

Research Priority Grant 2024

Top tips and FAQs

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists Research Foundation has offered a range of research grants annually since 2007. Over the years, 204 proposals have been submitted and 64 grants have been awarded. Each year, the Research Foundation Advisory Group highlights points for general feedback to applicants. We have developed these points into a list of 'top tips' and FAQs which we hope will be helpful as you prepare your application.

Top Tips

- Consider whether the size of your proposed project is appropriate for the funding available; pay close attention to all financial elements.
- Consider whether your proposal represents good value for money.
- Be realistic about what can be achieved, and not too ambitious. Build on your existing research strengths.
- Consider how applicable your proposed project is to occupational therapy and what the benefit will be to the profession. Describe how your proposal addresses one or more of the Top 10 research priorities for occupational therapy in the UK (<https://www.rcot.co.uk/top-10>).
- Ensure the proposal describes how the project will build the research capacity and capability of occupational therapy researchers, beyond the principal investigator.
- Make it explicit within your proposal what you are intending to do and how you will do it. Keep it simple and focused – include sufficient detail and ensure it is clearly explained.
- Where your application relates to an activity nested within a larger project, you must be able to clearly identify the discrete element that will be supported by the RCOT Research Foundation grant.
- Ensure that your proposal is methodologically sound and include all aspects of the method within your application. Refer to the theoretical framework underpinning your methodology as well as the method itself. Include theoretical framework(s) from other countries and cultures, where appropriate.
- Think broadly about the potential for relevant partnerships, given the scope of occupational therapy interests.
- Ensure relevant support or agreements are in place in principle to ensure the fundamental viability of the project.
- Consider inclusion of people with lived experience as co-applicants. Be clear within your proposal where involvement with people with lived experience and/or their families or carers have had input into the research design and how they will be involved in the research. Ensure

you are compensating people with lived experience at the [NIHR recommended rates](#). State how you will ensure a diversity of perspectives are included.

- Think about the participant population and how you can ensure diverse populations are included.
- Adhere to the application form completion criteria, particularly word limits and font size. Don't append additional documents as these will not be read. All essential facts should be included within the proposal form.
- Allow time to have your proposal peer reviewed before submission.
- Be mindful of the submission criteria and deadline and allow sufficient time for obtaining signatures of any co-applicants, calculation of financial costings and any institutional sign off required.
- Understand the expected deliverables required if your proposal is successful.
- The ability to begin work promptly is an advantage, but you will need to propose a realistic start date. In determining the proposed project start date, factor in sufficient time for grant contract negotiation and sign off. This could take two to three months following confirmation of a successful outcome.

FAQs

Q: Will the RCOT Research Foundation support research activities based outside the UK?

A: Yes, the RCOT Research Foundation welcomes and has funded projects with an international collaboration, but proposals must be aligned to one or more of the Top 10 priorities for occupational therapy in the UK, reflect UK local and national policy and offer outcomes to benefit UK practice and service delivery, and people accessing those services.

Q: I am not an occupational therapist but would like to apply for a Research Priority Grant with occupational therapists as co-applicants. Is this possible?

A: Under the current criteria for the Research Priority Grant, the principal investigator must be a professional member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists. Involvement of non-occupational therapist collaborators in project submissions is welcomed.

Q: Should I consider the implications of the COVID pandemic when submitting my application?

A: We're still encouraging applicants to continue to think creatively and consider new ways of working and how people are adapting their research and methods after the impact of the COVID pandemic. If you are proposing online or virtual engagement with participants, you should show that you have considered aspects of digital poverty and equitable access. If you are proposing in-person data collection, it is worth having some flexibility and contingency planning.

Q: What funding aspects can be included within my costings for a proposed Research Priority Grant?

A: We expect the funding section of the application form to include actual costs related to undertaking the project – for example, staff time costs (salary/grade), administrative costs and materials. Doctoral students may apply for support towards future course fees. It should be noted that as a registered charity we do not expect to fund university overheads. The RCOT Research Foundation Advisory Group will discuss whether the costs proposed seem reasonable for the work planned.

Q: Are the fees for doctoral study an eligible cost in a Research Priority Grant?

A: Yes – future doctoral fees can be included for a BAOT co-applicant or to provide a contribution towards a doctoral studentship.

Q: Should inflation be included in the costs for a RCOT Research Foundation grant? If so, at what rate?

A: Yes – inflation should be accounted for at your institution's standard rate.

Q: Would attendance at a conference be covered by a RCOT Research Foundation grant?

A: Yes - up to an overall maximum of £2K for a Research Priority Grant.

Q: What do you mean by peer review?

A: By peer review we mean that someone outside of the research team, but with research experience, has reviewed your application prior to its submission.

Q: Can I nominate external reviewers from within my institution?

A: Yes – but you mustn't nominate anyone from your department or whose involvement in the review process would be a conflict of interest. Additionally, you shouldn't nominate someone who is an employee of RCOT or someone you have conducted research with recently. Ideally, your reviewer would have a doctorate or equivalent practice experience. Please ask for permission from those you nominate as external reviewers before putting their names forward.

Further help and advice

If you would like to discuss your project proposal, particularly if you are unsure if it is the right time to submit a grant application or if you have a question about the application process, please contact Angie Thompson, RCOT R&D Officer, in the first instance at: angie.thompson@rcot.co.uk or telephone: 020 3141 4615.

Additionally, Dr Phillip Whitehead, previous Research Foundation grant holder and NIHR panel member, has created a helpful webinar providing information on writing good grant proposals. You can find it on our [website](#), under the heading 'Helpful webinar'.

Finally

You can find other funding opportunities through the R&D Bulletin and discuss research opportunities and issues with other RCOT members via Research Connect, a closed LinkedIn group. You can find out how to access both here: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/research-and-development#research-networking>.

