

OCCUPATIONAL TRANSITION EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

- International students are a growing population in OT education globally
- Transitioning to study abroad involves major occupational disruption and change
- These academic, social, cultural and practical transitions are not only personal experiences but occupation justice issues, shaped by access to resources, support and meaningful participation.

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THE STUDY

Qualitative phenomenological study at a single UK university.

Participants: 9 international OT students

Data collection: Semi structured online interviews

Analysis: Thematic analysis

Key findings



- Significant **academic, cultural, and emotional challenges**
- Variable **institutional** and **peer support**
- Adaptation through **social connection** and **meaningful occupations**

Key Themes:

1. "It was difficult" – Academic, cultural and emotional challenges
2. "I pretty much felt alone" – Limited institutional and peer support
3. "Adaptation is learning the lifestyle" – Coping through new and meaningful occupations

IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- Early, structured transition support for international OT students
- Peer mentoring and cohort connection across year groups
- Recognition of occupational transition as part of professional formation
- Educator awareness of cultural and occupational needs
- Supporting occupation supports student success

Implications for OT Education



- Structured, early transition **support**



- Peer **mentoring** across **cohorts**



- Acknowledging **occupational disruption** and **adaptation** in curricula

Aligned with WFOT guidance on inclusive, culturally responsive education