

Observing BAOT Council and RCOT Board meetings

1. About this policy

We know that some members and colleagues are keen to observe meetings to better understand how BAOT¹ and RCOT² work, or to support their professional development.

This policy outlines how we handle requests to observe these meetings.

2. Scope

This policy applies to requests to observe meetings of either the BAOT Council or meeting of the Board of Trustees of RCOT (BAOT's subsidiary charity).

3. Member rights in Company Law

Under the Companies Act 2006, members don't automatically have the right to attend or observe BAOT Council meetings. Members delegate authority to the Council (the company directors) to run the organisation's affairs, and meetings can be held privately unless our articles of association or a formal resolution say otherwise.

4. The purpose of Council/Board of Trustee meetings

The main role of BAOT Council and RCOT Board meetings is for Council members and Trustees to carry out their legal responsibilities under company, trade union and charity law. This includes:

- making decisions
- reviewing proposals
- challenging and supporting management
- developing strategy
- reviewing budgets and financial performance
- monitoring risks and KPIs.

To do this well, Council members and Trustees need space to:

- have open and honest discussions
- explore and refine ideas before sharing them more widely
- talk through confidential matters.

Because of this, observers won't always be able to attend.

5. How to request to observe a meeting

If you'd like to observe a meeting, please email the Chair at chair@rcot.co.uk at least 15 working days before the meeting. Include why you'd like to attend and any agenda items you're interested in.

If you're a colleague, please speak to your line manager first.

6. Chair's discretion

The Chair has full discretion to approve or decline observation requests. When deciding, they'll

¹ British Association of Occupational Therapists

² Royal College of Occupational Therapists

consider:

- whether confidentiality or legal privilege needs to be protected
- how observation might affect the meeting's flow and decision-making
- your reasons for wanting to observe
- the importance of transparency.

7. Conditions for observing

If your request is approved, you'll attend as a non-participating observer. The Chair may set conditions, such as:

- signing a non-disclosure agreement
- observing online rather than in-person
- exclusion from specific agenda items, or from parts of agenda items.

7. Right to decline requests

The Chair may decline any request without giving detailed reasons. This helps ensure meetings run smoothly and in the best interests of the organisation.

8. Committee meetings

Meetings of the Audit, Investment and Risk Committee, People and Nominations Committee and the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee aren't open to observers.

9. Expenses

If you're invited to attend in person, we're unable to cover travel costs. However, lunch and refreshments will be provided on the day.

10. Invited observers

From time-to-time the Council or Board may invite observers for various reasons, for example to support with succession planning. The Chair may also set conditions for invited observers and will discuss expenses for invited observers who are asked to attend in person on a case-by-base basis.

11. Professional development

We'll provide a record of attendance if requested by observers wishing to record this learning within their CPD portfolio.

12. Monitoring and review

We'll review this policy every three years, or sooner if needed. As a Level 1 policy, any changes will need approval from both the BAOT Council and RCOT Board of Trustees.

13. Further information

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Head of Governance and Compliance at governance@rcot.co.uk.

Version control	
Avoid referring to printed versions of this document as they may be out of date.	
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Version no	Date approved	Approved by	Summary of changes to latest version
1	2 October 2025	Council/Board	Significant re-write of former defunct policy. Chair's discretion re attendance introduced.