

RCOT Fellowship awards

Guidance for nominations 2026

A Fellowship award is the highest honour the Royal College of Occupational Therapists can give its professional members to recognise their exceptional service and outstanding contribution to the profession during their career.

Who can you nominate?

1. You can only nominate a current **RCOT member of at least ten years** for a Fellowship award.
2. Both the nominators and nominee must be in a position of good professional standing.
3. In acknowledgement of the difference in achievement between the Fellowship and Merit Awards. We are implementing a three-year gap between individuals receiving these awards from 2025.
4. The nominee will have demonstrated exceptional practice over a significant and sustained period, including impact outside their primary job role.
5. The nominee will have gone above and beyond their day job in terms of their achievements.
6. The nominee will be working or using their skills as an occupational therapist in practice, education and/or research, or other scholarly activities within UK or internationally.
7. The nominee should have contributed to support the work of RCOT, through various roles, such as volunteering, serving on the RCOT committees or advisory groups, acting as a representative, engaging with communities, or having historical involvement in a RCOT Specialist Section, regional group or now RCOT Communities.
8. The nominee has made important and significant contribution(s) in their role; and demonstrates their commitment to [RCOT Strategy and values](#).
9. In your nomination form, you should show how the nominee has made a consistent and outstanding contribution to the profession that has made a significant impact. The criteria areas could include:
 - Improved service delivery that has benefited people accessing services and carers.
 - Advanced the way that occupational therapists are educated.
 - Supported the professional workforce through initiatives such as equity, diversity and belonging.
 - Conducted research that has influenced the practice of occupational therapy at a national or international level.
 - Raised the profile of the profession with a range of stakeholders.
 - Through outstanding leadership. The nominee may also have influenced the perception of occupational therapy in a national or international context. For example, the nominee may be working in a national leadership role or an international occupational therapy organisation such as the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC) or European Network of Occupational Therapists in Higher Education (ENOTHE).Outstanding contribution in another area not listed.

Before you start your nomination:

1. Make sure that your nominee meets the above criteria (who you can nominate).
2. Identify two members who will support this nomination.
3. Nominators should not be a spouse/ partner, or close relatives of the individual being nominated.

4. We will only communicate with the main nominator to confirm receipt of documents and if we require further information.
5. Provide contact details for both the nominee and two supporting nominators.
6. You have the option to provide a copy of the nominee's CV with the nomination form and, if applicable, a publications list.
7. Your nomination will benefit from up to two letters of support or testimonials. (see RCOT Fellowship process further down for details)

Equity and Diversity

RCOT is keen to increase and promote diversity within the profession and actively encourages people from a range of backgrounds to nominate and be nominated for Fellowship and Merit Awards.

The process for the RCOT Fellowship awards

1. Make sure you share all the key information to show the nominee's contribution and impact. This will help the committee check that the nominee meets the criteria and avoid unnecessary disappointment.
2. Once you decide to nominate an individual for an award, as the main nominator, you will need to ask two other RCOT members to support the nomination and sign the nomination form.
3. You should work with the other nominators to decide who will lead the different parts of the nomination, so you're not repeating information.
4. You should assume that the Fellowships and Merit Awards Committee knows nothing about the nominee. Make sure you include all relevant information and evidence so that the committee can make an objective decision.
5. All information submitted must be typed in electronic format.
6. If acronyms are being used throughout the nomination form, they need to be initially explained in full.
7. When the nomination form is complete, please ask the nominee to sign parts 1 and 2 of the nomination form. This is to confirm that the provided information is correct and to give their consent for sharing this information, as part of the [RCOT's Privacy notice](#). Electronic signatures are acceptable.
8. Please ask the nominee to write a 500-word max statement about themselves and their achievements. This helps ensure valuable information isn't missed out in the nomination.
9. Include two letters of support or testimonials. Key information to note:
 - These should be written by individuals who have first-hand knowledge of the nominee.
 - They can be written by non-RCOT members, occupational therapy colleagues; people accessing occupational therapy services and/or their carers; other health professionals, senior managers in other organisations or other senior individuals.
 - Think about who is writing the letters of supports or testimonials as their position/role will influence the committee's decision.
 - These statements confirm the impact and contribution the nominee has made to the occupational therapy profession.
 - These statements are confidential – so please don't share them with the nominee.
 - Provide these statements as separate documents on appropriate letterhead and make sure, they're not longer than 500 words.
 - If you send more than two letters of support or testimonials, the committee won't consider the additional ones.
 - Please remember that individuals cannot be the same people as the nominators and should not be a spouse/ partner or close relatives of the nominee.
10. An accompanying CV for the nominee is optional and should be no longer than four sides of A4.
11. If you're including a list of publications, please make sure it's not longer than two sides of A4. It should be listed in date order, with the most recent publications first.

12. Supporting materials must not include promotional material and personal data for example, data that may identify a patient.
13. Email the completed nomination form and supporting documentation to hello@rcot.co.uk:
 - Completed nomination form with all the key information and signatures
 - Two letters of support or testimonials
 - A statement by the nominee.
 - A CV (optional).
 - A publications list (if appropriate).
14. When we receive your nomination and supporting documents, we will email the main nominator to confirm receipt.
15. Group nominations will not be accepted. All nominees should be nominated on a separate nomination form by the nominators, as the committee needs to assess the unique contribution of each individual when assessing their suitability for both Fellowship and Merit Awards.
16. If you have any questions about the nomination process or form, or would like to discuss your nomination, please contact us by emailing hello@rcot.co.uk

The Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee's role

1. The Fellowship and Merits Awards Committee will consider all nominations and will decide if the nominee meets the criteria. RCOT will collect feedback from the committee members to support discussions at their meeting.
2. The Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee will give final recommendations for The RCOT Board to approve.

RCOT Board role

1. The RCOT Board reviews and takes note of the report with the recommendations from the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee. The Board's role is to approve or reject each recommendation. They will have access to nomination forms, letters of support, and testimonials, as required. The Board's decision is final.
2. The Chair of The Board will then contact all nominees and the main nominators to let them know the outcome.
3. We would not be able to share detailed information or reasons why a nomination was not approved.
4. RCOT is the administrator for the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee.

Data Protection

1. All personal information relating to both the nominee and the nominators will be securely destroyed after the Awards event in line with [RCOT's Privacy notice](#).
2. The information provided in the nomination form and supporting evidence will be reviewed by the Fellowship and Merit Committee **without anonymisation**, except for specific personal contact details.
3. Only personal contact details, such as postal addresses and telephone numbers of both the nominee and the nominators, will be anonymised prior to review.
4. The personal contact details will also be anonymised in the support letters and testimonials.

Help and guidance

If you experience or anticipate any barriers within the nomination process or require help to access information, please email hello@rcot.co.uk. Requesting advice, guidance, and/or support will not affect the assessment of your nomination.

Dated: March 2026