Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Guidance on making a nomination

Submitting a nomination is an opportunity to recognise an individual who has made a significant contribution to occupational therapy, RCOT and/or people accessing services.

Before starting a nomination, we recommend reading the relevant award guidance notes and assessment criteria summary. These documents explain the eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and supporting evidence required for each award category.

Not sure which award is right?

The table below provides a general guide to help identify the most appropriate award category for a nominee.

If you're recognising…	Consider
A significant achievement, innovation, project or contribution at any stage of a member's career	Merit Award
Exceptional and sustained contribution over many years	Fellowship (Professional Member)
Exceptional and sustained contribution by an Associate Member	Associate Fellowship
An individual who is not an occupational therapist and/or not an RCOT member who has made an exceptional contribution to occupational therapy or provided distinguished service to RCOT	Honorary Fellowship

Please note: Each award category has its own eligibility requirements and assessment criteria. We recommend reviewing the relevant **guidance notes and assessment criteria summaries** before starting a nomination.

What makes a strong nomination?

- Read the relevant guidance notes and assessment criteria before starting
- Clearly explain the nominee's achievement, contribution and impact
- Demonstrate what changed as a result of the nominee's work
- Show who benefited and how
- Include evidence and measurable outcomes where available
- Focus on quality rather than quantity
- Clearly explain why the nominee's contribution is significant

The strongest nominations focus on achievement, contribution, influence and impact rather than job titles, responsibilities, committee memberships or length of service alone.

Strong nominations explain not only what the nominee did, but why it mattered and the difference it made.

RCOT Fellowship and Merit Awards are among the highest forms of professional recognition offered by the College. Nominations are assessed against published criteria and supporting evidence, and approval is not guaranteed. Successful nominations clearly demonstrate the achievement, contribution, influence and impact required for the relevant award category.

Tips for preparing a strong nomination To help strengthen your nomination, avoid:		
1.	Listing roles without explaining impact	Simply listing job titles, committee memberships, publications, projects or responsibilities does not demonstrate achievement, contribution or impact. Strong nominations explain the nominee's individual **contribution and the difference it made**.
2.	General praise without evidence	Statements such as for example: • "They are outstanding" • "They are highly respected" are most effective when supported by **specific examples and evidence**.
3.	Repetition	Repeating the same examples across different sections of a nomination can make it difficult for assessors to identify distinct achievements and contributions.
4.	Focusing on activity rather than outcomes	Describe not only what the nominee did, but also the difference it made.
5.	Vague statements	Where possible explain: • What was achieved. • What changed. • Who benefited. • How impact was demonstrated.
6.	Assuming the Committee already knows the nominee	Assume that the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee (FMAC) has no prior knowledge of the nominee and provide **sufficient information** to support an objective assessment.
7.	Excessive use of acronyms	Spell out acronyms in full when first used and avoid terminology that may not be widely understood.
8.	Focusing solely on seniority or visibility	Awards are not limited to people holding senior positions, formal leadership roles, academic appointments or RCOT committee memberships. Achievement, contribution and impact can be demonstrated across many different sectors, professional roles, settings and areas of activity.

Demonstrating impact

When describing a nominee's achievements or contribution, consider:

- What was the challenge, opportunity or need?
- What contribution did the nominee make?
- What changed as a result?
- Who benefited?
- What evidence demonstrates the impact?

Where possible, include examples of:

- Service improvement
- Innovation

- Research or educational achievements
- Workforce development
- Professional influence
- Improved outcomes for people accessing services
- Community impact
- Equity, Diversity and Belonging (EDB) initiatives

Nominations across the profession

RCOT is committed to ensuring that the Fellowship and Merit Awards reflect the breadth and diversity of the occupational therapy profession.

We welcome nominations from individuals working across all sectors and settings, including:

- Clinical practice
- Independent and private practice
- Education and academia
- Research
- Leadership and management
- Community and voluntary sector organisations
- Consultancy and advisory roles
- Workforce development
- Specialist fields of practice
- Equity, Diversity and Belonging (EDB) initiatives

Successful nominations are not limited to those holding senior positions, formal leadership roles, academic appointments or RCOT committee memberships.

The FMAC assesses nominations on the achievement, contribution, influence and impact demonstrated, rather than job title, sector, career pathway or level of visibility within the profession.

Equity, Diversity and Belonging

RCOT actively encourages nominations from people with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

We particularly welcome nominations that reflect the diversity of the occupational therapy profession, including individuals from groups that may be under-represented within recognition and award programmes.

Contributions that advance equity, diversity, belonging, inclusion and equitable access to services are valued alongside other forms of professional achievement and contribution.

We recognise that excellence, innovation, leadership and impact can be demonstrated in different ways across many different occupational therapy roles and settings.

Preparing your nomination

Before submitting your nomination:

1. Check that the nominee meets the eligibility requirements
2. Read the relevant guidance notes and assessment criteria summary
3. Gather examples and supporting evidence
4. Obtain the nominee's agreement to be nominated
5. Arrange the required supporting statements or testimonials
6. Ensure all required declarations and signatures have been completed

Help and guidance

If you experience or anticipate any barriers during the nomination process, or require support accessing information, please contact us by email hello@rcot.co.uk or by phone: 020 3141 4600.

Requesting advice, guidance and/or support will not affect the assessment of a nomination.