

Invitation to Tender

Re-imagining quality assurance for pre-registration education – Phase 1, workstream 1

Review of the Learning and development standards and incorporation of early career standards

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1. Summary

This Invitation to Tender ('ITT' or 'Tender') relates to the procurement of the **Re-imagining quality assurance for pre-registration education – Phase 1, workstream 1: Review of the Learning and development standards and incorporation of early career standards** project. The evaluation will assess the capability, experience and accreditation of the bidders.

2. Introduction to RCOT

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists has championed the profession and the people behind it for over 90 years; and today, we are thriving with over 36,000 members.

We have a vision, that **people everywhere value the life-changing power of occupational therapy**. To achieve it, we're raising the profile of occupational therapy, attracting more people to the profession, and helping everyone who needs it get the life-changing therapy they need.

We're the powerful advocate and high-profile champion that the UK's occupational therapists deserve. Proudly inclusive, we also welcome and support new generations of occupational therapists and are working to create a profession that reflects the diverse society we work with.

This includes giving members opportunities to learn, research, teach, practice, and continuously improve their knowledge and skills. We also work with healthcare commissioners, political leaders, and others to position occupational therapy as a solution for health and social care.

3. Background

This ITT is part of a project which will deliver our revised and expanded Learning and development standards for pre-registration and early careers education and re-imagining how we quality assure these Standards.

Our overarching vision for this project is: A re-imagined pre-registration quality assurance service supporting the delivery of our Workforce Strategy through the provision of a commercially viable quality assurance offer including expanded Learning and development standards for pre-registration education and early career occupational therapists.

Confidence in the quality education of occupational therapists is essential to the future of the profession. As the professional body for occupational therapy in the UK, RCOT determine the current and future needs of the profession and reflect these in the Learning and development standards for pre-registration education. The Standards are a cornerstone document to be viewed alongside our professional standards.

The Standards describe the expectations of the profession that education providers must meet when delivering an occupational therapy pre-registration programme in the United Kingdom (UK). They are reviewed every five years, with the last review and publication being completed in 2019.

RCOT manages an Accreditation Process, using these Standards to assess occupational therapy pre-registration programmes and ensure quality in their design and delivery. There has been considerable growth in pre-registration education in recent years in both the number of providers and the number and range of programmes. Our current quality assurance mechanisms need a new approach to ensure continued stakeholder confidence in the delivery of effective pre-registration education supporting quality early career occupational therapists.

Project description

This project will re-imagine the way we assure the quality of occupational therapy pre-registration education and early career support taking the approach of establishing a clear quality assurance

system.

There will be two workstreams to the project which are distinctly separate in their consideration and inextricably linked in their delivery:

Workstream 1 review of the Learning and development standards and incorporation of early career standards

Workstream 2 re-imagining the quality assurance approach (phase 1)

This ITT is for Workstream 1.

4. What we are looking for

This tender aims to procure an occupational therapist with expertise in occupational therapy pre-registration education to lead the review of the Learning and development standards and incorporation of early career standards.

The project objectives for Workstream 1 are:

- Write, publish and support the embedding of RCOT’s 2025 Learning and development standards for pre-registration education and early career support and associated quality assurance processes.
- Work with stakeholders at all stages of the process to ensure a revised set of Standards.
- Within the standards be bold in consideration of key topics, recognising the changing world, technology and practice and learning from 2019 standards, in line with RCOT’s Workforce Strategy, Equity, diversity and belonging Strategy and service demographic need in 2035.

A broad timeline has been prepared as follows:

Task	Completion
Recruit Project Lead	June 2024
Establish project advisory group	July 2024
Literature review	November 2024
Stakeholder engagement	December 2024
Draft Standards prepared	May 2025
Consultation on draft Standards	September 2025
Final version prepared	January 2026
Publication of revised Standards	April 2026

Clear project plans will be used to manage the scope, time, quality and resource of the commission. Collaboratively work with the Project manager, Workstream 2 Project lead, Project oversight group (internal) and Expert advisory group (external) and relevant teams within RCOT to ensure delivery.

4.1 In scope

- Inclusion of early career Standards

4.2 Out of scope

- Review of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) requirement of a minimum of 1000 hours practice-based learning
- Individual student membership offer

5. Building a strategic partnership

Working strategically internally as well as working externally to consult with key stakeholders.

6. Project timing and delivery

We are looking for an individual with the experience, skills, knowledge, and capacity to deliver the project identified in the brief above.

This commission is expected to be delivered by 31 March 2026

7. Project cost

The overall budget for the tender is: £38,600.

This is allocated as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| • June 2023 - September 2024 | £8,400 |
| • October 2024 - September 2025 | £21,400 |
| • October 2025 - April 2026 | £8,800 |

Further information can be provided on request.

8. Equity, diversity and belonging

As a membership organisation, a professional body, and an employer, RCOT is committed to leading innovative change to promote equity and social justice and build a sense of belonging for all our staff, members, and the populations we serve. Our ambition is to have a diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. We don't only embrace diversity, we celebrate it, nurture it and support our staff in realising their true potential. We are passionate about creating an environment free from discrimination and harassment where people can be their authentic self and recognise that each of us is unique. Therefore, our definition of diversity goes beyond those defined in equality legislation and we will afford the same standards and principles to those with lived experiences.

9. How and when to submit a tender

Tenderers should submit a proposal setting out their approach to deliver this project They should include the name and CV of the consultant who would work on the assignment. They should also include a detailed breakdown of pricing.

Tenders should be submitted to Carolyn Hay, Head of Education: carolyn.hay@rcot.co.uk by **noon, Friday 17 May 2024.**

The procurement is intended to follow the timeline below; however, tenderers should note the dates are provided for indicative purposes only and may be subject to change.

Procurement steps	Duration (approx.)	Start date	End date
ITT Submission and clarifications	One month	3 April 2024	Noon, 17 May 2024
RCOT evaluation and interview assessment	15 days	17 May 2024	31 May 2024
Outcome notification to contracts	1 day		3 June 2024
Completion of approved supplier forms	10 days		21 June 2024
Contract commencement date			1 July 2024

10. Evaluation criteria

10.1 Validity and completeness

When tenders have been received, the tenders will be checked to ensure that they are valid and complete. Submissions that are found to be incomplete or invalid will be eliminated except, at our sole discretion, or in the case of minor omissions that can be rectified easily.

If we need to clarify any of these points, questions will be submitted in writing to the named point of contact provided within the tender submission. During the evaluation period, we reserve the right to seek clarification in writing or by means of a clarification meeting from any tenderers.

10.2 Evaluation criteria

We reserve the right to accept the whole or any part of any tender submitted. We also reserve the right to award this contract to more than one consultancy if deemed necessary.

The award will be to the most economically advantageous tenderer taking into consideration the following award criteria and which are set out in more detail below:

Evaluation criteria	Weighted score
A – Quality	90%
B – Price	10%
Total weighted score	100%

The award criteria have been divided into the following sub-criteria.

Criteria	Description	Weighted score
A	Proposed approach to delivering the project	35%
	Ability to build and maintain effective relationships	20%
	Experience and ability to deliver the project	20%
	Innovation	10%

	Timescales	5%
B	Price	10%
Total weighted score		100%

11. What happens next for the successful bidder

The decision to award will be subject to our internal approval process. Once we have notified the successful bidder, we will need to complete various supplier checks. If we are satisfied that the successful bidder meets our supplier standards, we will be able to award a contract.

12. Contract award

The award of any contract will be made strictly and solely on responses to the information requested, and in the format required, as detailed in this ITT. The successful bidder will receive a formal acknowledgement and payment details will be set up on our system.