RCOT Fellowship Associate Awards

Guidance notes 2027

What is an RCOT Associate Fellowship?

An Associate Fellowship is one of RCOT's highest honours. It recognises Associate Members who have made an exceptional and sustained contribution to occupational therapy, RCOT and/or the people who access occupational therapy services.

Associate Membership is open to occupational therapy assistants, support workers, support helpers, technical instructors, reablement workers and part-time students who are employed.

Eligibility criteria

The nominee must:

1. Current RCOT Associate Member
2. Have a minimum of 10 consecutive years of RCOT membership.
3. Be in good professional standing
4. Demonstrates commitment to RCOT's Values
5. Have made an exceptional and sustained contribution to occupational therapy, RCOT and/or people accessing services

What makes a strong nomination?

Strong nominations usually demonstrate:

- Exceptional and sustained contribution to the profession
- Going above and beyond normal role expectations
- Significant impact on people, services or communities
- Professional leadership and influence
- Workforce development and support
- Innovation, service improvement or improved practice
- Recognition by colleagues, people accessing services and stakeholders
- Evidence of lasting benefit and impact

Assessment criteria summary

To understand how nominations are reviewed by the **Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee (FMAC)**, please refer to the **Associate Fellowship Award Assessment Criteria Summary**. This document outlines the key areas considered during assessment and the types of evidence that help support a strong nomination.

Strong nominations include evidence of:

- Measurable outcomes
- Lasting impact
- Service improvements
- Professional influence
- Benefits to people, services or the profession

Examples of contribution

Contributions may be demonstrated through:

- Clinical support practice
- Support for people accessing occupational therapy services and their carers
- Service development
- Workforce development
- Education and training
- Supporting, developing and training colleagues
- Quality improvement
- Research support activity
- Community activity
- Equity, Diversity and Belonging initiatives
- Advocacy and promotion of occupational therapy
- Support for RCOT activities, campaigns or professional initiatives
- RCOT volunteering and professional activity

Preparing your nomination

Before starting the nomination:

1. Check that the nominee meets the eligibility criteria
2. Identify a second RCOT member who will act as the supporting nominator
3. Obtain the nominee's agreement to be nominated
4. Gather evidence, examples and supporting information
5. Where nominations reference RCOT volunteering, committees, advisory groups, RCOT Communities, campaigns or other RCOT activities, nominators should provide sufficient detail and examples of contribution and impact. RCOT may verify participation in these activities where possible and where required

Important notes:

- Nominators must be in good professional standing
- Nominators must not be a spouse, partner or close relative of the nominee
- RCOT will only communicate with the lead nominator throughout the process
- You will need contact details for the nominee and supporting nominator

When completing the nomination:

- Assume the FMAC knows nothing about the nominee
- Include clear examples and evidence of the nominee's contribution and impact throughout the nomination
- Avoid repetition between sections
- Explain acronyms in full when first used
- All information must be submitted electronically

The nominee must sign the relevant sections of the nomination form to:

- Confirm the information provided is accurate
- Provide consent for their information to be shared and assessed in line with the RCOT Privacy Notice

Electronic signatures are acceptable.

Supporting documentation

1. Nominee statement

The nominee must provide a personal statement of up to 500 words outlining their achievements and contribution. This helps ensure important information is not missed during the nomination process.

The statement should cover:

- Career journey
- Key achievements
- Contribution to RCOT
- Contribution to occupational therapy
- Impact of their work
- Why their contribution is important to the profession

2. Letters of support/testimonials

The nomination must be supported by **two letters of support or testimonials**.
Each letter should:

- Be written by individuals with first-hand knowledge of the nominee's contribution.
- Provide evidence of impact and achievement.
- Be submitted as separate documents.
- Be no longer than 500 words each.
- Be provided on appropriate letterhead where possible.

The letter may be written by:

- Occupational therapy colleagues
- Other healthcare professionals
- Senior managers
- People accessing services or their carers
- Non-RCOT members familiar with the nominee's work

The letter **must not** be provided by:

- The nominators
- A spouse or partner
- A close relative

Please note:

- Only two letters/testimonials will be considered
- Additional letters will not be reviewed
- Testimonials are confidential and should not be shared with the nominee

3. Optional additional supporting evidence and information

- Optional CV (maximum four sides of A4)
- Optional publication list (maximum two sides of A4). It should be listed in date order, with the most recent publications first
- Supporting materials must not include promotional material and personal data for example, data that may identify a patient
- 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

Equity and Diversity

RCOT actively encourages nominations from individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and is committed to ensuring Fellowship and Merit Awards reflect the diversity of the profession.

Assessment process

1. Step 1 (Committee review) - The Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee (FMAC) reviews all

nominations against the published criteria and supporting evidence and determines whether the nomination meets the Associate Fellowship criteria.
2. Step 2 (Board approval) – The FMAC makes recommendations to the RCOT Board, who approve or reject each nomination. The Board's decision is final.
3. Step 3 (Outcome notification) - The Chair of the Board informs nominees and lead nominators of the outcome. Please note that RCOT cannot provide detailed reasons where a nomination is not approved.
4. Step 4 (Administration) - RCOT acts as administrator to the FMAC and supports the nomination and assessment process.

Data protection

1. Personal data is managed in accordance with the RCOT Privacy Notice.
2. Nomination documentation is reviewed by the FMAC. Personal contact details, such as addresses and telephone numbers, are removed before review, including from letters of support and testimonials where appropriate.
3. Information will be securely destroyed after the awards process in accordance with the RCOT Privacy Notice.

Help and support

If you have any questions about the process, need support completing a nomination, or anticipate barriers to participation, please contact: hello@rcot.co.uk

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

Dated: October 2026