

# Case Study

## Taiwanese Occupational Therapist

I previously worked in Taiwan as an Occupational Therapy (OT) for three years on completion of an undergraduate degree in occupational therapy. I later came to the UK to study for a Masters degree in OT.

Upon completion of my Masters degree, I sought and gained employment as an OT Assistant. I enjoyed this role. I was able to gain knowledge and experience of the culture and practice of OT in the UK. This was important because the practice of OT in the UK is different from the way in which it is practiced in Taiwan. In Taiwan, healthcare is free for everyone, although some people have insurance. Additionally, OT services can only be accessed by referral and equipment is purchased by the patient and not provided by the service, as it is in the UK. In Taiwan, we are in-patient based; OT intervention focuses more on impairment (primarily through a medical model). Families are expected to support activities of daily living (ADL), hence rehabilitation is not a priority. I was also able to learn how to conduct functional assessments. Importantly, I was able to build my confidence.

While working as an OT Assistant, I was encouraged by colleagues to register as an OT with the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). My colleagues supported me throughout the process, which took approximately three months. I then embarked on the process of applying for a job as an OT. The application process was difficult. I was lucky because my supervisor at work supported me, particularly to understand the job description and writing my personal statement.

I would encourage OTs from overseas who are interested in working in the UK to consider working as an OT Assistant first. This can prove effective in developing skill, knowledge and agency without

the responsibilities that comes with working in a substantive OT role. Once you obtain your substantive OT role, I would also encourage you to seek opportunities to shadow more senior OT practitioners. This also helps in developing contextual understandings of the practice of OT in the UK and could be a vital source of information as well as provide opportunities for you to ask those key questions. I would also encourage you to join or form support groups (formal or informal); I'm lucky because I'm a member of a Taiwanese AHP support group. We meet on a monthly basis to share knowledge. Sharing your experiences and knowledge within your affinity groups and beyond is important. Membership of support groups is one way of building belonging and improving retention.

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