

Developer's Guide

Course Planning Workbook

For a CPD@RCOT Short Course[‡]



Name of Developer(s):

This workbook is designed to help you, as the developer, plan a successful CPD@RCOT Short Course that meets the standards of the RCOT Approved Learning award.

[‡] A Workbook for Full Courses is also available.

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Introduction

This workbook is designed to guide your thinking about the CPD@RCOT Short Course that you are planning. Through a series of questions with detailed explanations, it takes you step by step through the key considerations for a good quality learning resource. There are thirteen questions in total.

The workbook is designed to give you confidence that you are developing a high quality learning resource. When you have completed each section in as much detail as possible, you will have laid strong foundations. You will have ensured the resource meets many of the RCOT Approved Learning standards (Appendix 1). As you move to the next stage, of creating a course by putting the materials and resources together, you should find it easy to make further decisions about, for example, the sequence of information, what should be included, what is not needed, and why.

Depending on the nature and length of your course, not all sections may be relevant. Still, carefully consider each one. All the sections contribute towards an effective and engaging learning experience.

Use this workbook in the way that works best for you. It is intended to be a planner to capture and expand on ideas, so use words, phrases, sketches, notes, links to online resources and any other prompts about your course. Start with your initial thoughts in any order, however fully formed or vague they may be at first. Return to the workbook as many times as necessary to add to, develop and reframe your thoughts, ideas and plans. If you are working on your own, you may want to ask someone to take on the role of critical friend. This will help you get extra perspective on your ideas and intentions.

Over time, as you work back and forth between the questions, the standards and the career levels, you will find the course begins to take clear shape. Then, when you put the course together, it should be a very straightforward process. This workbook encourages you to do your thinking up front, so the job of course assembly is smooth and, we hope, enjoyable.

For ideas, look at the [CPD@RCOT Short Courses](#) already available to members. The format is normally individual pre-work, a group session, and suggestions for follow-up activities. You are not restricted to this format, though, and you may well have different ideas for the types of activities to include.

The RCOT Professional Development Team is ready to assist you with any questions you have about course planning and design. Don't hesitate to contact us, we are delighted to help!

We would be grateful for your feedback on this resource, so that we can continue to improve the learning resources we offer to you and other members.

Email us with any questions, comments or suggestions:

RCOTApprovedLearning@rcot.co.uk

1. What is the title of the course?

Start with a working title if need be. You can refine it as you develop the course.

2. What are the key purposes of the course?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 5

What learning needs have you identified that the course will address? What key skills will participants gain or deepen?

Depending on course length, list about one to three overarching purposes. If you identify several interlinked learning needs, consider creating more than one course. For example, it might be appropriate to create an introductory course to explain and embed basic concepts and knowledge. A second, follow-on course could expand these concepts and go into greater depth for the more advanced learner.

How do these purposes link to the four Pillars of Practice as laid out in the [Career Development Framework](#), and summarised in Standard 5, page 19?

The Pillars are:

- Professional Practice
- Facilitation of Learning
- Leadership
- Evidence, Research and Development

3. Who are the people who will take this course?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standards 1.4, 2.1, 5, and see Appendix 2: Career Levels

One of the most important early steps in designing an effective course is being clear on the learners who will take it. The course needs to be appropriate to the people it is intended for. To take an obvious example, needs will be different if learners are just starting out, or if they are experienced with and knowledgeable about the subject matter.

What are learner characteristics in terms of age, location, starting knowledge, skills and experience and likely job roles? What attitudes, beliefs and opinions might learners hold as a result? Will ethnic and socio-economic background have an impact on learner profiles? What challenges are the learners likely to be facing? How will the course take these factors into account and ensure an engaging experience for this audience? Refer to the Career Development Framework for detailed Career Level characteristics of each.

Articulate all these factors to avoid taking any aspects of the course for granted. As a subject matter expert, it is easy to forget gaps in knowledge, understanding and judgement of inexperienced learners. One powerful way to do this is to create 'learner personas' – do a web search to learn more about this technique.

4. What are the Learning Outcomes?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 6

What will learners gain from the course when they have completed it that they didn't have before?

- What will be achieved as a result of the learners taking the course?
- What will the learners be able to do or know and to what level? (The level does not need to relate to Career Levels, although it can, but the explanation of the level should make sense to the learners.)
- What are the changes in learner behaviour that the course is designed to achieve?

The number of Learning Outcomes should be proportionate to the length of the course, and to the level of knowledge and skills of the intended participants.

Suggested format:

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

5. What is the learning structure?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 1.3

How will the learning be achieved? Is this course for individuals to learn on their own, for groups of participants, or a mixture of both? Will groups of people learn together at the same time (synchronous learning), or share their learning at different times (asynchronous learning). If together, will this be remotely or face-to-face?

Most CPD@RCOT Short Courses are designed to have individual work followed by a group session, but they do not have to follow this format. They could be created for individuals to learn on their own. If you include group work, make sure you design activities to take advantage of people coming together to maximise their learning.

6. What are all the important points and elements to include?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 1.1, 7

This is a brainstorming exercise. Include pre-reading, concepts, diagrams, case studies, related online links, follow up resources – anything that relates to the course content, presentation and follow up. Make sure materials are up-to-date and from reputable sources.

Focus on engaging, relevant and varied methods - verbal, visual, action-oriented. How can the experience be as close as possible to the real life situations learners will encounter in practice?

For this section you could use lists, mind maps, sketches, and/or broad-brush course timelines.

7. How will the course start?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 1.2

The beginning of the course is the key opportunity to engage participants' attention. How can this best be achieved?

8. What is the logical sequence of points?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standards 1.3, 2.3, 3, 4.1, 4.3, 8

Using your ideas from section 6, work out the key points and elements the course will cover. How will they logically progress and lead to deeper understanding?

9. What is the course timeline?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standards 1.2, 1.3, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 4.4, 8.3.

How much time is allotted for the course overall? Include pre-work and post-course follow up.

For a short course, pre-work of about 1-3 hours is about right, although some participants may need or want to take longer. Carrying out the work over separate days could be deliberate course design or individual choice. Group sessions are normally designed to take one hour and one hour may be most practical. Post-course work to consolidate learning, not including following up suggested resources, of up to an hour is most realistic – any longer and people are less likely to complete. (See also question 11.)

Within this, how much time is needed for each element of the course? If the course is intended for a group, are participants expected to prepare individually before learning together? Map out the time needed for each section of the course, within the total time allotted for the course.

Ensure plenty of time for Q&A. If the total course group time is longer than 90 minutes, include at least one short break.

Include time for participants to reflect on learning. If you have writing activities to consolidate learning, bear in mind this will need some time.

10. How can each point best be taught?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standards 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Thinking about your answers to questions 6 and 8, and keeping in mind time constraints (question 9), how can each key point or concept best be taught and demonstrated? Where will it fit best: pre-work, group work or post-course consolidation? How will participants' engagement in learning be sustained throughout?

Make sure everything is fully accessible. Appendix 3 provides some resources to use for this. Build in and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

How will the learners draw on, relate and share their own experiences? How will the course structure help them make links between their work and what they now know?

11. How will participants' learning be reinforced and checked throughout the course?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standards 3, 4, 6.3, 7

Research shows learning is embedded by repetition of concepts and information. How will the course incorporate repetition of learning points? This could be, for example, introduction of a concept, then a case study to illustrate the concept, then an exercise to use the concept. Or, it could be introduction of a concept in pre-reading and application in a group session. For a longer course, the facilitator may reinforce points before and after breaks.

How will the facilitator seek feedback on progress and learning? Some possible approaches are informal quizzes, facilitator questions to participants and peer-to-peer interactions.

12. How will participants' understanding be assessed?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 4

How will the effectiveness of the learning be determined? Quizzes, exams, formal or informally graded practical exercises, self-assessment methods, follow up in real-life situations?

How will the learners be evaluated on their learning? Marks received, in-session answers validated, peer to peer confirmation and support, self-assessment?

13. How will participants respond to their experience of the course?

RELATES TO: RCOT Approved Learning standard 8

How will you ensure the participants are satisfied with the course? The course should have mechanisms for evaluation by learners, raising complaints and concerns, opportunities for praise.

How will you review this feedback and use it to develop the course?

APPENDIX 1: RCOT APPROVED LEARNING STANDARDS

STANDARD 1: Content

1.1 STANDARD

The course materials, such as readings, video clips, web pages, are up to date, relevant to the topic and are produced or written by reliable sources.

The course signposts and reinforces best practice.

If any branded equipment or materials are suggested or referred to, the course explicitly provides full commercial disclosure.

1.2 STANDARD

The course has an introductory overview that orients the participants and prepares them for learning. It explains the knowledge and skills that the course covers for participants' professional development.

The main purpose of the content is:

- to deepen the practical ability of the participants to do their professional work at the level they already achieve;

AND/OR

to develop abilities in the content topic(s) beyond the knowledge and skills they already have at the start of the course

1.3 STANDARD

The course includes work on problem-solving and decision-making. There are several clear opportunities within the course for participants to consider different problem-solving and/or decision-making strategies.

The content provides different suggestions or approaches to help participants meet complex challenges and/or to improve the quality of their work.

1.4 STANDARD

The course promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. Content is respectful to everyone.

The content and the delivery encourage participants to promote equality and diversity in their work.

STANDARD 2: Accessibility

2.1. STANDARD

All course materials are accessible for people with impairments, for example dyslexia, sensory impairment such as vision and hearing, and limited mobility.

Plain English is used as far as possible and technical terms and acronyms are explained

2.2 STANDARD

Participants can assess the following information at the beginning of the course:

1. Course structure, outline or timetable.
2. Any course pre-preparation and how long it should reasonably take to do.
3. Overall length of the course.
4. Maximum number of learners per event, if numbers limited.

If the course is commercially funded, information on the funder(s)/sponsor(s).

2.3 STANDARD

The course structure and course materials give a good participant experience.

1. The course is clearly laid out and logically ordered.
2. Materials relate well to the course topic.
3. Recommended resources are safe and of good quality – for example, web resources are produced by reputable sources.
4. All provided hyperlinks are functional and navigation is straightforward.
5. Content prepared by sources other than the developer is listed with a recognised and consistent system. Copyright and permission are acknowledged, for example for graphics and images. The source and date of issue or publication is indicated in the relevant section of the course materials (for example, PowerPoint slides).
6. The resources are listed with a recognised and consistent system. Enough information is provided for learners to locate them after the course is over. The resources are grouped logically (for example, published papers, online resources, useful materials, or other clear groupings). The lists of resources are ordered in a logical way, for example publications are alphabetical by first author.

STANDARD 3: Participant Engagement

3.1 STANDARD

The content is delivered using different types of activities. The facilitator is supported to encourage participants to learn through active participation.

The facilitator is supported to make sure all participants engage in the problem-solving and critical thinking course activities.

3.2 STANDARD

The facilitator is supported to direct and guide participants so they can fully engage and learn from the activities.

Any content that may cause concern or issues for learners is signposted within the course and guidance is given to participants and/or the facilitator on how to manage any problems that may arise as a result of this content.

Enough time is given to each aspect of the course so that the material can be covered in suitable depth. This includes time for questions, supplementary discussion and practice.

The facilitator is supported to lead informally with questions that check all participants understand the course content and activity instructions.

3.3 STANDARD

The course provides opportunities for participants to share their experiences and learning with each other.

Participants are encouraged to share their learning with colleagues after the event.

STANDARD 4: Learning Assessment and Reinforcement

4.1 STANDARD

The facilitator is supported to feed back to participants to help their understanding and reinforce their learning throughout the course.

The facilitator is supported to use language that encourages the participants.

At the end of the course, the facilitator is supported to summarise the content and describe what the participants should now be able to do.

4.2 STANDARD

If the course includes formal learning assessment leading to a pass or fail designation, participants receive information about assessment, if included, before the course begins or during the course introduction.

Participants receive information before the learning assessment so that they

understand what they must do or achieve in order to pass. If levels other than pass are awarded (for example merit, distinction) the criteria to achieve these levels are explained.

The participants know what will happen if they do not pass.

4.3 STANDARD

Reinforcement of learning includes the opportunity for participants to reflect on and record their learning, with enough time set aside for these activities.

STANDARD 5: Relevance

PILLARS OF PRACTICE	KEY SKILLS - The course supports participants to:
Professional Practice	P1. Make links between the course content and helping people to do what they want, need or have to do
	P2. Deliver safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice
	P3. Use professional judgement, reasoning and decision making
Support Learning	S1. Teach, mentor, supervise and/or assess others for learning
	S2. Assist and/or guide others to learn in the workplace
	S3. Create and test learning environments, tools and materials
Leadership	L1. Identify, review and improve own knowledge and skills
	L2. Guide, direct and/or support teamwork
	L3. Design, carry out, manage professional and/or organisational change
Research, Gather Evidence, Develop Profession	R1. Influence local, regional, national, international policy and decision-making
	R2. Create, use and/or explain evidence to inform practice
	R3. Design, carry out and test research, distribute research evidence

5.1 STANDARD

The course must be relevant to occupational therapy personnel, including support workers, but need not be exclusive to them. The course demonstrates the relevance to occupational therapy personnel by mapping to one or more Pillars of Practice. One or more Pillar may apply.

The Pillars of Practice identified in the course are accurately mapped to content and

learning outcomes. If Professional Practice is one of the Pillars of Practice, the course makes clear links between content and helping people to do what they want, need or have to do.

5.2 STANDARD

The course has been designed for a specific, defined audience of people, with a certain level of skills and knowledge. For example, it could be aimed at students, support staff, early career professionals or personnel highly experienced in the topic. It could be designed to teach a particular skill relevant to all or most career levels of a given Pillar of Practice.

The course makes clear what the intended audience is. (Appendix 2: Career Levels)

If more than one Pillar of Practice is covered by the course, different career levels may be covered for each one. The course materials make this clear.

5.3 STANDARD

The following information is clear at the beginning of the course:

1. Description of who the course is intended for.
2. The knowledge and skills participants will learn that will support or advance their professional development;
3. The level and type of knowledge and/or skills that they need before participating in the course.

Participants receive evidence that they have completed the course.

STANDARD 6: Learning Outcomes (Skills and Knowledge Gained)

NOTE: Learning Outcomes are general statements about what participants should be able to do as a result of taking the course, how well they should be able to do it, and how they can apply their learning to their work.

The number of Learning Outcomes varies depending on the course, but as a rule of thumb may range from three to four for a Short Course.

Learning Outcomes should: i) be general, not too detailed; ii) be realistically achievable; iii) lead to participants feeling confident about achieving all of them by the end of the course; iv) be assessable - facilitators and learners can assess that learners have achieved them.

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### 6.1 STANDARD

The Learning Outcomes are directly relevant to the Pillars of Practice identified in the course.

Learning Outcomes conform fully to the NOTE above and describe precisely, not vaguely, what the participants should be able to do as a result of completing the course.

If the skill area is Professional Practice, at least one key skill **must** cover how the course content helps people to do what they want, need or have to do.

### 6.2 STANDARD

The Learning Outcomes are pitched at the right level for the skills and experience of the participants who the course is designed for.

Participants should reasonably be able to achieve the Learning Outcomes within the course timeframe.

The resources and content fully support the course Learning Outcomes.

### 6.3 STANDARD

The Learning Outcomes are assessable, that is, they are worded so that participants can judge if they have been achieved.

This judgement may be based on formal or informal learning assessment, reflection, action plans or other means.

## STANDARD 7: Course Follow Up

### 7.1 STANDARD

The course includes an up-to-date annotated resources list that supports on-going learning.

### 7.2 STANDARD

The participants receive at least one learning resource in addition to links and references (as for standard 8.1) to support on-going learning.

This may include, for example, tip sheets, access to a community of practice, webinars or suggested further CPD activities.

### 7.3 STANDARD

The course includes guidance to develop action plans, encouraging participants to apply their learning to their work. Development of action plans may be part of the course, or resources may be given to participants to develop their action plans independently after the course has finished.

### 7.4 STANDARD

The facilitator is supported to guide participants to record the Continuing Professional Development they have gained from taking the course. The course encourages learners to think about the outcomes of their learning. This may be related to the delivery of the service or the service user experience they provide in professional practice or in other occupational therapy work such as management and research.

## **STANDARD 8: Quality Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

### 8.1 STANDARD

Participants have access to information on who to contact in the event of a complaint or problem about the course and what to expect if they make a complaint or have a problem.

### 8.2 STANDARD

All participants know that they can evaluate the course. The information on how to do this is clearly provided in the course materials.

## APPENDIX 2: CAREER LEVELS - RCOT CAREER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

For more detailed information about career levels for each Skill Area (Pillar of Practice), refer to the [RCOT Career Development Framework](#). Levels 1-4 refer to personnel not yet qualified for registration with the occupational therapy regulatory body (HCPC - Health and Care Professions Council).

Remember the Career Levels apply to each of the four Pillars, not just Professional Practice. Use them according to the Pillar(s) that you have identified are relevant to your course (Workbook question 2).

| CAREER LEVEL                                                                                                                                                                          | CAREER LEVEL SKILLS AND ABILITIES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LEVEL 1:</b> basic general knowledge; awareness of the role of occupational therapy; entry level                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any new starter in the sector but not necessarily straight from school.</li> <li>Can do a limited number of straightforward tasks under direct supervision.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>LEVEL 2:</b> understands at basic level occupational therapy and any specific topic of study                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carries out occupational therapy duties with guidance and supervision.</li> <li>Can participate in improvement initiatives.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>LEVEL 3:</b> knows and understands occupational therapy procedures, processes and general concepts for own subjects of study and practice                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carries out wide range of delegated duties with guidance and supervision when needed.</li> <li>Can contribute to improvement initiatives.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>LEVEL 4:</b> knows and understands occupational therapy procedures, processes and general concepts for own subjects of study and practice                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-guided by written procedures and protocols, makes judgements, plans activities.</li> <li>May have some responsibility for aspects of supervision of some staff or students.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>LEVEL 5:</b> has comprehensive, specialised knowledge and understanding of occupational therapy; understands boundaries of both personal knowledge and knowledge within the sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes judgements within own particular area of work, actively contributes to improvement initiatives.</li> <li>May have responsibility for supervision of staff or students.</li> <li>May be eligible for registration as an occupational therapist with the regulatory body (HCPC)</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b><br/>May be non-regulated, experienced care workers or have own specialist trade or craft e.g. posture and seating skills.</p> |
| <b>LEVEL 6:</b> has critical understanding of occupational therapy knowledge                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leads in a specific area of work with some responsibility for service and team performance.</li> <li>Supervises staff and/or students.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>LEVEL 7:</b> has highly specialised knowledge and critical awareness                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has specialist practice-based, technical or scientific skills.</li> <li>Responsible for service development in complex environments.</li> <li>Leads in services/research/education, supervises staff and/or students.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>LEVEL 8:</b> has most advanced and specialised knowledge                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the forefront of the profession as for example strategic leader, original thinker, political leader.</li> <li>Responsible for finances, service development and/or multiple teams.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>LEVEL 9:</b> innovates and widely advances occupational therapy                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops services for a population, works at the highest level of an organisation.</li> <li>Accountable for the performance of staff and services, thinks at a systems level.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Appendix 3: Resources for accessibility

Disability Rights UK has developed a [Factsheet for Adjustments](#) for a considerable number of special needs. The document offers a list of adjustments and approaches to improve communication.

Other charities have more information on specific needs. This list is a guide only and is not exhaustive.

- Action on Hearing Loss: [Communication tips for the general public](#)
- Hearing Link: [How to communicate with a hearing impaired person](#)
- Royal National Institute of Blind People: [Guide on how to meet, greet and guide a blind or partially sighted person](#)
- British Dyslexia Association Advice for Educators: [What do I need to know as a teacher?](#)
- National Autistic Society [Communication tips, so you can communicate more effectively](#) They also provide [Communication tools](#) to improve understanding.