

# RCOT Honorary Fellowship awards

## Guidance for nomination 2026

The award of an Honorary Fellowship is a rare award made to individuals who are not occupational therapists or associate members, but who have made an exceptional contribution to the work of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) or have supported the profession in a significant way. A Fellowship is the highest honour RCOT can bestow.

### Who can you nominate?

1. If you wish to nominate someone for an Honorary Fellowship Award, consider how this person has supported the profession and the impact their support has had.
2. The nominee will have contributed their exceptional service to RCOT for a sustained period of time.
3. The nominee has made important and significant contribution(s) in their role; and demonstrates their commitment to the [RCOT's Strategy and values](#).
4. The nominee will have made a **consistent and outstanding contribution** to the profession that has led to either a significant impact on occupational therapy practice, education and/or research; or has led to high level influencing or raising the profile of RCOT or the profession of occupational therapy. Consideration could be given to an individual who has:
  - Been influential in supporting the work of RCOT.
  - Facilitated high level introductions to participate in meetings that have provided opportunities for RCOT.
  - Raised the profile of the work of RCOT over a considerable period.
    - Identified and developed/progressed new ways of working/service. development/enhancement that benefit the users of occupational therapy services.
    - Actively supported and promoted RCOT campaigns.
    - Supported the professional workforce through initiatives such as inclusion and diversity.
    - Raised the profile of the profession with a range of stakeholders.
    - Supported learning and development opportunities for occupational therapists.
    - Acted as a champion for the occupational therapy workforce at high level meetings.
    - Repeatedly supported RCOT and endorsed RCOT key messages via social media.
    - Offers their time freely to participate in RCOT governance structures or other significant meetings.
    - Ensured the involvement of occupational therapy researchers in high profile research.
    - Conducted research that has influenced the practice of occupational therapy at national or international level.
    - The nominee may also have influenced the perception of occupational therapy in an international context.

### Before you start your nomination:

1. Make sure that your nominee meets the above criteria (who can you nominate).
2. Identify another RCOT member who supports this nomination.
3. Colleagues at RCOT can also submit nominations.
4. Nominators should not be a spouse/ partner, or close relatives of the individual being nominated.
5. We will only communicate with the main nominator to confirm receipt of documents and if we require further information

6. Provide contact details of the nominee and a second nominator.
7. You have the option to provide a copy of the nominee's CV with the nomination form, and if applicable, a publications list.
8. Your nomination will benefit from up to two letters of support or testimonials. They should preferably be from individuals within the profession (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 the Fellowship and Merit Awards.

## The process for the RCOT Honorary Fellowship award

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 one other RCOT member to support the nomination and sign the nomination form.
3. If you are a member of staff from RCOT, you need to ask a non-RCOT staff member to support the nomination and sign the nomination form.
4. You should work with the other nominator to decide who will lead on the different parts of the nomination so you are not repeating information.
5. You should assume that the Fellowships and Merit Awards Committee knows nothing about the nominee. Make sure you include all relevant information and evidence to enable the committee to make an objective decision.
6. All information submitted must be typed and in electronic format. 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, see [RCOT's Privacy notice](#). The nominee can add details to ensure the facts are correct. 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 with the nomination. Key information to note:
  - Individuals with first-hand knowledge of the nominee, should write these. They can endorse their contribution or supply additional information.
  - They should preferably be written by RCOT members, occupational therapy colleagues, senior managers and other senior individuals.
  - Consider who is writing the letters of support or testimonials, as their position/role will influence the decision of the committee.
  - These statements should confirm the impact and contribution the nominee has made to the occupational therapy profession.
  - They are confidential – so please do not share them with the nominee.
  - Provide these statements as separate documents on appropriate letterhead and make sure, they are no longer than 500 words.
  - If you send more than two letters of support or testimonials, the committee will not consider the additional ones.
  - Please remember that individuals cannot be the same people that have nominated you and should not be a spouse/ partner or close relatives.
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. Once you're finished with the nomination form and supporting materials, email this [hello@rcot.co.uk](mailto:hello@rcot.co.uk). Make sure it includes the following supporting materials:
  - Completed nomination form with all key information and signatures
  - Two letters of support or testimonials
  - A statement from the nominee
  - CV (optional)
  - 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](mailto: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.

Dated: March 2026