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# Information paper

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## **Survival Guide in Obtaining Your First Physiotherapy Post**

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# Survival Guide in Obtaining Your First Physiotherapy Post

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Whilst band 5 physiotherapy job prospects are extremely good at the moment, obtaining your first post can be a stressful as well as exciting time. This survival guide targeted at final year students and recent graduates will offer you lots of tips and advice to help you secure the perfect job.

### Where to look

- The CSP website: <http://www.jobescalator.com/>
- [www.healthjobsuk.com/jobs](http://www.healthjobsuk.com/jobs)  
Is a useful site, as it tends to have the jobs that are advertised on individual trust websites and not the NHS site
- <http://www.physiobob.com>
- Job ads in Frontline, the CSP's fortnightly publication
- There are web based NHS job sites in all four countries where vacant posts are advertised
  - England and Wales [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)

This site will enable you to search for vacant posts in England. In addition a special registration service has been set up in some regions for newly qualified junior physiotherapists who are looking for their first job.

Go to [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk) where you can register your profile with details such as experience gained during training. Your details will be logged onto a database which employers can search and which enables them to email details of suitable posts to those looking for jobs.

- Scotland: [www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk)
- Northern Ireland: [www.hscni.net/](http://www.hscni.net/) which has a link on the left hand side of the home page to the job vacancies section



## Support with finding your first job

### **ENGLAND**

Some of the recently established Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs) have set up Candidate Profile Databases for newly qualified health professionals including physiotherapists. These exist in:

- East of England
- North West
- South West
- Thames Valley
- Wessex
- West Midlands

You will need to sign up with the LETB region in which the HEI where you trained as a physiotherapist is based.

### **What happens if I am no longer living in the region that commissioned my training?**

The registration form allows you to indicate which areas outside your commissioning LETB region you would be prepared to work in.

### **Should I do anything after I register?**

Every three months the LETB will email you to ask you to renew your profile and confirm that you are still looking for a job. It is important that you do this to remain registered under this scheme – otherwise you may automatically be removed from the register.

**Please respond to any contact you receive from the LETB. If you are unable to take up an offer then please explain why.**



## **How to register for your Candidate Profile Database**

Don't try to register until you have received notification from the Exam Board that you have qualified and make sure you have your HEI student number to hand, then:

- 1) Go to [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk) and log in (if you are already a registered user), or register
- 2) Click on the 'My Profiles' link on the righthand side of the page
- 3) This will take you to a page with the list of LETBs which have Profile Databases set up. Select the region that commissioned and funded your course and click on register
- 4) Complete all the questions and enter your personal details on the form. Once submitted you will receive a confirmation form from the NHS Jobs email service
- 5) To receive daily alerts of suitable jobs by email, log into your NHS Jobs account and select the My Jobs by email link on the right hand side of the page.

**Remember to update your profile if your email address changes.**

### **WALES**

The Welsh Early Warning System has been created to support qualified physiotherapists wanting to work in Wales.

The website provides an early warning of job vacancies in Wales, through the use of text messaging and the website's 'Newsflash' page. The site not only contains up-to-date job vacancies but also provides the latest news on NHS Wales, information on relevant CPD opportunities which would strengthen your CV and advice on job applications.

Cardiff university has designed and developed this resource, and continues to host and manage content, using feedback from users to provide useful case studies, offer guidance, and facilitate networking. The aim is to offer you support in the whole job-finding process.

Registration is quick and easy – simply visit one of the following sites and follow the instructions: <https://healthcarestudies.cf.ac.uk/physiojobswales/>



If you give your mobile number, job vacancy information will be sent by text message.

## **SCOTLAND**

NHS job vacancies in Scotland are advertised on the NHS Scotland Recruitment website online recruitment at <https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/> which should be checked regularly for new posts.

In Scotland the Flying Start programme is a national development programme for newly qualified nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. It aims to support their learning and build their confidence during their first year of practice in NHS Scotland. For more information go to: <http://www.flyingstart.scot.nhs.uk/faqs/>

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

Jobs in health and social care in Northern Ireland are advertised on the HSC Recruit website. There is now a regional recruitment process for band 5 jobs in Northern Ireland with the application only happening once a year – the exact date varies but is notified on the website and in the Belfast Telegraph.

In order to apply online applicants must be registered with the site – to get started go to <http://www.hscrecruit.com/>

### **If you see a job advertised be quick!**

On the NHS jobs sites, you may get the email and then apply to find the job closed because so many applications have been received. It is therefore recommended that you log on the sites every day or as often as possible and search manually under “physiotherapist” and “Band 5” to catch any new jobs before they are emailed out. The earlier you apply the better chance you have of being interviewed. (There are lots of tips on how to apply later on in this guidance)

Make sure you inform the CSP of your current **non university** email account so we can keep in touch with you. Email this to: [enquiries@csp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@csp.org.uk) along with your CSP student membership number or full CSP membership number.

Also in order for the CSP to keep track of the situation, it is vitally important that we use up-to-date data of the job situation for newly qualified physio's when they graduate. The CSP usually emails graduates in the November and April following their graduation to find out whether you have managed to obtain a physiotherapy job. We need to have as many respondents as possible to make our findings stand



up to scrutiny so if you do receive an email survey from us please reply as quickly as possible.

If you don't have a physio post when you graduate don't forget you can apply for a 50% reduction off the membership rate. It's important you apply for CSP membership as soon as you graduate in order to remain insured should you do any voluntary or private work. Also many NHS jobs have CSP membership in the desirable section of their jobs person spec.

CSP membership also gives you free access to the CSP's ePortfolio – a rich resource of information, learning activities and tools designed to support members' CPD. You can access your CSP ePortfolio account via the CSP's website at:

<http://www.csp.org.uk/professional-union/careers-development/cpd/csp-eportfolio>

- NHS Trusts' circulars, which are sometimes sent to schools and colleges Trust websites (many Trusts have a "job shop" on their website)
- Write speculative letters to every hospital within the area you wish to work, requesting any information on Open Days
- It's important to also look away from the large acute hospitals as the number of posts in community settings is growing.
- Private hospitals (including BUPA) have also started recruiting newly qualified physiotherapists.
- Do you also have any contacts with past placements? Maybe you could contact them to see if you can visit / volunteer or shadow perhaps (if you can afford to). Also see CSPs guidelines on volunteering <http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/too-free-work> and at <http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/unpaid-internships-what-are-issues-physiotherapy-graduates-profession>).

If you get your face known as much as possible then maybe when they have junior posts you will be the person they think of.

- Agencies: a number of agencies take on new graduates as locums, and these often result in permanent posts. PULSE is an agency with which a number of new graduates have enrolled: [www.pulsejobs.com/uk/allied-health/](http://www.pulsejobs.com/uk/allied-health/)
- Look in local newspapers and job centres.



## Who can help you maintain your CPD?

### **Professional Networks**

There are approximately 39 recognised and a number of non-recognised professional networks that represent physiotherapists working within particular areas of the profession; be they clinical, occupational or interest related.

They sometimes include reduced or free membership for out of work newly qualified physiotherapists as well as reduced or free entry to courses, workshops and conferences. Some may even arrange mentoring or even some kind of shadowing so that you can keep your CPD up to date

There is a complete list of groups and their areas of interest, with contact details, on the CSP website: <http://www.csp.org.uk/networks>

### **Graduate Workshops**

In the past there were a number of workshops organised by newly qualified physio's for those wanting to keep their skills up to date.

They weren't successful all around the country due in some part to universities encountering difficulty in allowing unfunded access to their facilities and to the fact that a number of graduates with the initiative to set the workshops up, are the same ones that have been successful in finding physiotherapy posts.

A number of HEIs were involved in running workshops for their own graduates, or any graduates in their locality. These were generally at the request of their graduates. Some of these, such as Cardiff, were on a one-day a week basis over a period of weeks while others were one off days. In general these focused on the core skills of musculoskeletal, cardio respiratory and neurology. They were designed to maintain clinical reasoning as well as practical skills. Others were offering graduates assistance with CVs and interview techniques while some developed 6-12 month teaching and research assistant posts for graduate applicants.

Going forward it is suggested that final year students from each university group together, meet their universities and ask them if they will help arrange workshops for after they graduate.



## **English Regional Networks and Country Boards**

You could get in touch with your Country Board or English Regional Networks. Previously one graduate volunteered to help out the Board Secretary writing up the notes of the meeting etc. This got her known and she was subsequently offered work shadowing and then an actual job.

Contact details can be found here:

<http://www.csp.org.uk/nations-regions>

## **CSP's e-Portfolio system**

As well as providing tools to help you record and evaluate your learning, build profiles and create CV's, the CSP's ePortfolio system contains a CPD webfolio. The CPD webfolio is a one-stop e-shop of information, learning activities, examples from practice, and links to other CPD resources - focused on the behaviours, knowledge and skills used by the physiotherapy workforce. The CPD webfolio will be launched at Congress 2011. It will be a dynamic resource with content updated and new materials added – in response to users' feedback and developments in practice. Information about how to access the CPD eportfolio is available at:

<http://www.csp.org.uk/professional-union/careers-development/cpd/csp-eportfolio>

The CSP's Physiotherapy Framework (sits within the CPD webfolio) will be a useful resource to help you think about your future professional career. The framework defines the behaviours, knowledge and skills used by the physiotherapy workforce at six levels of practice – from support to expert. Have a look at the entry-level graduate descriptors to find out more about the expectations of a newly qualified physiotherapist. The descriptors for this level have been mapped to Band 5 job profiles and the HPC's expectations of a registered physiotherapist. You could use this information to map your behaviours/knowledge/skills against the expectations of entry-level practice. Doing that would help you think about your ongoing CPD needs, as well as helping you refine the content of a portfolio of evidence to support your job application process.

## **NHS employing organisations**

A number of NHS employers across the UK have supported unemployed graduates in a variety of ways, in particular through involvement in in-service training sessions and work shadowing. Some have put on practical skills refresher days (which are however, often oversubscribed!)



It is worth contacting local employers in your area to find out if they run any such sessions.

### **Private Practitioners**

You should look at physio first website (<http://www.physiofirst.org.uk/>) for contact details of thousands of private practitioners. You could then contact them to see if they will offer you a job or even (if you are financially able to do this) a shadowing opportunity which could then lead to paid work.

### Choosing where to apply to

You should consider the issues raised in the CSP's Information paper CPD2 The New Chartered Physiotherapist: Guidelines of good practice for new entrants to physiotherapy<sup>(1)</sup> when selecting a Trust in which you wish to work.

It is not always an advantage to look for a job in a large acute hospital – smaller organisations and community settings can offer a good range of experience and increasingly, therapy managers are being encouraged to combine junior rotational posts across both sectors. Gaining a good range of experience is the most important factor during the first two years of work when you need to consolidate and extend your skills although it is appreciated that some students, particularly those who have worked as assistants prior to graduation, may know which areas they wish to specialise. In these cases it is perfectly acceptable to apply to a particular area such as mental health or learning disability.

Check there are enough senior people to ensure there will be adequate support and teaching in the different clinical areas. Physiotherapy managers have to give patient care top priority but make sure you find out how much in-service education is provided and how it is organised. The clinical rotations are an important element of your personal development. However, remember even static, temporary or part time positions still provide valuable experience if a rotation is not available. Objectives on different blocks and a formal appraisal system will help develop your skills.

Make an informal visit to any potential employers. Talk to as many staff as possible. The CSP steward is a good source of information, or talk to students who have been to there on placement. What about the attitude of the people you would be working with? Are they forward thinking and progressive? What's the atmosphere like? Do people appear friendly and supportive?



Find out about:

- The type of rotations available
- Terms and conditions of employment - for more information on what to look out for in a contract of employment see ERUS Information Paper Newly qualified physiotherapists: a guide to your first employment contract <sup>(2)</sup>
- The staffing and resource levels
- Any specialities in the organisation
- Attitudes and opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD)
- Policies of the employer, for example, equal opportunities
- Medical library facilities
- Whether pre-qualifying students attend clinical placements.
- Attend any Open Days.

Do some research on each organisation you are applying to so that they will be able to see that not only do you want to become a physio, but you really want to become a physio at that particular place.

Also ask managers what they recommend you do in order to make your application as attractive as possible to them. It's also worth checking out the CSP website to get as up to date as possible with current physiotherapy issues as well as issues which are pertinent to that particular organisation. It's also important to keep up to date with government policy on the NHS in the four countries. You will find lots of information on the CSP website [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk) and you can also look on the various health departments' websites in the four countries.

Basically you need to make your application stand out more than the others they receive.

### **Junior rotations**

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy firmly believes that physiotherapists from the beginning of their career can be employed across the whole of the health, social, educational, voluntary and independent sectors given the appropriate support.

## **NHS employers**

The nationally negotiated Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment, including pay, form the basis of the employment contract for NHS staff. However, some NHS employers are offering lesser terms and conditions for new starters. Therefore you should check any job offer carefully (see CSP ERUS briefing paper Newly qualified physiotherapists: a guide to your first employment<sup>(2)</sup> contract for more information on what should be included and what to check before accepting a job offer.).

## **Third Sector Providers**

Current government policy in England is to open up the NHS to greater competition and this includes the introduction of a wider range of third sector providers, which will provide NHS services. This can include organisations such as private sector, voluntary sector, and social enterprise companies. Again, if you are considering applying for a post in such an organisation you should always check any contract you are offered to see if and how the terms, conditions and pay differ from the NHS national agreements.

## **Private practice**

You should ideally have a minimum of two years good all round experience and as much post-qualifying education as possible before you embark on setting yourself up as a self employed private practitioner .

Private practice is generally not an area where newly qualified physiotherapists have worked traditionally. Indeed it is not something that the CSP have previously encouraged for newly qualified physiotherapists due to amongst other things, their lack of clinical experience, the potential lack of senior support or access to a structured CPD program and a potentially limited career development pathway.

However given the current moves to outsourcing in England, it is clear that some people are being left with no choice but to look at starting their careers outside traditional employment within the NHS, which includes private practice.

Given appropriate mentorship, access to immediate help and advice when required, a structured training program including business and clinical training days, peer support and a clear understanding about working within their scope of practice it is something that should not be dismissed out of hand. With the appropriate support it is possible that newly qualified physio's can practice safely within the private sector.



With the backing of senior colleagues willing to mentor and share their knowledge, regular meetings with peers and structured CPD opportunities, there is a possibility of newly qualified physio's developing in the same way that they would in a junior role within the NHS.

The Society does not encourage newly qualified practitioners to move into work settings where there is limited professional support.

If you feel you have reached the right stage in your career and are ready to take on the challenge and responsibility of private practice, you should read CSP information paper PD074 Thinking of Private Practice<sup>(3)</sup> and contact Physio First (formerly known as the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice - OCPPP):

Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice  
Cedar House, Bell Plantation,  
Watling Street,  
Towcester,  
Northants  
NN12 6HN

Telephone: 01327 354 441 Email: [towcester@physiofirst.org.uk](mailto:towcester@physiofirst.org.uk)

Physio First are looking to develop more of their 'starting in private practice' courses from next year. Contact them for more info.

### **Non-NHS sectors**

In recent years there has been a growth in physiotherapy posts in the following sectors: independent hospitals and health care providers, sports clubs, education, Ministry of Defence, and voluntary/charitable organisations. Pay, terms and conditions vary across the sectors. Once again the Employment Relations and Union Services function works hard to ensure members are properly represented in these settings.



## Registration with the HCPC

In order to practise as a physiotherapist in any capacity in the UK, you need to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council. If you have graduated but haven't received your HCPC registration then you can work but only if you are being supervised. Registration must be renewed every two years. Your university should keep a stock of registration forms or you can contact the HCPC directly.

For further information contact:

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)  
Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London, SE11 4BU

Telephone: 0845 3004 472 or 020 7840 9802  
email: [registration@hpc-uk.org](mailto:registration@hpc-uk.org)  
Website: [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)

## Job applications

### **Phoning for a job**

Some advertisements invite you to telephone for more details or for an informal chat about the post. This may be so the employer can ask a few general questions and, on the basis of your responses, tell whether it will be worth your while making a formal application.

Be prepared with pen and paper and your Curriculum Vitae (CV) for reference. Have dates in mind when you could go for an informal interview.

### **Writing a letter**

Letters of application are not normally necessary where an application form has been provided but if you are asked to submit a CV for a job, you should usually attach a letter of application. Letters enquiring about informal visits of confirmation to attend an interview should also be laid out properly and neatly.

1. Your address and phone number in the top left hand corner.
2. The name of the person, their title and address in the top left hand corner.
3. Put the date and any reference number underneath the name and address of the person to whom you are writing.
4. Begin the letter by stating your reason for writing, e.g. to apply for the post of physiotherapist advertised in the November issue of Frontline, then give brief relevant details why you are suited for the post. If you are familiar with the hospital or department, mention why you are especially interested in working for them.
5. Be concise. Your letter should not be more than one side of A4 size paper.
6. Towards the end of your letter express your willingness to come for an interview or informal visit as appropriate.
7. When signing off use the correct method, for example:





Dear Sir or Madam – with Yours Faithfully

Dear Mr Smith – with Yours Sincerely

Print your name legibly under your signature.

### **Compiling a CV**

The way in which information is organised in a CV could mean the difference between rejection and being offered an interview. Research carried out by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development concluded that, on average, an employer takes just four seconds to decide which pile a CV is placed.

It's important to have your CV up to date and accessible, so that you can apply for posts with minimal notice e.g. ½ hour as many jobs disappear within a few hours of being advertised due to high numbers of applicants.

There are many schools of thought as to how a CV should be organised. Much depends on the individual and the job you are seeking, but some of these general points may be useful:

- Use good quality, unlined A4 size paper
- Type the information, spacing sections well, so it doesn't look cluttered
- Check spelling
- Keep your CV to no more than two sides of A4
- Personal details: full name, address, phone number, date of birth and age
- A short personal statement to give the reader a snapshot of who you are and what you are bringing to physiotherapy. This statement can either sit as an introductory paragraph, or can work equally well at the end of the CV – pulling the information presented together as a summary
- Education and training: list in date order the schools and colleges you have attended since age 11. Academic qualifications: list the, examinations passed with their grades
- Clinical education: make a note of how your placements were organised (e.g. 8 x 4 week placements, 6 x 5 week placements + one elective). List the placements you have undertaken, for example respiratory care (Royal Marsden) – and the key achievements/learning outcomes for each one. You should also list, under the title 'Positions held', any positions of responsibility, for example, Prefect, CSP Student Rep, etc.
- Work experience: include details of any vacation, part-time or voluntary work undertaken, briefly mentioning your duties and what the job involved. Link

these where possible to the behaviours/knowledge/skills from the CSP's [Physiotherapy Framework](#) (accessible via the CPD webfolio) Mature students should detail any previous full-time employment

- Interests and achievements: consider what impression it is you want to create before completing this section. List any special skills or hobbies and give details. Include any special courses you have attended
- References: provide names and addresses of two people who are willing to be contacted by the prospective employer with a view to commenting on your experience and personal qualities. At the outset of your professional career most employers will require a reference from your HEI.

In the case of references for a first post you should ask your course leader and another lecturer or possibly someone who has been an employer or involved in outside clinical work. Ask their permission before using their names and try to ensure your chosen referees are available at short notice.

It might also be worth referring to the AHP Employability guide, especially for transferable skills. <http://www.cihe-uk.com/docs/SEP/AlliedHealth.pdf>

### Completing application forms

Many employers will send you a standard job application form and prefer this method to sifting through CVs. Find out whether they will accept a CV as well as the application form, or just the application form alone.

Departments that receive many applications will usually use the application form as the first stage of their selection process and draw up a shortlist of people to invite for interview. It is therefore essential to take time and care when completing an application form. Always read the job description and person specification carefully and make sure you address in your application how you meet all aspects of the person specification – use information you've collected in your degree portfolio and draw on practical examples of these to illustrate how you meet each aspect of the job description/person specification. Where there is competition for posts, anyone not demonstrating how they meet the requirements of the person specification will not be short-listed for interview. Make sure you tailor your **whole** application, including the personal statement, to the specific post for which you are applying – including mentioning the employer to which you are applying. If recruiters have any reason to feel you have just used “cut and paste” they will not feel inclined to short-list you. Equally, take care to ensure you are succinct in your examples – recruiters' time is limited and they will not be inclined to read closely a multiple-page application.



Apply as soon as possible as often employers bring deadlines forward when they have secured a certain number of applicants.

Don't start filling in the form until you've read all the details and any accompanying literature fully. Sometimes a separate set of guidelines will be provided. Study these carefully. Read through all the information and make notes. For example, you might be asked to fill in certain sections in **BLOCK CAPITALS** or use black ink or type.

Before completing the application form, map out your answers to any detailed sections in rough. If possible photocopy the form and practice filling it in to ensure everything fits. Remember presentation is very important so try to type if at all possible. If not, handwrite as clearly as possible. Make plenty of copies of the form beforehand in case you mess up the first few.

Photocopy your completed application form, especially a statement in support of application so you don't forget what you said on the form at interview! Keep this together with the job description and other details about the employer in a safe place in readiness for an interview.

Be precise about your work/placement experience: give clear dates, locations and job summaries.

### **Preparing for Interview**

- Divide your preparation into three main areas:
  1. Identify why you will be able to do the job, with specific reference to the job description and person specification. Think of at least three examples of what you have actually done in relation to each of the areas of the job description and person specification. If you have not had direct experience, think about what you may have done in other areas of your life (domestic, voluntary, student rep roles, etc.), which may have given you transferable skills and experience. Think about your successes, big or small, also the lessons you have learnt from where things haven't gone as well as you had hoped. Draw out information from your portfolio if you have it that can act as supporting evidence for your statements – you may be asked for this at interview.
  2. Research the employer and the physiotherapy department via the Internet, personal contact, the organisation's annual report, etc.

3. If applying to the NHS, get yourself up-to-date with key government policies for the NHS and the contribution that physiotherapists can make, now and in the future. Write yourself notes under these three headings, and then condense your notes into key bullet points that you can go over the night before the interview. The CSP website is an excellent source of information on key developments and policies.

Make sure you are clear about your understanding of clinical governance and its implications for the physiotherapy service. Have a good understanding of the legal responsibilities of the profession and ensure you can demonstrate use of reflective practice.

- Think of answers to the obvious opening questions: Why do you want to work here and/or the NHS? What can you bring to the job? What are your strengths and weaknesses? Do you have any particular development needs?
- Think of a few intelligent questions to ask the interviewers at the end of the interview. Use the supporting statement to address all aspects of the person specification, using a separate heading for each part of the person specification and giving concrete examples to illustrate relevant experience or skills.

Sometimes students claim that they haven't had placements in all core areas and this hinders their job applications. However, now students are getting lots of experience in transferable skills and at interviews they should highlight these rather than just simply core placements. It is important to stress that people can also adapt with theory even without having the practice.

The discussion section of the Newly Qualified network on interactive CSP (available to all CSP members) is a useful source of information about interview experiences, and the types of questions colleagues have been asked.

The CSP remains concerned to ensure that there is adequate planning within the NHS to ensure all new graduates are able to find a job in the NHS. It is worth noting though that this may not mean all new graduates will be able to find a job in the particular hospital or location that they have as their first choice.

## **Attending an interview**

### **Before**

Prepare! Make sure you know how to get there, so that you allow enough time. Aim to arrive slightly before the allocated interview time. Find out as much as you can about the particular Trust and/or department, which will enable you to prepare some questions to ask at the interview.

Plan what to wear. Interviews should normally be treated fairly formally so dress smartly so it looks like you have made an effort but also in something you feel comfortable. Re-read your application form so that you remember what you said and can be prepared if the interviewers ask you any specific questions about your form. They may, for example, ask about any gaps in your career/education history.

If requested, take your portfolio with you, ensuring you've drawn out an evidence profile from it that supports the examples you listed in your application. While the interviewer may not have time to look through your entire portfolio (and shouldn't really for confidentiality reasons), there may be time for them to look at the pre-selected profile of information you've pulled together.

If you have any particular needs for the interview (e.g., if you are visually impaired, hard of hearing, use a wheelchair, etc.), let them know. Interview panels should provide support/access for candidates where required.

Drink plenty of water immediately before the interview, but not hot drinks, as they tend to dry the throat.

### **During**

Establish rapport: smile, relax, and address interviewers by name. A panel of at least two people normally conducts interviews.

Make eye contact with the interview panel, especially the person asking the question, but don't hold it long so that the person is forced to look away to break the contact.

Try not to fiddle with pens, your hands, etc., or shift around in your chair too much as this is distracting to interviewers.

Interviewers will normally write notes during the interview – don't be put off by this, it is so that they have a record of the interview to refer to at the end – it is not a sign that you have said anything particularly good or bad!



Good interviewers will ask open questions, i.e., questions that don't elicit a one-word answer.

They tend to begin with "How..", "Tell me about...", "What...", "Why....", etc.

Take time to think about the question you have been asked – it's better to do this than to rush in and realise afterwards that you could have given a better response.

If your mind goes blank in response to a particular question, be honest about this and ask if you can return to the subject later in the interview.

Show humour during the interview, but don't overdo it.

Speak clearly, and try not to rush. Be alert to verbal/non-verbal prompts from the panel, which may indicate that you need to either give more information, or have already given enough. Don't talk too much! If the panel do want you to expand further they will use prompts, asking open, probing questions.

Concentrate on your achievements, experience and strengths. Give examples in your answers wherever you can. If you are asked about your weaknesses, try to turn this into a strength, e.g., "I can sometimes be overly critical of myself if I make a mistake – but I'm conscious of this, and on the positive side it means I always work to as high a standard as possible."

Use every opportunity to show you are interested in this particular job/Trust.

Remember, a good panel will do their best to put you at your ease to ensure you present yourself as well as possible. They want to find the best candidate for the job, so there should be no trick questions or attempts to make things difficult for you. Try to relax!

### **At the end**

The panel may ask you if you have any questions for them. Have one or two prepared – about the job or place of work – as this demonstrates your interest in the post. But there is unlikely to be time for a long list of questions. This could also be an opportunity for you to tell the panel anything important which you think you have missed or didn't have an opportunity to say during their questions.

You could also highlight your evidence profile or portfolio if they haven't already asked to look at it.

The panel will normally tell you when you are likely to be given the result. If they don't, it is perfectly acceptable to ask.

### **After**

Analyse what you did well.

Note down anything you were not prepared for, and think about how you might answer differently in the future.

If you aren't successful, ask for feedback.

### **Group interviews**

These are becoming increasingly common and can take on many forms. Employers are usually very clear about the criteria they are looking for candidates to demonstrate and they structure a variety of tasks to bring out these features.

Employers do not necessarily select the most forthcoming candidates but those who contribute in a considered and inclusive way within the group. It's a good idea to voice your opinion concisely and reasoned. Avoid repeating yourself. Let others offer their opinion, and state whether you agree or disagree and why. Then expand on their answers. If you make a point that someone else has raised refer to their name. Don't be overpowering, encourage the quieter members to give their opinion. Try to get the group to summarise the key points after the discussion, it makes you look confident and organised. If someone has been interrupted, after the interrupter has finished, perhaps ask them what they were going to say. Try not to dominate as what they are also looking at is interaction and team work and not just the content. Also don't forget to think before you speak and do think how what you say could be perceived.

Do encourage other people if they aren't being involved but don't single people out. If you find one person is doing all the talking ask if anyone else has anything to add. This again shows consideration and teamwork.

Importantly be yourself, the observers want to see what kind of person you are and how you would fit into the team dynamics. They are basically looking to assess your reasoning skills, communication skills and how you interact with each other.

## Employment Options Abroad for New Graduates

If that first job is proving elusive, and you are prepared to look further than the UK, there are some opportunities out there for the resourceful, but first things first. Wherever you decide to look for work you must ensure that you are registered in the UK with the Health and Care Professions Council, as a licence to practise in your own country is the basis for application for recognition in another. Even in host countries where registration does not operate, your UK registration is an assurance of quality.

Make sure you document and reflect on your learning by using the CSP's ePortfolio electronic CPD system, so you can provide the HCPC with evidence of your ongoing learning when renewal comes up and also show a prospective UK employer how your overseas experience can benefit your UK practice. Experience abroad, especially in less well-resourced areas of the world, will enhance your personal development in terms of resourcefulness, flexibility and cultural awareness. There are resources in the CPD webfolio to help you critically evaluate the behaviours/knowledge/skills gained from your overseas experience, and to demonstrate how they transfer into UK practice. Joining the CSP as a full practising member will cover you for professional indemnity for temporary work abroad, excluding Australia, Canada and the USA.

Check out the registration requirements in your host country with the agency you are applying to and call the Enquiry Handling Unit for country specific information available from the CSP. This includes the contact details for the registration authority, the professional body and other physiotherapists who have worked abroad. It is also a good idea to visit the website of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy [www.wcpt.org](http://www.wcpt.org) and check on country contact details. The scope of physiotherapy practice may differ, especially in terms of professional autonomy and relations with the medical profession, so make sure you practice within the law of the country otherwise you will invalidate your CSP professional indemnity and break the CSP's (2012) Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour <sup>(4)</sup>.

There are several things to think about when considering your destination. For ease of reference the CSP divides the world into three: the 'big five' countries (USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa), the countries of the European Economic Area and the rest of the world.

Singapore is another country which might be interesting for physiotherapists who plan to work abroad. As English is one of the five recognised official languages,





communication shouldn't be too difficult. They are looking for overseas physiotherapists to increase physiotherapy provision in the country. More information about working in Singapore can be found on the CSP website.

All the 'big 5' countries, except New Zealand, require you to pass a licensing exam which can be expensive and time consuming. After passing the exam South Africa requires you to work for two years under supervision in the public sector but jobs are rarely available for foreigners and New Zealand requires a least a year of post-qualifying experience. The New Zealand Registration Board have recently complained to the CSP that some UK newly qualified physiotherapists have been purporting to have quite extensive experience as a physiotherapist although they have only been qualified a few months, and are using experience gained before they gained their HCPC registration. It is very important that you demonstrate your professionalism and do not give anyone the impression you are using the protected title "physiotherapist" without entitlement. Whilst we have explained that these new graduates are trying to imply they have the experience that someone with one year's post-qualifying experience based on additional work they did as a student under the supervision of a qualified physiotherapist, it is important to ensure you are not implying you have been practising physiotherapy "illegally", but under supervision as a student physiotherapist.

If you have excellent language skills you might consider working in a country of the European Economic Area (EEA). Under EU law the regulatory authority in your host country cannot test language competence, but you are obliged to demonstrate that you are safe to practice. Regulatory authorities (like the HCPC in the UK) may require evidence that you have followed particular courses and managers offering an interview will need to be convinced. For general information on regulation and conditions of employment in the EEA visit <http://www.physio-europe.org> and <http://www.europa.eu.int/eures>

Working in a less well-resourced part of the world offers adventure, the chance to make a contribution to development projects, experience different ways of working and learn from local colleagues about less familiar conditions such as the effects of cerebral malaria, leprosy or polio. Health beliefs and practices differ all over the world and are shaped by politics, the socio-economic situation, religion and other aspects of culture. The history and standing of the profession is another important factor. Most development organisations like VSO pay a basic living allowance but require a minimum of 2-5 years experience.



Other organisations do recruit short-term volunteers but you may have to raise around £1500- £2,000 to go. If you are selling a good cause to your family and friends, this may not too difficult to achieve but volunteering does depend on personal circumstances. If you fancy a sports clinic in Ghana or rehabilitation in Nepal check out these organisations with short-term volunteer opportunities for new graduates and others:

<http://www.teaching-abroad.co.uk>

<http://www.challengesworldwide.com>

A number of faith based organisations offer short-term volunteer placements. See <http://www.cabroad.org.uk>.

A list of development agencies can be found in the CSP's publication Working as a volunteer abroad <sup>(5)</sup>

For questions about job opportunities abroad you can use the International Work and Study Discussion forum on the WCPT website [www.wcpt.org](http://www.wcpt.org)

Don't forget to share your success with other job hunters, for example on the iCSP ADAPT network which is the CSP's network for physiotherapists interested in international work and development (<http://adapt.csp.org.uk/>)

The Society cannot endorse any organisation so make sure you have all the information you need before you set off.

For more information please feel free to contact the CSP's International Development Adviser, Birgit Mueller Winkler [muellerwinklerb@csp.org.uk](mailto:muellerwinklerb@csp.org.uk)

### HCPC return to practice requirements and its impact on physiotherapy graduates not currently employed/working as physiotherapists

#### **Protection of Title:**

The law protects the title 'physiotherapist', and in order to use this title you MUST be registered with the HCPC. If you do not register, or re-register, with the HCPC you cannot call yourself a 'physiotherapist.' If you are not on the HCPC register you can call yourself a 'former physiotherapist' if this is relevant to your situation. Offences in relation to protected titles require an **intention-to deceive** and so the clear use of an unambiguous prefix to a protected title is acceptable.



## **What are the HCPC return to practice requirements?**

For up to date information go to the following link:

[http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001364returning\\_to\\_practice.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001364returning_to_practice.pdf)

## **CSP expectations**

Members of the CSP are expected, to only practise those skills in which they are **educated, trained and competent**. Therefore, even if an individual is not officially required to undertake a HCPC return to practice period of re-orientation, due to having been out of practice for less than two years, or having done a brief period of practice during a two year registration cycle, an individual should still ensure they sufficiently update knowledge and skills prior to, or at the start of, any new employment to ensure competence and fitness to practise.

## Summary

The band 5 job situation has improved a lot over the last few years. However if you don't secure the first job you apply for keep persisting and remain in contact with the employers you have contacted for applications. It may not be wise to try and contact them every week. However once a month you could send them a brief e-mail saying hello and what you've been doing to keep up your skills etc.

Your job hunt begins in earnest when you have your examination results, but in the meantime, as well as reading this guidance, talk to your lecturer or personal tutor. They may well have sound advice and suggestions to help you in your search.

The CSP's focus has been, and will continue to be, on ensuring there are sufficient suitable job opportunities for new graduates.

## Relevant Publications

All the CSP factsheets and briefing papers below are available via the CSP website

- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Newly qualified physiotherapists: a guide to your first employment contract. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2014
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Pay scales, high cost supplements and on-call allowances in the NHS. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2015

- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Overtime, unsocial hours and emergency duty. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2010
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Maternity leave and pay: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2012
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Sickness payments: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2013
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Working as a volunteer abroad: a resource list of development agencies: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2014
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Scope of practice <http://www.csp.org.uk/professional-union/professionalism/csps-approach-professionalism/scope-practice> The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2015

Remember to visit the CPD webfolio for information, advice, activities and ideas to help you maintain and develop the behaviours/knowledge/skills for your future physiotherapy practice.

## References

1. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. The new chartered physiotherapist : guidelines of good practice for new entrants to physiotherapy. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2002.
2. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Newly qualified physiotherapists : a guide to your first employment contract. IP69. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2014.
3. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Thinking of Private Practice? A guide for physiotherapists. PD074. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2011. <http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/thinking-private-practice>
4. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour. London: The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; 2011.



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5. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Working as a volunteer abroad. 2014.

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