

RCOT awards for learning, development and research

2024 funding round – notes for guidance

Introduction

Applying for an annual award is a competitive process. Please read these notes carefully, including the specific guidance for each individual award before you complete your application form.

These guidance notes have two sections:

- Generic guidance applicable for all the award categories
- Specific guidance notes for each award

The 2024 awards offer support for activities that start or take place during the calendar year **1 January–31 December 2024**. We don't provide support for activities that finished before 1 January 2024, or are planned to start after 31 December 2024.

We value the diversity of our membership and strongly encourage applications from all sections of our community, especially those from under-represented groups.

We'll treat the information you provide for an award application confidentially, processing it in line with the RCOT Data Protection Policy and GDPR legislation.

1. Eligibility and award criteria

- You must be a member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) when you apply for an RCOT Annual Award, and you'll need to include your membership number in the application form. Any other occupational therapy personnel who might benefit from award funding, such as those involved in a group activity or project collaboration, must also be BAOT members when submitting the application.
- Some awards are only open to certain membership categories – please check that you are eligible to apply for that award category.
- You can apply for more than one award if the applications are in different categories, but **you can't duplicate funding requests**. If you apply for more than one award towards the same activity/project, each application must be for funding for different parts of the activity. You can't ask for funding for the same part of the activity in two award categories, for example asking for travel costs from two different award categories.
- For some award categories, a small group (up to four people) may apply. If you are part of a group application, you must all be members in the eligible membership categories. For group applications, you will need to nominate a lead applicant as the main contact.

2. Completing the application form

- Our Annual Awards are normally personal awards, so you should complete the application form yourself. If your colleagues are applying for a similar or identical activity, such as a travel award to attend a conference, make sure that you complete your applications independently and avoid duplicating content.
- Submit application forms as a word document using a minimum Arial 11pt font.
- To ensure all applicants are treated equally, complete each section of the application within the word count allocated for that section. You must state the total number of words for each section where asked. If you cite references, these are included in the total word count for that section.
- Please don't include separate CVs with your application form as we won't consider them.
- Don't attach additional pages or information to the application, except where this is specifically requested (for example, evidence of ethical approval).
- Write in an anonymous style, using terms like 'the service, the Trust' rather than the name of your institution/workplace. We'll remove all identifying information from your application before external review. Using an anonymous writing style ensures important details aren't accidentally deleted, giving reviewers a complete picture of your proposal.
- Professional presentation, grammar and spelling are important. Always proofread your application before submitting it and ask a colleague to read it for you too.
- The award-specific marking schedule provides information about the criteria that your application will be assessed against. Use it as a guide for completing your application form and supporting statement.
- The [Career Development Framework: Guiding principles for occupational therapy](#) (second edition, RCOT 2021) offers a set of guiding principles for occupational therapy and a structured process to guide learning and development within our profession. Using the framework can help you describe how the award will contribute to your continuing professional development.

3. What to include in each section of the application form

<p>Personal details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will remove this section from your application and anonymise it before sending it for external review. If you are the main or lead applicant, you must provide full details. Co-applicants should be named in the application, but personal details are not required. • Remember to include your BAOT number, a daytime contact telephone number and email address in case we need to contact you.
<p>Activity details and supporting statement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the award-specific guidance notes below to learn about each award category, criteria and who can apply.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within each application form, you will find information to support you with what to include in each section of your application. This includes a supporting statement and project requirements if applicable. • Clearly identify how your project/activity is relevant to our profession and how it will benefit people who access occupational therapy services and/or carers. • Most award applications ask for a description of the overall aim of the project (what you intend to achieve, learn, or develop) and up to three objectives (how you will achieve the aim). Give careful attention to writing the aims and objectives clearly. For example, 'The overall aim of this project is to develop a community information group session for older people at risk of falling. The objectives are 1) to involve local community partnerships in setting up the group 2) develop a falls prevention information session that can be delivered independently by community groups 3) pilot the delivery of the group session and evaluate the effectiveness of the group'. • If an individual section of the form is 'not applicable' to your application, state this in the box. Don't delete or leave the section blank. If you are applying for more than one award, avoid cutting and pasting content as no two application forms are the same.
<p>Financial assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details of the expected costs of your activity/project and specify the amount of support you are asking for from the award. Evidence of estimates/quotes should be included where possible. All requests should be rounded up to whole pounds. • You can only apply for assistance with costs directly related to your activity/project. These must be actual expenses that you expect to happen. • If your activity is part of a larger project, please clearly identify the discrete activity/element that you are seeking funding for. • Funding is not available for indirect costs such as childcare, or to enhance your salary. Where an award is used to backfill salary costs, this can only be paid to the employing organisation not an individual. • If your activity/project is being supported, or considered for funding support, by any other organisation(s) including another RCOT award category, please give details. • Give details of any other sources of funding not already covered on the application form.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you secure funding from another source and no longer need support from an RCOT award, please email annualawards@rcot.co.uk as soon as possible. This way, we can withdraw your application.
<p>Supporting evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide some form of documentary evidence to confirm your participation in the planned activity/project. This might be from your manager, supervisor, employer, university, or a partner organisation. As an applicant, you can't authorise or sign supporting evidence to support your own activity. Refer to the award specific guidance notes for the evidence required for different awards. Start gathering supporting evidence early to make sure you can submit it at the same time as your application. We will accept copies of email correspondence as supporting evidence if it's clear that the email(s) originated from an appropriate organisation. If you provide a letter of support this should be a scanned copy of an original, or an e-letter on a headed template.

4. Submitting your application

- Submit your application by **5pm, 31 October 2023**. Applications received after this time won't be considered. We will confirm all applications via email.
- Submit your application forms in Word format (not PDF) via email to annualawards@rcot.co.uk.
- Submit supporting documentation electronically along with your application form. You can scan and send supporting documents in a PDF format. We do not accept hard copies of your application or supporting documents.
- Please keep a copy of everything you email to us. If you are successful, you will need to refer to your application form when you prepare the award audit documentation at the end of your activity/project (see paragraph 6.4).

5. What happens next?

- We will screen all the applications to make sure that all the eligibility criteria have been met.
- Your anonymised application will be assessed by two occupational therapists, one internal assessor (an RCOT staff member) and one external assessor. If you are applying for an externally funded award, your anonymised application form may be confidentially shared with the sponsor. They will then be asked to provide comments to the Awards Panel on the suitability of your application for funding.
- The Awards Panel, led by the Chair or Vice Chair of BAOT/RCOT Council, will make a final decision in early January 2024. Winners are selected based on the quality of the application as judged against the criteria stated in the marking schedule.

- Please note that the Awards Panel can use its discretion in making final decisions in all categories to benefit members, within the criteria of the awards available.
- You will be notified of the outcome by the end of January 2024. The selection process is confidential, and the decision of the Awards Panel is final. You will not receive further detailed individual feedback about your application. However, applicants who have been unsuccessful will receive general feedback and a report on the outcome of the funding round will be published in *OTnews*.

6. Successful applicants

6.1 Payment

- For those awards directly funded via RCOT, we will transfer the award money to the winner's nominated bank/building society account via BACs as soon as reasonably possible. Awards funded by external sponsors may have different payment arrangements.
- If the activity to be funded needs ethical approval, we will not make the payment of the award until we've received evidence of ethical approval.
- Where an award is to backfill salary costs, this can only be paid to the employing organisation not an individual.

6.2 Publication of outcome

- The names of the award winners and details of the funded activity will be published in *OTnews* and on the RCOT website.
- If you are successful in receiving an externally funded award, your name and contact details will be passed to the award sponsor. The award sponsor may wish to publish details of your success on their website and/or via other communication channels, such as a press release and may contact you directly about this.
- RCOT will celebrate your success as an Annual Award winner and provide more information about these celebrations.

6.3 Obligations on completion of the project/activity

The award winner will:

- provide a statement of expenditure confirming how the award money was spent. You also need to provide evidence of expenditure, such as invoices/receipts/tickets in your name.
- provide a one-page evaluation to show how they have achieved the aims/objectives set out in the supporting statement.
- submit a summary report (500 words) for publication on the RCOT website. We will provide guidance on this. We'll also send a copy of the summary report to the sponsor of externally funded awards, who may use it in their informational materials, including publishing it on their website.
- share the results as indicated on the application form.
- acknowledge the award sponsor in any presentations/publications related to the funded activity.

- share their experience of applying for and winning an award with RCOT. Let us know how the opportunity has contributed to their professional development and any tips for future applicants.

6.4. Submitting finance/audit documents

- A statement of expenditure, summary report and evaluation of aims/objectives should be submitted to annualawards@rcot.co.uk within three months of completion of the activity for which the funding was given.
- We'll provide further guidance to the Award winners on how to submit financial statements.
- We'll send reminder emails to Award winners near the end of project/activity date.

7. Enquiries

For all enquiries about the RCOT Annual Awards please contact annualawards@rcot.co.uk

Checklist before submitting your application

Did you:	
check the eligibility criteria to ensure that you are eligible to apply for a specific award?	
read carefully through all sections of the guidance notes, including the relevant award-specific guidance?	
seek advice on any parts of the form you were unsure about?	
refer to the marking schedule to understand the assessment criteria?	
target your application at a specific award/s?	
include explicit aims/objectives?	
tailor your supporting statement to the award?	

Have you:	
completed all the relevant sections of the form?	
included the word count where asked and completed the final declaration boxes?	
provided sufficient detail for the reviewers to be able to assess whether the criteria for the award have been achieved?	
obtained appropriate supporting evidence confirming your participation in the planned activity/project to submit with your application form?	
obtained evidence of ethical approval, where applicable, to submit with your application form?	
asked someone to proofread your application?	

Top tips

- Take a few minutes to check the award-specific guidance notes for all the available awards. You may find that you can apply for funding in a different category than the one you were initially considering.
- Download a copy of the marking criteria for the award from the RCOT website as a guide.

- You might find it helpful to discuss your ideas with a colleague, manager or academic tutor/supervisor. It can also be useful to talk through your intended outcomes and aims/objectives for the proposed activity to make sure they are clear.
- Ask a colleague to proofread your application. Aim to submit your application and documents in good time to avoid any last-minute panic or IT issues.
- Record the submission of your award application in your CPD portfolio and any reflections from this activity.
- Keep a copy of these guidance notes. If you are successful, you will need to refer to the section on 'successful applicants'. If you win an externally funded award, you may also like to find out more about the sponsor.
- Applying for an Annual Award is a competitive process. Pay close attention to the guidance notes and submission criteria; the impact of the project/activity for people who access occupational therapy services/carers and the profession and identify the benefits to your own continuing professional development.
- Check the RCOT website to see examples of previous winners' reports.

Externally funded awards

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists would like to thank the following organisations for their support in the 2024 Annual Awards funding round:

External sponsor awards

- The Constance Owens Trust (supporting The Barbara Tyldesley Student Award).
- Pearson Assessment (supporting the Pearson Award)
- Tunstall Healthcare Ltd. (supporting the Tunstall Award for creative use of technology for independence and care)
- Medequip UK (supporting the Medequip Innovation Award for Community Equipment)

Legacy funded awards

- The Institute of Social Psychiatry Award
- Eden Travel Award



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The Barbara Tyldesley Student Award

Key information

Open to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student members • Apprentice members
Number of awards	2
Funding amount	£500 each
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	3–5

Background

The Constance Owens Trust, based in Liverpool, established this award in 2014 in memory of their late Trustee, Barbara Tyldesley who was a previous President of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT).

This award aims to support a UK pre-registration student or apprentice who is participating in a role emerging or research placement, an approved practice placement overseas or is actively involved in a global health project. This may include virtual/online participation in an overseas project. If you are proposing digital activities, you must show how you have taken equity, accessibility and digital poverty into account.

Applicants must demonstrate how their experience will relate to their pre-registration studies and what benefits there may be to people who access occupational therapy services/carers.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. Open to UK pre-registration students/apprentices in an accredited pre-registration programme in the UK.
2. The award is not available towards pre-registration course fees or conference attendance.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Documentary evidence that confirms your participation in the planned activity and a letter/email of support from your programme lead with your application.
3. If you are an apprentice, your letter/email could be from a programme lead or supervisor in your workplace.
4. If you're working on a project, please provide a signed letter from the project/organisation facilitator who has authorised the project.
5. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

Innovation Award

Key information

Open to	All membership categories
Number of awards	1
Funding amount	£2000
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	1–9

Background

This award provides funding to support innovative or developmental projects. This could include, for example, audit, pilot projects or practice evaluation, or student/learner projects. We require that you emphasise how the project outcomes are likely to affect people who access occupational therapy services/carers and the profession and professional practice.

If you are proposing digital innovations, you must show how you have taken equity, accessibility, and digital poverty into account. You should also consider equity, diversity and belonging in your activity choices.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. You can use funding support for project-related activities including learning from specialist settings, speaker fees and backfill, presenting the work at topic-related UK (online) conferences or other dissemination costs, or other planned expenditures.
2. Open to all members for an individual or group activity. Where an application is made for a group activity, all member applicants will be acknowledged as award recipients, but the award funding will be made to the lead applicant whose details appear on the application form.
3. Student/apprentice member applicants must demonstrate how the activity will enhance their pre-registration studies.
4. This award doesn't support course/tuition fees or attendance at the RCOT Annual Conference.
5. We will not support applications for projects that only benefit a single business or institution commercially.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Please submit a copy of a signed letter/email using an institution/company header from the person who has authorised the project with your application.
3. Student member applications require a letter/email of support from a programme lead.
4. If you are an apprentice or associate, your letter/email could be from a programme lead or supervisor in your workplace.
5. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

Institute of Social Psychiatry Award

Key information

Open to	Professional members
Number of awards	1
Funding amount	£2000
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	5–9

Background

Social psychiatry focuses on the interpersonal and cultural context of mental health and wellbeing. The Institute of Social Psychiatry Award provides support for an individual occupational therapist towards a research or developmental project/activity in a topic relevant to occupational therapy and mental health, which also demonstrates relevance to social psychiatry.

If you are proposing digital activities, you must show how you have taken equity, accessibility, and digital poverty into account. You should also consider equity, diversity and belonging in your activity choices.

What the funding covers

The award can be used to support formal post graduate research activities and education.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.
3. Signed letter/email of support, on institution headed paper/email, from your research supervisor sponsor or a copy of a letter of acceptance, if the activity is related to an award-bearing course.

International Activity Award

Key information

Open to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional members Associate (support worker) members
Number of awards	2
Funding amount	£750 each
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	1–9

Background

This award aims to support an individual member’s active participation in an overseas activity. This might include, for example, presentation at an international conference (which may be virtual); sharing professional practice/expertise; or working online with an overseas community to provide occupational therapy.

If you are proposing digital activities, you must show how you have taken equity, accessibility, and digital poverty into account. You should also consider equity, diversity and belonging in your activity choices.

Details about the funding and conditions

- For UK-based BAOT members, the ‘overseas’ activity must take place outside the United Kingdom.
- This award is not open to pre-registration students/learners/apprentices. (BAOT student/learner/apprentice members seeking funding should refer to the eligibility table to see which award categories you can apply for, based on your type of membership).

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

- Download and complete the application form.
- Documentary evidence that confirms your participation in the planned activity for example, confirmation of registration for an international conference.
- If you are an associate member (support worker), letter of support from your supervisor at work.
- If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

Pearson Award

Key information

Open to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional members Student members Apprentice members
Number of awards	1
Funding amount	£750
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	3–9

Background

The Pearson Award for education, research or continuing professional development provides support for an individual occupational therapist or student/learner/apprentice member towards an activity that forms part of their education, research or continuing professional development. This may include participation in virtual/online activities.

Applications should reflect benefits to people who access occupational therapy services/carers and/or contribute to the development of the profession. Student/learner/apprentice member applicants must demonstrate how the proposed activity will enhance their pre-registration studies.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. This award is not available towards pre-registration course fees or course/tuition fees for university award bearing courses – such as diplomas, Master’s, PhD.
2. Open to UK pre-registration students/apprentices in an accredited pre-registration programme in the UK.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Documentary evidence that confirms your participation in the planned activity – for example:
 - signed letter/email of support, on company or institution headed paper/email, from a tutor, research supervisor/sponsor or line manager.
 - confirmation of a place on a relevant (non-award bearing) course.
3. Student member applicants must provide a letter/email of support from their programme lead.
4. Apprentice members must provide a letter/email of support from their programme lead or supervisor at work.
5. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

RCOT Annual Award for Student Entrepreneurship and Leadership

Key information

Open to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student members • Apprentice members
Number of awards	1
Funding amount	£500
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	3–5

Background

This award provides support towards a pre-registration student/learner/apprentice entrepreneurial or leadership activity. This could involve a project, community engagement activity or new service development with a focus on the relevance of the activity to occupational therapy and benefit to people who access services.

Engagement in entrepreneurial and leadership activities and opportunities can be enriching and creative elements of your student/learner/apprentice experience, can develop character and help prepare you for life beyond study. Entrepreneurship and leadership activities can take place in small or large group settings, across a range of curricula or be subject-specific and contribute to a service or another area of society.

The project may be used to take forward a business plan linked to a pre-registration module related to the development of entrepreneurial and leadership skills in occupational therapists. This may include virtual/online activities and participation. If you are proposing digital activities, you must show how you have taken accessibility and digital poverty into account. You should also consider equity, diversity and belonging in your activity choices.

Applicants must also demonstrate how the proposed activity will enhance their career development.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. Open to UK pre-registration students/apprentices in an accredited pre-registration programme in the UK.
2. Individuals or a small group (up to four people) may apply. If a group application is made, all applicants must be BAOT student/apprentice members, all applicants must complete the 'Personal details' section and a lead applicant should be nominated for correspondence and payment of funding.
3. The award is not available towards pre-registration course fees, or conference attendance.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Documentary evidence that confirms participation in the planned activity for all applicants – for example, an email or signed letter on company or institution headed paper from the programme lead, practice educator or project manager.

3. Apprentice members must provide a letter/email of support from their programme lead or supervisor at work.
4. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

The Tunstall Award for creative use of technology for independence and care

Key information

Open to	All membership categories
Number of awards	1
Funding amount	£1500
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	1–9

Background

The Tunstall Award for creative use of technology for independence and care provides funding for creative use of technology to support individuals, communities, or occupational therapy service delivery in a real-world setting. You should emphasise the likely impact of the project and/or the positive outcomes for the people who access occupational therapy services, and/or their carers, and professional practice.

If you are proposing digital activities, you must show how you have taken equity, accessibility, and digital poverty into account. You should also consider equity, diversity and belonging in your activity choices.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. Funding support can be used for project-related activities including staff time/backfill, evaluation costs, dissemination costs or other planned expenditure such as equipment.
2. Open to all BAOT members for individual applications.
3. Student/apprentice member applicants must demonstrate how the activity will enhance their pre-registration studies.
4. This award doesn't support course/tuition fees or attendance at the RCOT Annual Conference.
5. We will not support applications for projects that only benefit a single business or institution commercially.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Please submit a copy of a signed letter/email using an institution/company header from the person who has authorised the project with your application.
3. Student member applications require a letter/email of support from a programme lead.
4. If you are an apprentice or associate, your letter/email could be from a programme lead or supervisor in your workplace.
5. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

Eden Travel Award

Key information

Open to	All membership categories
Number of awards	2
Funding amount	£750 (each)
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	1–9

Background

This legacy award provides funding to be used to cover travel costs only, which are related to a planned professional development or a learning activity. The travel can be UK based or international.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. We expect members to make efforts to seek reasonable prices and most appropriate means of transport.
2. Travel costs/expenses does not cover accommodation, visas, registration fees and travel insurance.
3. The date of the travel must occur during the Annual Awards period (1 January 2024–31 December 2024).
4. Due to unforeseen circumstances, if you are unable to travel or an event/activity is cancelled, you will need to inform us as soon as possible by emailing annualawards@rcot.co.uk.
5. Open to all BAOT members. Individuals or a small group (up to four people) may apply. If a group application is made, all applicants must be members. All applicants must complete the 'Personal Details' section and a lead applicant should be nominated for correspondence and payment of funding.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Please submit your application with documents which evidence travel costs and confirms your participation in the planned activity for example, confirmation of your place at the learning event you are travelling to.
3. If you are an associate member (support worker), letter of support from your supervisor at work.
4. If applicable, please provide evidence of ethical approval.

Medequip Innovation Award for Community Equipment

Key information

Open to	Professional members
Number of awards	1
Funding amount	£1,500
Career levels (<i>RCOT Career Development Framework</i>)	5–9

Background

The Medequip Innovation Award for Community Equipment provides funding to support an innovative or developmental project focused on the provision of community equipment. The project needs to relate to one or more of the following criteria: personalisation, choice, sustainability, or successful outcomes.

Details about the funding and conditions

1. Individuals or a small group (up to four people) may apply. If a group application is made, all applicants must be members. All applicants must complete the “Personal Details” section and a lead applicant should be nominated for correspondence and payment of funding.
2. The project should show how a small amount of funding could make a big impact.
3. Funding may be used towards backfill for staff time to carry out the project.
4. If you are considering virtual participation in a project or online innovations, you will need to address any barriers that can prevent participation.
5. The funding cannot be used for course/tuition fees or attendance at the RCOT Annual Conference.
6. We will not support applications for projects that only benefit a single business or institution commercially.

How to apply

Please submit the following documents listed below to annualawards@rcot.co.uk:

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Submit a signed letter/email on company or institution headed paper/email from the person who has authorised the project/research activity with your application form.
3. If applicable, provide evidence of ethical approval.