

Research champions

Role description

Vision for the Occupational Therapy Research Network

A UK-wide virtual network of RCOT members that work together to ensure that occupational therapy is a research active profession informed by evidence. The network will connect research and clinical practice by working in partnership with RCOT, members and wider research networks.

An RCOT research champion can be any RCOT member interested in promoting research and research activities. You can be working in any context (health, social care, voluntary sector, education or research). The role is also open to support workers, pre-registration learners and apprentices. You can be at any stage of your research career development, and any location in the UK. Most importantly, you'll be committed to research and networking with others interested in research.

As an RCOT research champion, you will:

- support the development of the RCOT occupational therapy research network
- promote engagement in the network, for example, by
 - attending and supporting our Research cafes
 - signposting people that access the network to resources, research experience opportunities and funding
 - encouraging networking and discussion
- promote the occupational therapy research agenda, encouraging and inspiring individuals with diverse backgrounds to engage in and with research, as well as undertake it themselves
- champion the value of research within our profession, helping to promote, showcase and celebrate occupational therapy research
- raise awareness of the importance of translating research into real-world improvements in practice
- submit a short biography, outlining your interests, areas of expertise, location, to help direct queries to the champion most suited to answering questions submitted to the network.

You will have the following attributes:

- an enthusiasm for research and contributing to the network
- knowledge of research and resources to support members accessing the network
- excellent communication skills, including the use of social media
- excellent networking skills, including responding to posts and following through with integrity
- an understanding of research and research-related concepts and approaches and a willingness to learn more
- able to map your ways of thinking and skills to the Career Development Framework (RCOT 2021) Leadership Pillar and the Evidence, Research and Development Pillar at Level 4 and above
- normally, be able to commit regular time and energy to supporting the network (approximately 30 minutes per week/two hours per month).
- awareness of the [top 10 priorities for occupational therapy research in the UK](#).

About the role

You can apply at any time to be an RCOT research champion. We offer a self-nomination process that will ask you to map your skills to the Leadership and the Evidence, Research and Development Pillars and give a short statement about what you'll bring to the role. You will not be expected to provide specific guidance on individual projects and/or ongoing support or mentoring to people accessing the network. This will be clearly stated in our network ground rules.

We'll provide an induction for research champions and access to our online resources to enable you to support the network. You will also have support from an RCOT research assistant and the research and development manager who will co-ordinate the network.

The role has no fixed timescale. If you're active in the virtual research network, you can continue to be a research champion and grow and develop your own skills within the network. Each year we'll ask you for short feedback about how you've been supporting the network. In return, we'll give you documentation to help you demonstrate how this role has contributed to your professional development.

We'd like you to help us grow and shape the network. We will host virtual meetings twice a year for research champions to come together to share experiences, network and suggest how we might develop the network further.

Level 4 – Leadership Pillar

Ways of thinking:

L4.1 Recognise and act where performance and practice of self and others should be improved or reported (e.g. where practice is potentially unsafe, where there are displays of microaggressions, or behaviours that are discriminatory or that reinforce stigma).

L4.2 Recognise and act where performance and practice of self and others should be recognised and celebrated, to facilitate a culture within which people can excel.

L4.3 Alert colleagues and/or managers to resource issues that affect learning, development and performance.

L4.4 Maintain curiosity to continually develop practice in response to changing population needs and challenges.

Skills (practice-based, technical or research-based):

L4.5 Act as a role model to promote the values of the profession.

L4.6 Manage a designated workload, identify priorities, and manage time and resources effectively with guidance as appropriate, within a complex and changing system.

L4.7 Advocate for the needs of those who access occupational therapy services, their families and their carers.

L4.8 Actively promote the rights and responsibilities for self and others, including but not limited to professionalism, equity, equality, diversity and inclusion, and health and wellbeing in the workplace.

L4.9 Suggest alternative ways to get the job done without compromising service quality, recognising and seeking to influence a change in culture where needed.

L4.10 Volunteer for leadership opportunities within the system.

L4.11 Navigate the cultural, social, political and economic climates that impact on local service delivery now, whilst anticipating future issues.

L4.12 Take some managerial/leadership responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure.

L4.13 Actively participate in building self-awareness, emotional intelligence and resilience, and actively embrace and seek opportunities to engage in courageous conversations when advocating for self and others.

Level 4 – Evidence, Research and Development Pillar

Ways of thinking:

- E4.1 Know the importance of evidence and research in delivering safe and effective services.
- E4.2 Constructively question own and others' practice to create opportunities to generate new knowledge.
- E4.3 Understand and comply with research governance processes, including ethics, data protection and confidentiality, with support if needed.
- E4.4 Understand the research priorities for the profession, and within the context of own work (e.g. within a specialist area).
- E4.5 Prioritise the needs of the local population when thinking about future research activities and/or quality improvement projects.

Skills (practice-based, technical or research-related):

- E4.6 Undertake systematic information searches, select relevant information and critically summarise the findings.
- E4.7 Engage in/set up audit activities and contribute to quality improvement projects with minimal guidance.
- E4.8 Record routine research/service evaluation data and undertake basic analysis, with guidance.
- E4.9 Support the involvement of people who access services, their families and their carers in the research process (e.g. co-designing quality improvement and research projects).
- E4.10 Undertake participant recruitment and consent activities as part of a team.
- E4.11 Create methods to disseminate contemporary findings (e.g. research noticeboards, blogs, posters, presentations) with guidance to inform content.
- E4.12 Respond to practice guideline development opportunities (e.g. at RCOT).
- E4.13 Apply evidence to inform practice, with guidance.

Career Development Framework, RCOT (2021 p51)