

Stepping Into Podiatry

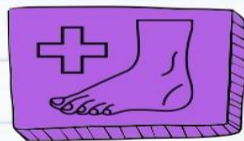


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Stepping into **PODIATRY**



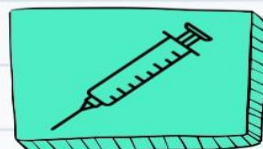
**LEVEL 3
PODIATRY ASSISTANT**

**LEVEL 3/4
FOOT HEALTH
PRACTITIONER**



**LEVEL 5
ASSISTANT
PRACTITIONER**

**LEVEL 6
PODIATRIST BSC**



**LEVEL 7
PODIATRIST (PRE-
REGISTRATION) MSC**

Welcome to our podiatry workforce guide! Discover more about each of the roles listed above and learn how to enter and advance within this rewarding profession. Whether you're just starting your journey or aiming for the top, this guide will help you find out where to start and how to take those crucial first steps.

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Level 3 Podiatry Assistant

What is a level 3 Podiatry Assistant?

Podiatry Assistants, also known as Foot / Podiatry Care Assistants, Level 3 Assistant Practitioners, or Podiatry Support Workers – depending on employer - are skilled healthcare workers who provide crucial clinical support to Podiatrists and are important members of the non-registered podiatry workforce. See [here](#) for more information.

What responsibilities / scope of practice would I have in this role?

In this role, responsibilities may include assisting with patient assessments, updating records, and providing direct patient care, under the supervision of a [HCPC](#) registered Podiatrist. More information can be found on the [Royal Collage of Podiatry](#) website or under the Foot / Podiatry Care Assistant section of the [Standards for the Foot Health Workforce](#) document.

What qualifications do I need to become a Podiatry Assistant?

For a level 3 apprenticeship, ideally you would hold Maths and English GCSE grades 9-4 (A*- C) or equivalent, however, entry criteria may vary locally. A full list of equivalent qualifications can be found [here](#). Completing an NHS [Senior Healthcare Support Worker apprenticeship](#) or the Royal Collage of Podiatry level 3 [Assistant Practitioner training programme](#) are two, recognised, ways to qualify as a Podiatry Assistant.

How long does it take to qualify as a Podiatry Assistant?

Both the Senior Healthcare Support Worker apprenticeship and the Royal Collage of Podiatry Assistant Practitioner training programme will take up to 2 years to complete. It is important to note, however, all applicants must be employed in a suitable health or social care setting and have employer support before they can start this course.

How much do Podiatry Assistants earn and how can I progress from this role?

Within the NHS, Level 3 Podiatry Assistants sit within the Agenda for Change (AfC) band 2/3. See [here](#) for a breakdown of the pay bands and their potential salary. Once qualified, anyone wishing to progress would be eligible to apply for a level 5 Assistant Practitioner apprenticeship. See level 5 qualification page (page 7) for more information.

Level 3/4 Foot Health Practitioner

What is a Foot Health Practitioner?

Foot Health Practitioners are not typically employed within the NHS; however, important steps are being taken to enable this to happen through a professional accreditation pathway. See below for more details. Up to this point, Foot Health Practitioners have solely worked within the private sector, either as autonomous practitioners, working within their own scope of practice, or in private podiatry clinics under the supervision of a [HCPC](#) registered Podiatrist.

What responsibilities / scope of practice would I have in this role?

Foot Health Practitioners focus on treating minor foot and nail conditions of the healthy population. The [Standards for the Foot Health Workforce](#) document provides more information about the scope of practice for this role (procedures, actions, and processes that practitioners are permitted to undertake within their level of training and competence).

What qualifications do I need to become a Foot Health Practitioner?

There are many providers offering Foot Health Practitioner training programmes - which are paid for by the student – and each will have their own entry requirements. However, not all courses will provide you with a Level 4 qualification, and most do not offer academic credits to enable onward access to higher education, therefore, a careful selection of the most appropriate course is important.

How long does it take to qualify as a Foot Health Practitioner?

Most Foot Health Practitioner courses are completed within 12 to 18 months. This will usually consist of a series of online training modules followed by a 2-week, in person, practical training element. To facilitate Foot Health Practitioners joining the NHS, Royal Collage of Podiatry, in conjunction with NHS England, have developed a professional [accreditation pathway](#) to encourage them to transfer their wealth of skill and experience into the NHS, and ultimately progress within the podiatry workforce.

How much do Foot Health Practitioners earn and how can I progress from this role?

Within the NHS, pay would align with Agenda for Change (AfC) bands 2 / 3. However, working privately, they would most likely be self-employed, meaning, income would be determined by own service prices and workload. Alternatively, Following the professional accreditation pathway, Foot Health Practitioners can enter the NHS Podiatry workforce, where progression to further education would be possible and encouraged.

Level 5 Assistant Practitioner

What is a Level 5 Assistant Practitioner?

Assistant Practitioners also work under the supervision of a Podiatrist, however, with the additional experience and skills acquired through the Level 5 apprenticeship, they may work alone and perform tasks independently: seeking guidance when appropriate. Assistant Practitioners can work in hospitals, community clinics, or homes. See [here](#) for more details about this role.

What responsibilities / scope of practice would I have in this role?

Assistant Practitioners can perform tasks such as, but not limited to, wound re-dressings, assisting with nail surgery, and patient assessments - following management plans set out by a Podiatrist. Further details about Level 5 Assistant Practitioners scope of practice can be found [here](#), under the section dedicated to Assistant Practitioners.

What qualifications do I need to become an Assistant Practitioner?

To be considered for a level 5 Assistant Practitioner apprenticeship, all applicants must be employed in a suitable health or social care setting and have employer support before they can start this course. Necessary qualifications include a Senior Healthcare Support Worker qualification (see page 4 - Podiatry Assistant), or [equivalent qualifications](#). See [here](#) for more information about the role of Assistant Practitioner.

How long does it take to qualify as an Assistant Practitioner?

A level 5 apprenticeship is expected to take between 18 and 24 months to complete.

How much do Assistant Practitioners earn and how can I progress from this role?

Within the NHS, Level 5 Assistant Practitioners sit within the Agenda for Change (AfC) band 4. See [here](#) for a breakdown of the pay bands and potential salary. Anyone wishing to progress after level 5 could move on to the level 6 Podiatry degree apprenticeship or apply to university and complete a Bachelor of Science degree, via the traditional pathway.

Level 6 Podiatrist BSc

What is a Podiatrist?

BSc Podiatrists are highly trained autonomous practitioners who have completed a Bachelor of Science degree in podiatry. The term Podiatrist is legally protected and to use this title you must be registered with the [HCPC](#). They are trained to assess, diagnose, and treat complex conditions affecting the feet and lower limbs. See [here](#) for more information about Podiatrists.

What responsibilities / scope of practice would I have in this role?

Responsibilities include assessing, diagnosing, and treating foot and lower limb conditions, providing tailored foot care, conducting specialised assessments and treatments, prescribing orthoses, and promoting overall foot health, mobility, and well-being through targeted patient education. See [here](#) to find out more about a Podiatrist's scope of practice.

What qualifications do I need to become a Podiatrist?

The most popular way into podiatry is through an approved Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in podiatry. See [here](#) for a full list of university providers. Alternatively, an increasing number of level 6 degree apprenticeships are now becoming available.

How long does it take to qualify as a Podiatrist?

In the UK, it usually takes 3 years full time or four years part-time to complete an undergraduate Bachelor of Science in podiatry. [Level 6 degree apprenticeships](#) may take up to 4 years to complete, however, it is recommended that you check individual apprenticeship / university course lengths with your chosen provider to confirm this. Once you have successfully completed your degree you would be required to register with the HCPC before you can start practising.

How much do Podiatrists earn and how can I progress from this role?

Newly qualified podiatrists may start their journey on Agenda for Change (AfC) band 5 but with appropriate further qualifications and experience, this can rise to band 9. See [here](#) for a breakdown of the pay bands and potential salary. Podiatrists can work towards specialising in any area that inspires or motivates them. See [here](#) for more information about this rewarding career.

Level 7 Podiatrist (Pre-Registration) MSc

What is a Podiatrist (Pre-Registration) MSc?

Like level 6, MSc Podiatrists are highly trained autonomous practitioners who have completed a Master of Science degree in podiatry. The difference between the two is that MSc's will have already completed training equivalent to level 6. The term Podiatrist is legally protected and to use this title you must be registered with the [HCPC](#). They are trained to assess, diagnose, and treat complex conditions affecting the feet and lower limbs. See [here](#) for more information about Podiatrists.

What responsibilities / scope of practice would I have in this role?

Responsibilities include assessing, diagnosing, and treating foot and lower limb conditions, providing tailored foot care, conducting specialised assessments and treatments, prescribing orthoses, and promoting overall foot health, mobility, and well-being through targeted patient education. See [here](#) to find out more about a Podiatrist's scope of practice.

What qualifications do I need to become a Podiatrist (Pre-Registration) MSc?

To be considered for a Master of Science (MSc) pre-registration degree in podiatry, candidates will need to have completed a previous undergraduate degree or level 6 apprenticeship in a similar field. See [here](#) for a list of Podiatry MSc courses and providers and links to their individual entry requirements.

How long does it take to qualify as a Podiatrist (Pre-Registration) MSc?

It usually takes 2 years, full-time, to complete a MSc podiatry degree but some universities offer a 3 year part-time course. It is recommended that you check individual course lengths with the university before applying. You can find out more for each university via the link in the answer above. Once qualified, it is necessary to register with the HCPC before they can start practising.

How much do Podiatrists (Pre-Registration) MSc earn and how can I progress from this role?

Newly qualified Podiatrists typically begin their journey at Agenda for Change (AfC) band 5. However, you may be able to accelerate your career in podiatry if your first degree, and previous experience, provided you with advanced transferrable skills. See [here](#) for a breakdown of the pay bands and potential salary. Podiatrists can work towards specialising in any area that inspires or motivates them. Find out more about this rewarding career [here](#).