

# RCOT Merit awards

## Guidance for nomination 2025

The Merit award recognises an individual's contribution to the occupational therapy profession which may be local; regional; in a specialist field of practice; or a diverse area of practice. Nominees will have been acknowledged by their peers in the occupational therapy community for excellence in their sphere of work and their special contribution to the occupational therapy profession.

### 1. Who can you nominate?

- a) You can only nominate a current RCOT member with a minimum of two years consecutive RCOT membership irrespective of membership category (excluding Student and Associate Apprentice members) immediately prior to the date of the nomination.
- b) Both the nominators and nominee must be in a position of good professional standing.
- c) The nominee will be working or using their skills within the occupational therapy profession either in practice, education and/or research.
- d) The nominee has made important and significant contribution(s) in their role; and demonstrates their commitment to the [RCOT's mission and vision](#) and its strategic priorities.
- e) The nominee will have been recognised by their peers as making a significant achievement locally or regionally that will have had an important impact on the practice and/or delivery of occupational therapy which may include:
  - improved service delivery locally that has benefited service users and carers
  - developed specialist practice-based skills that are innovative and have informed local service delivery in what could be a complex environment
  - led an innovative way of working and promoted the contribution of occupational therapy in a diverse setting
  - created and supported a learning culture locally or regionally
  - supported the professional workforce locally through initiatives such as inclusion and diversity
  - translated and applied evidence to inform their practice locally for the benefit of service users and carers
  - facilitated involvement in research or created a culture that supports research
  - raised the profile of the profession through providing examples of local innovation that have been published and raised interest
  - developed and evaluated educational resources (for example for students, people accessing services, etc.) and new methods of delivery
  - contributed and co-created professional networks to promote the exchange of knowledge, skills and resources.

(This is not an exhaustive list).
- f) The nominee may also have supported members through leading and influencing within one of RCOT's branches such as a specialist section; local regional group, an RCOT Board or other type of professional group/network.

## 2. Before you start your nomination:

- Make sure that your nominee matches the above criteria (part 1).
- Identify one member who will support this nomination.
- We'll only communicate with you as the main nominator, so we will need your details.
- Provide contact details for the nominee and the other nominator.
- Your nomination will benefit from up to two letters of support. These don't have to be from individuals within the profession (see item 5.7).
- Read section 5 of this guidance for detailed advice to nominators.

## 3. Filling out the form

**Question 1.** We need a 500-word summary telling us why the nominee should receive an RCOT Merit Award.

This should explain the rationale for the nomination and what is special about the nominee's contribution: how have they gone beyond the bounds of their job or gone the 'extra mile'? What is the significant achievement that has had an impact locally or regionally? Has this achievement helped improve service delivery/care for the benefit of service users? Does it demonstrate partnership working? What has been innovative/inspirational/or influential in their area of practice that has been admired by the nominee's peers

**Question 2.** Describe the nominee's area/s of contribution for example in practice, excellent team working/ leadership/management through innovation, education and/or research that has raised the profile of the profession. How has the nominee promoted the importance of occupation in their work? You have a 500-word limit and can use sentences or bullet format.

**Question 3.** We need to know details of the nominee's involvement either with RCOT or the profession over time including facts and relevant dates (max 500 words).

**Question 4.** In this table, you need to provide evidence of the nominee's impact and influence locally or regionally.

Include specific examples - including dates and any other evidence of impact - that focus on achievement and results. This could include:

- i. improved service delivery locally that has benefited people accessing services and carers
- ii. developed specialist practice-based skills that are innovative and informed local service delivery in what could be a complex environment
- iii. led an innovative way of working and promoted the contribution of occupational therapy in a diverse setting
- iv. created and supported a learning culture locally/regionally or created educational resources for students
- v. translated and applied evidence to inform their practice locally for the benefit of people accessing services and carers
- vi. facilitated involvement in research or created a culture that supports research
- vii. raised the profile of the profession through providing examples of local innovation that have been published and raised interest
- viii. Developed and evaluated educational resources (for example for students, people accessing services, etc.) and new methods of delivery
- ix. Contributed and co-created professional networks to promote the exchange of knowledge, skills and resources.

It is essential to include the impact of the nominee's activities and the difference they have

made. This will help the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee to identify that the nominee's activities are above and beyond their usual role.

**There is no word limit – but think about sharing this information succinctly and impactfully.**

What has the nominee done to influence the occupational therapy profession nationally and UK-wide and/or internationally?	Explain why this was needed/relevant.	Describe the impact that this had. What is different?
Your answer might focus on how they have raised the profile of the profession.	Your answer should show why this was important, what gap this was filling.	Answer the 'so what' question. Be specific about how this has made a difference to the profession across the UK or internationally? Facts and data may help illustrate this if relevant.

Use as many rows as you need to show additional examples of your nominee's outstanding impact on the profession by pressing the 'tab' key

**Question 5.** Tell us how the nominee had a positive influence on others for example people accessing services and/or their carers, staff or students or members of RCOT or within a diverse setting creating new opportunities for occupational therapists.

This could include how the nominee has supported RCOT through their role within one of the Branches - Specialist Section or Regional Groups - or through supporting staff by creating a learning culture or acting as a role model for others (max 500 words).

**Question 6.** Tell us if the nominee received recognition or an award from any other relevant body including RCOT. This is so we can better understand the context and reach of the nominee's work.

**Question 7.** Provide us with a short paragraph – three or four sentences – that we can use in our communications and celebration event brochure if the nomination is successful.

#### 4. 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 Fellowship and Merit Awards.

#### 5. The process for the RCOT Merit awards

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 to avoid unnecessary disappointment.

5.1 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.

5.2 You should work with the other nominator to decide who will lead on the different parts

of the nomination so you're not repeating information.

- 5.3 You should assume that the Fellowships and Merit Awards Committee knows nothing about the nominee. Make sure you include all relevant information and evidence so that the committee can make an objective decision.
- 5.4 All information submitted must be typed and in electronic format.
- 5.5 If acronyms are being used throughout the nomination form, they need to be initially explained in full
- 5.5 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, as the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) requires. The nominee can add details to ensure facts are correct. Electronic signatures are acceptable.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 Include two letters of support or testimonials.
- Individuals with first-hand knowledge of the nominee should write these. These can support their contribution or give additional information.
  - They can be written by non-RCOT members, occupational therapy colleagues, people accessing occupational therapy services and/or their carers, other health professionals; senior managers in other organisations or other senior individuals, preferably outside the nominee's own service; or by the other nominator.
  - Think about who is writing the letters of supports or testimonials as their position/role will influence the committee's decision.
  - These statements confirm the impact and contribution the nominee has made to the occupational therapy profession.
  - They are confidential – so please don't share them with the nominee.
  - Provide these statements as separate documents on appropriate letterhead and make sure they're not longer than 500 words.
  - If you send more than two letters of support or testimonials, the committee won't consider the additional ones.
  - Please remember that individuals cannot be the same people as the nominators and should not be a spouse/ partner or close relatives of the nominee.
- 5.8 Once you're finished the nomination form and supporting materials, please send it to [RCOT](#) by emailing to [Fellowship.Awards@rcot.co.uk](mailto:Fellowship.Awards@rcot.co.uk). Make sure it includes the following supporting materials:
- i) Completed nomination form with all the key information and signatures from the main and other nominators and nominee.
  - ii) Two letters of support or testimonials.
  - iii) A statement by the nominee.

When we receive your nomination, we will email you (as the main nominator) to confirm this.

- 5.9 Supporting materials must not include promotional material and personal data for example, data that may identify a patient.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 If you have any questions about the nomination process or form, or would like to discuss your nomination, please contact [RCOT](#) by emailing to [Fellowship.Awards@rcot.co.uk](mailto:Fellowship.Awards@rcot.co.uk)

## **6. The Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee's role**

The Fellowship and Merits Awards Committee will consider all nominations.

- 6.1 The Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee will decide if the nominee meets the criteria to the required standards. RCOT will collect feedback from the committee members to support discussions at their meeting.
- 6.2. The Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee will give final recommendations for the BAOT/RCOT Council to approve. They will share these recommendations and the reasons for approval and non-approval in a report.
- 6.3 We will destroy all personal information about the nominee and the nominators, as GDPR requires, after the Awards event.

## **7. BAOT/RCOT Council's role**

7.1 Council read and take note of the report with the recommendations from the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee. Council's role is to approve or reject each recommendation. They will have access to nomination forms, letters of support and testimonials, as required. Council's decision is final.

7.2 The Chair of Council will then contact all nominees and the main nominators to let them know the outcome.

We won't be able to share information or reasons about why a nomination was or wasn't approved.

RCOT is the administrator for the Fellowship and Merit Awards Committee.

## **8. Help and guidance**

If you experience or anticipate any barriers within the nomination process or require help to access information, please email [Fellowship.Awards@rcot.co.uk](mailto:Fellowship.Awards@rcot.co.uk). Requesting advice, guidance and/or support will not affect the assessment of your nomination.

Dated: November 2024