Advancing the Evidence Grant 2026

Top tips and FAQs

The RCOT Research and Innovation Fund has offered a range of research grants annually since 2007. Over the years, 229 proposals have been submitted and 72 grants have been awarded. Each year, the Research and Innovation Fund Panel highlights points for general feedback to applicants. We've developed these points into a list of ‘top tips’ and FAQs which we hope will be helpful as you prepare your application.

**Top Tips**

* Describe how your proposal addresses one or more of the [Top 10 research priorities](https://www.rcot.co.uk/top-10) for occupational therapy in the UK.
* 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.
* Ensure your 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 intend to do and how you’ll do it. Keep it simple, focused and include sufficient detail.
* Think about the participant population and how you’ll include diverse populations.
* Consider inclusion of people with lived experience as co-applicants. Be clear within your proposal where people with lived experience and/or their families or carers have input into the research design and how they’ll be involved in the research. Ensure you are compensating people with lived experience at the [NIHR benchmark rates](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392#payment-rates). State how you’ll ensure a diversity of perspectives are included.
* Ensure relevant support or agreements are in place in principle to ensure the viability of the project.
* 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 required deliverables if your proposal is successful.
* Always have your application peer reviewed before submitting.

**FAQs**

**Q: Will the RCOT Research and Innovation Fund support research activities based outside the UK?**

A: Yes, the RCOT Research and Innovation Fund 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 research 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 an Advancing the Evidence Grant with occupational therapists as co-applicants. Is this possible?

A: Under the current criteria for the Advancing the Evidence Grant, the principal investigator must be a professional member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists. We do, however, welcome the involvement of non-occupational therapist collaborators in project submissions.

**Q:**  **Should I consider the implications of the COVID pandemic in 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 considering flexibility and contingency planning.

**Q: What funding aspects can be included within my costings for a proposed Advancing the Evidence 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, administrative costs and materials. You can also include costs for open access publishing. It should be noted that as a registered charity we don’t expect to fund university overheads. The Research and Innovation Fund Panel will discuss whether the costs proposed seem reasonable for the work planned.

**Q: Are the fees for doctoral study an eligible cost in an Advancing the Evidence 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 an RCOT Research and Innovation Fund 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 and Innovation Fund grant?**

A: Yes - up to an overall maximum of £2k for an Advancing the Evidence Grant.

**Further help and advice**

If you’d like to discuss your project proposal, particularly if you have a question about the application process, please contact Angie Thompson, RCOT Research and Development Officer, in the first instance at: [angie.thompson@rcot.co.uk](mailto:angie.thompson@rcot.co.uk) or telephone: 020 3141 4615.

**Finally ….**

You’ll find other funding opportunities through the R&D Bulletin and discuss research opportunities and issues with other RCOT members via our online research community Research Connect. You can find out how to access both [here](https://www.rcot.co.uk/explore-resources/research#research-networking).