

## ART THERAPIST

### WHAT DOES AN ART THERAPIST DO?

Art therapists help clients to express their feelings through art, rather than through words. Art therapy may be carried out in group or 1-to-1 settings and art therapists may work closely with other healthcare professionals. An art therapist's role could include:

- assessing clients' needs by listening and providing guidance
- helping clients to explore their art work and the creative process
- assessing clients' feelings/ emotions
- challenging clients' behaviour/ attitudes

Art therapists work with people of all ages and backgrounds.

### SKILLS REQUIRED

Applicants for Art Therapy courses and jobs will need to demonstrate that they have:

- an interest in the visual arts
- creativity and imagination
- communication skills including observation and listening
- an ability to facilitate learning and encourage participation
- an ability to empathise and gain people's trust
- an ability to work effectively in 1-to-1 and group settings
- experience in dealing with people and their problems
- self-awareness, including an ability to recognise own strengths and weaknesses

### QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

- A postgraduate qualification in Art Therapy or Art Psychotherapy that has been approved by the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT).
- Registration with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC): <http://www.hpc-uk.org/>
- Applicants will need to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Check entry requirements and course content with individual course providers.

### UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

There are 2 undergraduate courses that focus upon the therapeutic benefits of art. Neither course is in the West Midlands.

**Creative Arts Therapy Studies Foundation Degree:** City of Bristol College  
(<http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/>)

**Length of study:** 2 years full-time

**Entry requirements - qualifications:** 5 GCSEs at grade 9-4/A\*-C including English Language and Mathematics, or their equivalent.

Applicants with an *Access to HE Diploma* must also have a portfolio of evidence/a creative piece of work.

Applicants with a *BTEC Level 3* qualification should have a good level of achievement in a related subject area (Merits/ Distinctions) and must also have a portfolio of evidence/ a creative piece of work.

**Entry requirements - work experience:** Related employment and qualifications are welcomed.

**BA (Hons) Creative Expressive Therapies:** University of Derby (<http://www.derby.ac.uk/>)

**Length of study:** 3 years full-time. Part-time study, over 6 years, is also possible.

**Entry requirements - qualifications:** Normally 5 GCSEs at grade 9-4/A\*-C, or equivalent, including English and Mathematics.

Applicants with an *Access to HE Diploma* need to have gained an overall Pass (60 credits) with a minimum of 45 Level 3 credits including a minimum of 15 at Distinction, 24 at Merit, and 6 at Pass level. Functional Skills or Key Skills, at Level 2, may be considered instead of GCSE English and Mathematics.

*BTEC* applicants will need to have gained Distinction, Distinction, Merit (DDM), and also have 5 GCSEs at grade C or above including Maths and English.

The University suggests that people who may be interested in this course think carefully about their choice of Level 3 course and the extent to which it prepares them for the degree pathway - e.g. art - that they want to follow.

**Entry requirements - work experience:** None specified.

**NB** Please check with each course provider as entry requirements can change.

## POSTGRADUATE COURSES

There are 9 BAAT-approved UK-based postgraduate courses. As part of the training, students undergo and fund personal therapy, and have a clinical placement.

**Courses in the West Midlands:** None of the BAAT-approved courses are located in the West Midlands. For information on where the courses are offered, see:

<http://www.baat.org/Assets/Docs/2017%20ART%20THERAPY%20TRAINING%20BAAT.pdf>

**Length of study:** Full-time postgraduate courses require 2 years of study whilst part-time courses require 3 years.

**Entry requirements - qualifications:** Successful applicants usually have an undergraduate degree in Fine Art, Visual Arts or Art & Design. Applicants with an undergraduate degree in Education, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Psychology or Social Work may also be considered. A relevant HND may sometimes be considered for entry if you have substantial clinical work experience.

**Entry requirements - work experience:** Postgraduate course providers demand substantial and relevant paid or voluntary work experience including work with service users in a health, educational or social services setting: this could be gained through NHS art therapy departments, prisons, special needs schools or hospices.

**Entry requirements - other:** Course providers may also ask for a portfolio of art work. Applicants will need to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

**NB** Please check with each course provider as entry requirements can change.

## EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Art therapists work in a variety of settings including healthcare organisations, education institutions, charities, drug and alcohol services, social services, prisons, stroke and head injury units, or hospices.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

Working hours depend on the employer: NHS roles tend to be 9am to 5pm, whilst private practice may require the art therapist to work outside those hours. Some art therapists work for a range of providers across the public and private sectors, with some practitioners combining art therapy with other work. Opportunities exist for part-time and freelance working.

Travel within a working day is often required, especially if the art therapist works for a range of providers.

## SALARY

The starting salary for Art Therapists is approximately £26,000 per year. With experience this can rise to £31,000 - £41,000 per year. A Principal Art Therapist in the NHS can earn up to £48,000 per year.

**NB** These figures are only a guideline: see NHS pay scales, and job advertisements, for up-to-date information

## LABOUR MARKET DATA

In May 2018, there were 4,322 art therapists in the UK who were registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Jobs are available in most parts of the UK, although competition is keen with few advertised vacancies. Many art therapists find work through networking and by marketing their own services.

## INFORMATION SOURCES:

- Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC): <http://www.hpc-uk.org/>
- National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>
- NHS Careers: <http://www.nhs-careers.nhs.uk/>
- Prospects: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>
- The British Association of Art Therapists: <http://www.baat.org/>
- UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/>

## VIDEO CLIPS

- <http://www.nhs-careers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/allied-health-professions/careers-in-the-allied-health-professions/arts-therapists/art-therapist/>
- <http://www.baat.org/About-Art-Therapy/Art-Therapy-Videos?404%3bhttp%3a%2f%2fwww.baat.org%3a80%2fferror.aspx%3f>

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