

# A Student Evaluation of an Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship

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## Introduction

Apprenticeships are becoming an increasingly popular means of training healthcare professionals, providing an opportunity to earn and study simultaneously. However, there is currently a lack of evaluative data on the student experience of Occupational Therapy (OT) apprenticeship schemes.

## Aim

To evaluate the perspectives of the five apprentices from the January 2020 cohort of the Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust / Canterbury Christchurch University OT Apprenticeship.

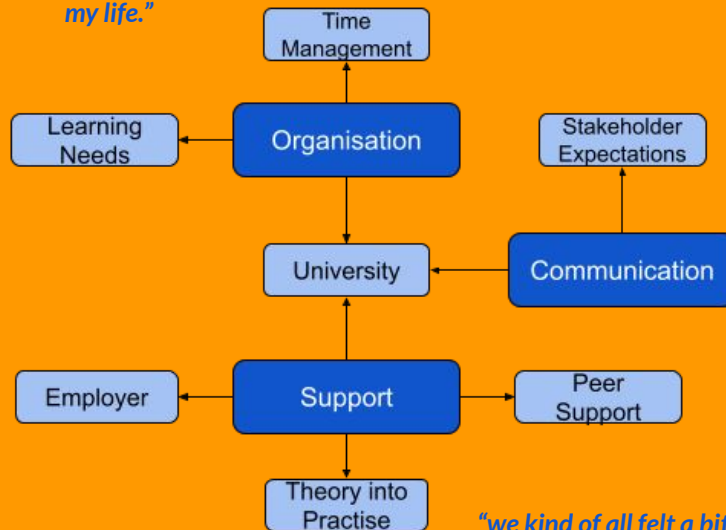
## Design

Apprentices were invited to attend a semi-structured interview, carried out on Microsoft Teams. Questions focused on what had gone well and what could be improved about the programme.

Data was analysed using a qualitative, interpretive approach. Three main themes and seven sub-themes were generated.

## Findings

*"Referencing. I'd never referenced anything in my life."*



*"Sometimes, I think the uni has assumed that you know what they're talking about and you don't. And sometimes it's been the opposite, where they assume that you don't know, like an undergrad, when actually you do."*

*"we've gone on the journey together of learning and finding what's right and what's wrong together."*

*"we kind of all felt a bit like rabbits in the headlights."*

## Conclusions

Apprentices identified the key components for programme effectiveness as clear communication and management of expectations between stakeholders; effective induction processes; and a commitment to supporting mentors and workplace teams within the clinical arena. Future evaluations should consider the perspectives of other stakeholders within apprenticeship programmes.

## Contribution to Knowledge

This is the first evaluation of an OT apprenticeship and contributes to the body of work on apprenticeship programmes, particularly within the allied health professions.

In keeping with previous research, this study emphasises the importance of multiple sources of support for apprentices as well as effective communication and programme organisation.

Additionally, apprentices should be treated in a way that reflects their different life experiences and circumstances.