

Welcome to the profession: an introduction to RCOT

Transcript of recording

The presentation starts by showing [this video](#).

Slide 3 – welcome to the profession

Hello everybody and welcome to the session, and more importantly welcome to the profession. This session is an introduction to the Royal College of Occupational Therapists who will be with you throughout your professional career as an occupational therapist.

Slide 4 – Steve Ford, RCOT Chief Executive

I'd like to start by giving you a welcome from our Chief Executive, Steve Ford. For those of you attending the live webinar, Steve will be at many of those to welcome you himself. As he says here in this slide "I'd like to welcome you as you begin your occupational therapy career. As the professional body for your chosen career, RCOT is here to support and to represent you throughout your career and we are excited that you are joining us".

Slide 5 – we're RCOT

So, we're RCOT, the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and we champion occupational therapy. Our role is around promoting the value of occupation in promoting people's health and wellbeing. And we promote the value of occupational therapy as a means for improving people's health and wellbeing.

We're here to help achieve life-changing breakthroughs for our members, for the people they support and for society as a whole. So, we're here for you now that you've begun your occupational therapy pre-registration studies. You might be doing that as a student, or an apprentice and we have a whole range of resources that are here to support you through your university studies and your practice-based learning students and then as you continue through your occupational therapy career. So, I just want to take a little time to introduce you to some of that.

Slide 6 – starting your journey with our professional guide

Our [professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics](#) are a key document. I'm sure you've already been told by your university teams where you can download these, but they're accessible for you to [download](#) within our website, freely to download. And it's really important that we're thinking about professionalism throughout your career and at all points of your study; thinking about how you represent yourself, your university, your employer and your profession to other people. So, we're thinking here about ways in which you think, your values, your motivations, and how that all shapes your behaviour and actions.

Slide 7 – RCOT regions

Our [regions](#) support our RCOT members at a local level. As a learner you can join in your region's activities. You might want to join the region where you are studying, or if it's different, your hometown. It's an option to join both. Learners are welcome to join in with the activities that your local regional committee is organising. They have a huge number of different activities that take place across each year, and there's also options for you to join regional committees to represent your university and to represent other students and apprentices. They give you a chance to connect

with members in your local area. They give you a chance to build up your networks before you enter practice and placements, and you can access free and low cost CPD activities in your region. All that will support the enhancement of your CV and your breadth of learning within your studies. It gives you an opportunity to keep up to date with RCOT and the profession.

Slide 8 – Specialist Sections

You'll see we also have 10 [RCOT Specialist Sections](#). I've turned my camera off so that you can see them all. I was blocking trauma and musculoskeletal health. So 10 different specialist sections and these are an option for you to join. You might want to join relevant to an area of practice that you're particularly interested in. Maybe an area you're looking to go and work within in the future. Or it might be an area that you want to find out more about. Might be that you're going to study on placement and working with these particular groups or in this particular area of practice. So our specialist sections are there for you to find out a little more about.

Slide 9 – CPD resources

We have a wide range of [professional development resources](#) available on our website, and some of these are really quick to complete. Some are much more in depth and take time for you to read through different articles, different questions to consider, different reflections. We also have our [career development framework](#). Again a document that you might have been shown at university or where those of you are undertaking apprenticeships might be a document that your colleagues are familiar with using. This again, we'd really encourage you to use throughout your career and there's plenty of resources within our website to tell you a little bit more about that and how you can begin to use the career development framework and how you can use that throughout your career.

Slide 10 – stay up to date with OTnews

As an RCOT member, every month you'll have our [OTnews](#) magazine drop through your door. It's also available online and this is a good way of keeping up to date with what's going on within occupational therapy practice. There are short news items, there's longer more in depth articles, and you're welcome to submit your experiences and your stories too. Also, we have details of different events that are taking place so they're accessible for you to look at as well as on our website.

Slide 11 – and our social media platforms

You can follow us on social media, so here you'll see Facebook, Twitter LinkedIn and you can find out there about different events that are coming up and different opportunities to get involved with RCOT, different news items. So, a great way to keep in touch, get involved with discussions.

Slide 12

As a member of RCOT, you'll also be able to access these resources: insurance and support from Unison; our digital library services; annual conference attendance and the materials available then for some months afterwards accessing annual awards for learning, research and development; you can engage with resource; and hiding behind me just there is our professional practice enquiry line, which again is a service that you can access.

Slide 13 – Zadi, Cardiff University

I've turned my camera off again so that you can see Zadi, who's currently a student at Cardiff University, and she's kindly given us a little bit of information, her thoughts about being an RCOT member. So, Zadi is a student member and also chose to become a member of the Children and Young People Specialist Section and she uses her membership to stay connected with her OT

community within Wales and also across the wider UK. She's used our CPD resources that are available and she's also planning on using some of our databases within the digital library services to support her research. She's been getting in touch with other OT students and other occupational therapists and says that's helped her to stay motivated through her learning journey and keeping up to date with the profession. Over the summer Zadié joined us on an internship and that gave her the opportunity to learn more about the role of RCOT for its members and realised the professional opportunities are endless. She finishes by saying, I'm glad I decided to become an RCOT member as it's helped me to develop as a person and professionally.

Slide 14 – RCOT Carnduff Learner Forum

Zadié's also a member of our [Carnduff Learner Forum](#), so she's fully taken advantage of some of the opportunities that are available to RCOT members. This is a forum of 12 students and apprentices, and you'll see here the current students and apprentices who are members of this forum. We always have places that are available. Due to the nature of students undertaking studies and then moving on into professional practice, the group has quite a high turnover, so very soon we will be advertising the opportunity for you to apply to join this forum. Some of the members have given us feedback on why they have chosen to join the forum and what they've gained from being a member and they talk about it: giving students a voice; sharing and learning about different experiences; and opportunity to meeting learners from across the UK; they are using the forum as one of the mechanisms for helping to improve learner support; raise awareness of the needs of students and apprentices whilst they're undertaking their pre-registration studies; it provides the space to exchange ideas and work collaboratively. You'll see that there's the web link for you to click on and you can find out more about the forum, and there will be details of how you can apply to become a member.

Slide 15 – placement programme

We also have a [placement programme](#) that you can participate in as and when you are undertaking a non-traditional practice-based learning placement. This is a series of placement visits. They are held virtually. You're not coming to RCOT, but it gives everybody across the countries, no matter where you're studying or undertaking your placements to come and meet with RCOT colleagues to support your learning within your placement. So you can choose who you meet and different members of RCOT staff relevant to their areas and topics and subjects that you're undertaking within your placement. So there's information here to tell you a little more about the placement programme and how you can sign up for that when the time comes. Your tutors know about this as well.

Slide 16 – become a member

So we really look forward to working with you and support you through your occupational therapy pre-registration studies and your whole career and time as an occupational therapist, so for many years to come. If you'd like to [become a member](#) of RCOT you can click on this link. You can find out a little bit more about how to become a member and of course what the member benefits are for you. First you need to register for an account and then you will sign up for membership, so it's a two-stage process. And if you attend Sheffield Hallam University, University of Sunderland or York St John University we have sent specific sign-up information to your programme teams, so do chat with them before you go and sign up for membership because there's some slightly different processes for you.

Slide 17 – thank you for listening

Thank you for listening and taking the time to find out a little bit more about RCOT and how we can support you through your student, apprenticeship and across your whole professional journey as an

occupational therapist. My name is Carolyn Hay. I'm the Pre-registration Education Manager and hopefully I'll be seeing quite a bit of you as you undertake your studies. I look forward to keeping in touch. Take care and enjoy the first few weeks of your studies.