**



Although 6 programmes were accredited for the BSc (Hons) degree apprenticeship, only one programme commenced delivery in 2018/19 and the learner data for this programme is therefore included in this 2018/19 report. The remaining BSc (Hons) degree apprenticeships commenced at the beginning of the next academic year (2019/20) and will be further discussed in the 19/20 combined AMR report.

### **1.3 Selection Process**

As in previous years, selection interviews were undertaken at HEIs, either in groups, individually or a combination of both, throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The sole Northern Ireland HEI continued to use the Health Professions Admissions Test.

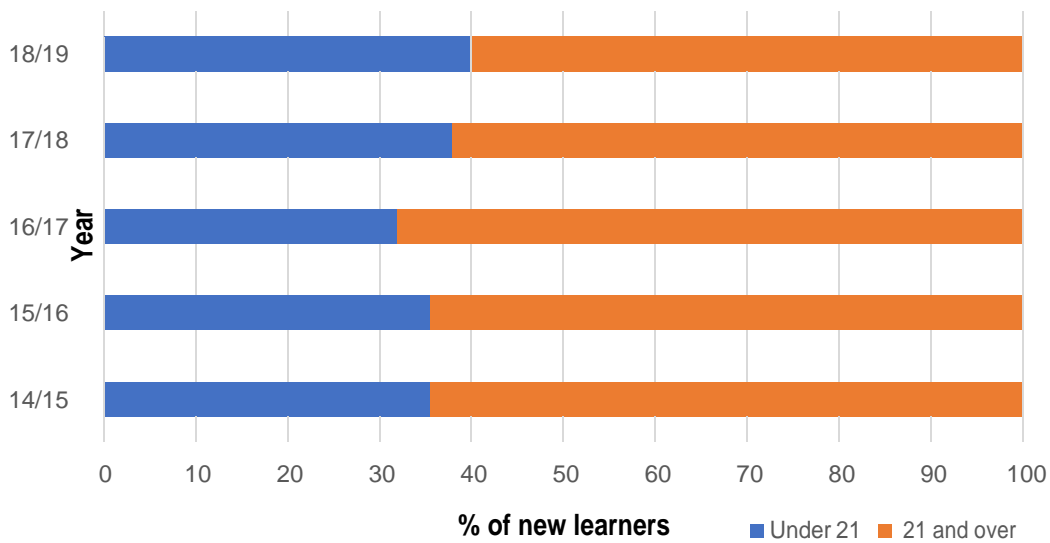
Carers and practice educators were involved in the shortlisting and selection processes of candidates at 50% of the HEIs that were asked the question. The recruitment processes included group tasks, written tasks, individual interviews, virtual interviews, paper-based applications or a combination of some of these elements.

Applicants were selected using values-based principles and these criteria were explored more fully in interviews as detailed above.

### **1.4 Age and gender profile of new learners 2018/19**

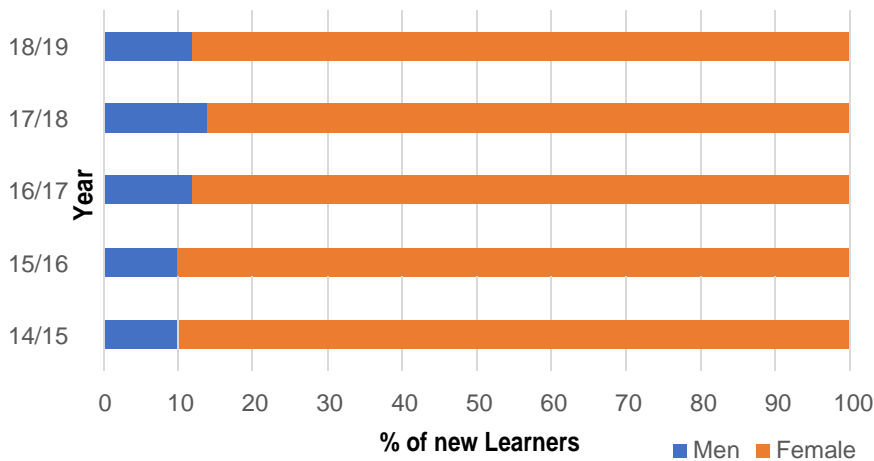
Overall, 60% of all new learners were aged 21 years or older; 54% of new learners on the BSc programmes and 81% on post-graduate entry pre-registration programmes. This data suggests most learners commence their pre-registration programmes after completing their first degree or after gaining further life experience. Conversely, the trend of learners aged 21 or over is decreasing since 16/17 as illustrated in Figure 2. This shift may be influenced by the change in funding as mature learners may have additional financial responsibilities. Conversely, the change may be settling back to the previous norm in 14/15 and 15/16 after a peak in 16/17.

**Figure 2 Distribution of new learners aged under 21 /21 and over (%) for the last 5 years**



The gender profile of all new learners for the 2018/19 period was 88% female (n=1887) and 12% male (n=247). As illustrated in Figure 3, this is a slight reduction in male learners in comparison to 17/18 when 14% (n=297) of learners were male. According to records, the 17/18 period was the highest percentage of new male learners. The AMR collection form has been amended going forward to gather data in relation to gender identity, acknowledging best practice guidance.

**Figure 3 Comparison of gender distribution for new learners over the last 5 years**





## **1.6 Ethnicity and Disability**

Due to changes in data processing, we were unable to collect ethnicity and disability information for this reporting period.

## **1.7 Previous qualification**

Due to changes in data processing, we were unable to collect previous qualification information for this reporting period.

## **1.8 Teaching staff**

All HEIs were able to demonstrate that programmes were led by suitably qualified occupational therapists with the relevant experience and expertise to support the learning required for learners to qualify for professional practice. Many HEIs have staff holding Fellowships/Senior Fellowships from the Higher Education Academy.

Fourteen programmes reported changes to their teaching teams during this monitoring year. In most cases staffing levels were maintained overall and new staff were recruited to take the place of those who had retired or moved, demonstrating forward planning. A few programmes had changes in staffing due to management restructuring and external examiners did raise concerns over staff workloads particularly where staff were not replaced immediately. The Royal College have offered support to teams where staffing numbers were reduced.

The reports also showed that staff are involved in professional development activities, including research, studying for higher degrees, delivering short courses, supporting PhD learners, and attending conferences and regional occupational therapy meetings.

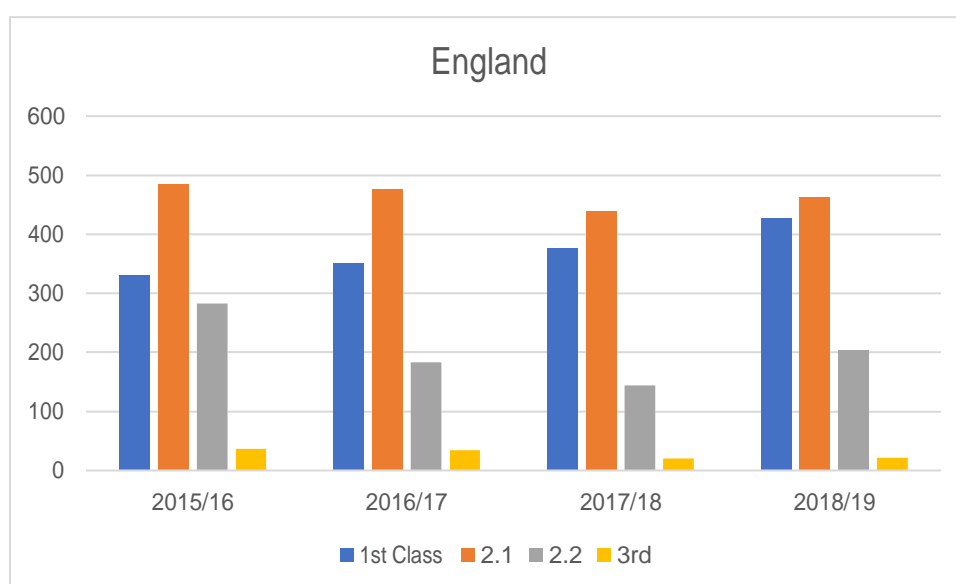
## 1.9 Learning resources

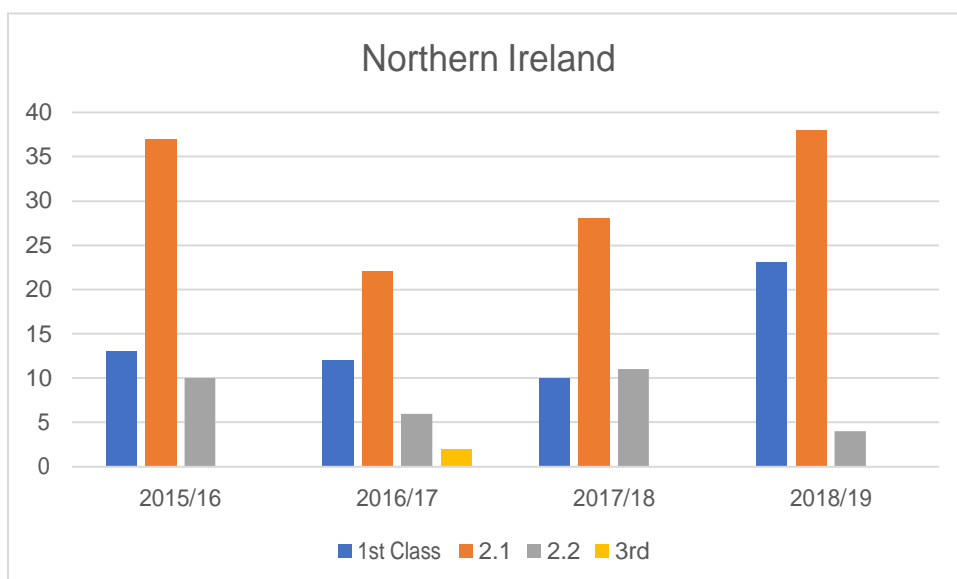
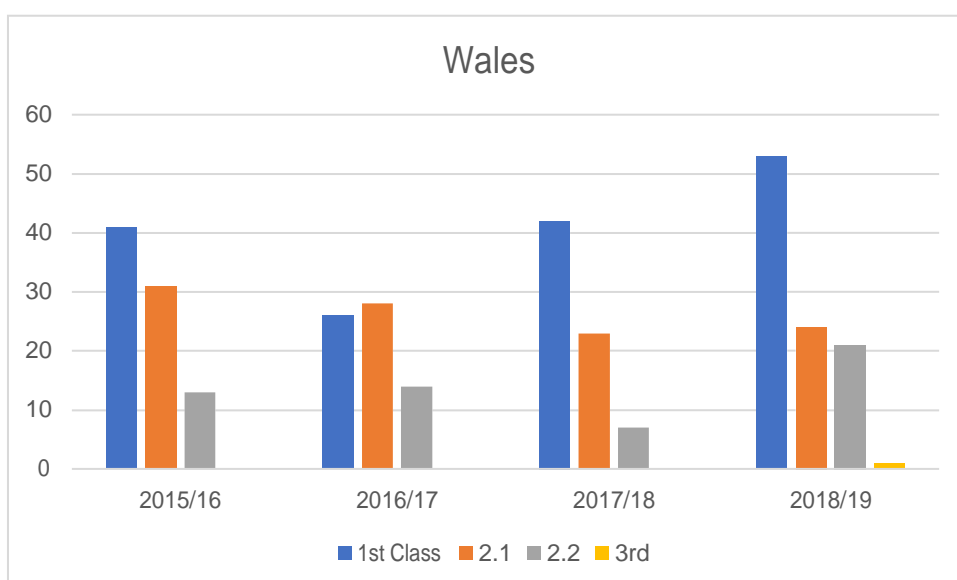
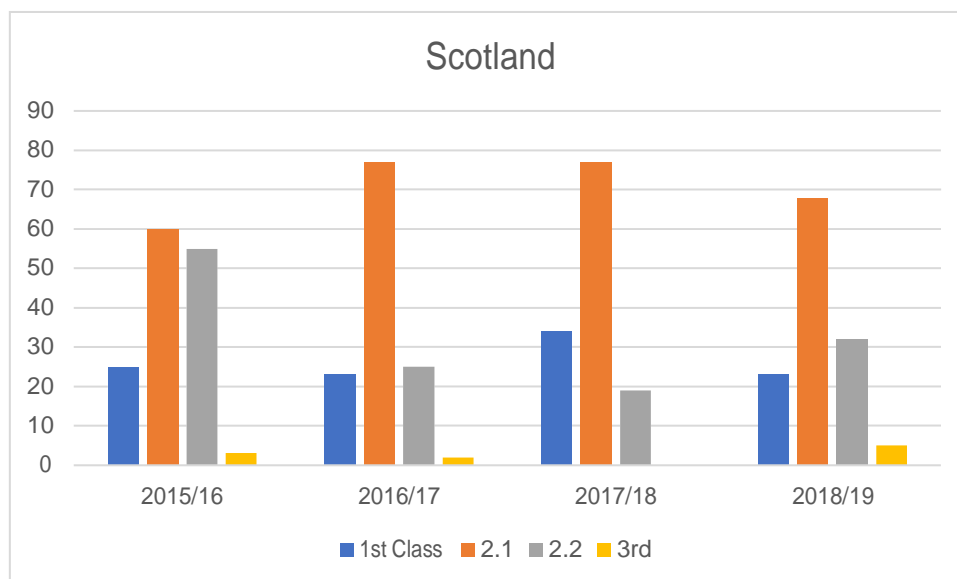
All programmes confirmed access to adequate and appropriate learning resources. One programme team in England noted that there was a premium to secure teaching space for learners, but plans were in place for new premises. Three other HEIs (England and Northern Ireland) noted that new teaching facilities were in planning or building stages, further demonstrating that the required teaching facilities were being addressed nationally.

## 1.10 Qualifications

1796 graduates qualified with a pre-registration occupational therapy qualification in the UK in 2018/19. Of these 1407 were awarded BSc (Hons) and 389 secured postgraduate awards. In 2017/18, the total number of graduates was 1509, in 2016/17 there were 1613 and in 2015/16 there were 1788.

**Figure 7 Honours degree classifications in UK 2015/16 to 2018/19 by Country**





### 1.11 National attrition rate: Loss to programmes through voluntary or involuntary withdrawal

Based on the submitted annual monitoring reports, the national attrition rate for all responding programmes in 2018/19 was 3% and much lower than the 7.09% of the previous year, 2017/18. The attrition rate for 2018/19 is the lowest it has been for the last 5 years. This may, in part, be due to the nature of the AMR cycle and not all HEIs requiring submission of this data.

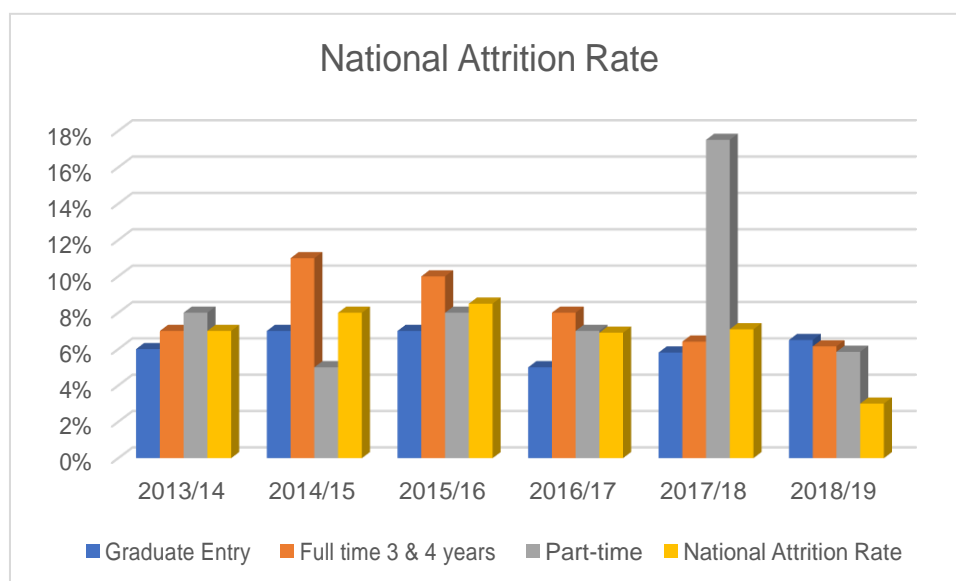
The national full-time programme attrition (undergraduate and graduate) for 2018/19 of 3%, was down from 6.41% in the previous year. Full time programme attrition by country for 18/19 was: 7.26% in England, 1.8% in NI, 1% in Scotland and 3% in Wales.

Nationally the graduate entry attrition rate was 6.5%, which was 1.3% higher than the previous year 2017/18. Graduate entry programme attrition by country was: 6.5% in England, 0% in Scotland and unreported in Wales. There are no graduate entry programmes in Northern Ireland. This rise in graduate entry overall attrition, from England, may be a direct reflection of the impact of reduced funding for MSc programmes in England from September 2018 (August 2017 for undergraduates), but there is no evidence to support this.

England continues to deliver seven part time and one in-service programme. The attrition rate for the part time programme is down from 17.58% in 2017/18 to 6% in 2018/19. Numbers fluctuate as part-time programmes are mostly being phased out by HEIs and have fewer students remaining. In 2017/18 the attrition rate for the part time routes was unusually high, this was due low numbers of students on the programmes distorting the representation as a percentage.

The most common reason for temporary and permanent student withdrawal continues to be for personal reasons, health, academic failure, financial reasons and not the right career choice.

**Figure 8: National Attrition Rate 2013-2018**



As in previous years, high attrition rates (above 10%) were seen in some programmes. In response, teams developed numerous strategies to deal with these including:

- Monitoring academic attendance to identify learners that may have issues and need support with the aim of early intervention.
- Using the personal tutor mechanism as an early alert for learners who are considering leaving the programme.
- Referring learners to support services within the University for additional help and advice.
- Encouraging learners to consider an interruption to their studies for a defined period as an alternative to permanent withdrawal.
- Assisting learners to access hardship funds.
- Ensuring the financial demands of the programme (especially placement, for example) are made clear at University open days, in relevant recruitment literature and at interviews.
- The introduction of a Peer Assisted Learning scheme for first year BSc learners to be mentored by 2nd and 3rd year learners.
- Ensuring that applicants have more information and opportunity to consider the nature of the profession and the academic commitment of an accelerated pre-registration MSc course.

### 1.12 Graduate destinations

First post destinations of graduates remain difficult to report on as the information is not always available. Those programmes (n= 26) that were able to provide information reported approximately 92% of graduates gaining employment with an Occupational Therapist job title. Ten individual programmes (all within England) reported that 100% of their graduates were successful in gaining an occupational therapy post and another eleven programmes confirmed that over 90% of their graduates were in occupational therapy posts.

A further 8% were employed in posts that were not specifically identified as Occupational Therapist but using their occupational therapy skills. Examples of these roles are teaching assistant, social services case manager, self-employed company director, support worker, and mental health practitioner. Further evidence provided by some programme teams confirmed a small number of learners going onto further study and research.

These 2018/19 figures are an improvement to those of the previous monitoring year, where 81% secured occupational therapy roles and a further 14% were employed in non-OT roles where they use their OT skills.

### **1.13 RCOT membership and professional body engagement**

When reviewing membership, 70% of all learners (new and continuing) and 84% of Occupational Therapy academic staff were RCOT members during 2018/19.

There were two active RCOT student groups reported at 15 of the HEIs that were asked this question and this frequency remains constant since the previous monitoring period. In addition, there were two local RCOT groups students joined and seven Occupational Therapy societies (run by Student Union).

In addition, some learners were involved in showcase displays during Occupational Therapy Week and others attended and presented at the RCOT conference, as well as at regional subgroup meetings. The RCOT Education Liaison Officer also visited the learners on many of the occupational therapy programmes to demonstrate the benefits of being a member of the RCOT and to recruit new members. There has been a slight decrease (1%) in student members since the 2017/18 academic year.

Academic staff were engaged with the work of the professional body as British Journal of Occupational Therapy reviewers, Specialist Section committee members and Royal College Board members and accreditors. Many presented at the RCOT annual conference.

## **SECTION 2 – Practice Education**

### **2.1 Availability of practice-based learning opportunities**

The number of placements undertaken in health settings accounted for 80.5% of total placements, while social care placements accounted for 9.2%, emergent and other settings 10.2 % and overseas placements 0.1%. Role-emerging placements took place in a wide range of settings including: primary education, nursing homes, farms, fire service, horticultural settings, prison service, charities.

Cancellation of placements by placement providers was 2.4% for 2018/19, an improvement to 2017/ 2018 data when 10.6% of placements were cancelled. The most common reasons for placements being cancelled was due to staffing pressures within the organisations, capacity, illness, shortage of practice educators and learners' personal circumstances.

### **2.2 Quality assurance of practice education**

All HEIs offer an accreditation scheme for practice educators either via APPLE or through their own accreditation training packages. They also run practice placement educators' courses and workshops at the university or as bespoke training with organisations. Courses vary from one and two-day courses for new educators to one or half-day refresher courses for experienced educators. Some are tailored and request tailored subjects i.e. role emerging placement training, mentoring, supervision, learning contacts and failing learners. One HEI reported that they were developing an online delivery. Many placement

settings have their own evaluation forms which learners are asked to complete. This helps to monitor the opportunities offered within the setting.

Role emerging placements were evaluated in various ways, some online via placement portals, as module evaluation questionnaires, or a halfway discussion or meeting with role emerging placement supervisors. Interviews at the end of placements were also used. Feedback was then shared with placement providers and educators. The evaluation feedback often feeds into the planning process for the subsequent academic year.

## SECTION 3 – Good Practice

### 3.1 Areas of good practice

There were many examples of good practice which HEIs highlighted through their own quality mechanisms. Examples were from a range of stakeholders from learners, external examiners, practice partners, service users to accreditors. A selection of these include:

- External examiner comments on the high level of support provided by programme teams for learners and practice educators.
- Inclusion of a role emerging placement for all learners for practice placement 3, allowing all learners to experience new and emerging practice areas that may be future OT employers.
- The occupational therapy admissions process being held up as an exemplar of good practice within the Faculty for 'values-based principles' and participation of service users and external partners in individual and interviews.
- Communication with learners by introduction of 'placement newsletters' sent to learners out on placement. Keeping them engaged and informed; and helping them to feel connected to the university whilst away from the academic setting.
- Many examples of high engagement of service users and carers with learners, including involvement in admissions interviews and other areas within the programme e.g., mini conferences and in-depth discussions demonstrating how their experiences relate to barriers and enablers to participation.
- Examples within modules demonstrating innovation and entrepreneurship requiring learners to produce a business case for an occupational therapy products/service. This is presented as a full business proposal and pitched to a panel of academic and practice partners followed by an individual written reflection.
- Involvement of lecturers and learners in planning and delivering simulation, together with practitioners, service users, and academics leading to co-producing a poster for a simulation

conference, winning best poster award. This programme was subsequently awarded funding from the University's Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund to evaluate further.

- Development of a range of marking rubrics in order to provide a greater level of consistency in marking and feedback across modules and marking teams. Positively evaluated by learners enhancing student satisfaction via the National Student Survey.
- Hosting a 'Role-Emerging Placement Networking Event' and disseminating good practice from those who have supported non-traditional placements in the past, to facilitate two-way communication about the evolving local landscape of health, care, public health, and community support.
- A programme team developing a Research Showcase for the pre-registration MSc learners, years 1 and 2. The purpose was to enhance the staff and student learning community with a particular emphasis on research. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback from staff and learners and was rated 5/5 on 'usefulness' by the first year MSc cohort and is now being developed for the BSc programme.
- Many HEIs used peer support with final year learners act as peer assistants for first year learners in modules and was well received by all the learners involved.
- Development of annual placement educator conference.