

## GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EUROPE REGISTER OF EXPERTS

### BACKGROUND

In 2015, COTEC established a Register of Experts in line with the priorities identified by the European targets for 2020 and the WHO key areas for action. COTEC was successful in attracting over 100 people from 16 European National Occupational Therapy Association nominations. Some associations made multiple nominations for an Expert area, others only one, some have nominated a specialist group and some associations have made no nominations.

The purpose of establishing the Register was to facilitate contact with known Experts in a particular area in order to field the best representation and best available evidence in a timely way, when COTEC was asked to respond to a consultation or attend a significant meeting.

At the COTEC General assembly 2017 it was agreed that this register would become the basis of the Register of Experts for Occupational Therapy Europe (OT-EU), expanding the pool of Experts, moving towards representation and visibility across practice, education and research.

At the OT-EU Coordinating Group meeting held early 2018, this was welcomed, and the recruitment and remit of the group reviewed.

Key areas identified so far include mental health, the ageing population, dementia, children and adolescents, poverty reduction, primary care, equal access to health care systems, ICT-solutions and e-health innovations, employment, oncology, palliative care, refugees and displaced people, neurology and rehabilitation. This is not an exhaustive list, and the need to be responsive to arising priorities and therefore needs to be a flexible approach.

In order to be in a state of preparedness and capture the broadest spectrum of expertise the OT-EU Coordinating Group agreed to self nomination by individual Occupational Therapists. This does not stop member organisations initiating a nomination (with the Occupational Therapist's permission) to be included on the Register of Experts. It is always preferable that nominees are member of their countries' professional organisation and/or have an affiliation with an educational or research institution.

In this way the OT-EU Coordinating Group - and the Executive Committees/Boards for COTEC, ENOTHE and, in due course, ROTOS - will have direct contact with the individuals nominated in the event that an urgent response to a call for Experts is required. As and when an invitation for an Expert is received, the Executive Committee will clarify the expectations required in terms of time commitment, the skills required (e.g. knowing the evidence base, clinical experience, ability to advocate for our profession, knowledge of educational systems) financial arrangements and the brief for the invitation, with the individual concerned.

As European wide organisations COTEC, ENOTHE, ROTOS and Occupational Therapy Europe will always strive to provide opportunities for participation by as many countries as possible, whilst ensuring that the expertise matches the need.

There is also the expectation that there will be an agreed method of reporting back.

(Please see feedback form)

## CURRENT STATUS OF THE REGISTER OF EXPERTS

COTEC Register of Experts was established in 2015. Nominations were asked to be sent through the Member Associations to ensure that nominees are members of the association and/or recognised Experts in their field. During the COTEC Governance day 2015 the Member Associations reported that the nomination process should be kept like this because they want to be involved and know who is listed in the Register from their association.

*This will remain in place with the additions of a self nomination route, and nomination by invitation to join the register from the OT-EU Coordinating Group.*

Nominees will receive a letter of confirmation which they are asked to return. Experts will be contacted annually and asked to confirm their willingness to stay on the Register

Please see Letter to Nominees Register of Experts.

*This will remain in place - changing from a COTEC Register to an Occupational Therapy Europe Register.*

As a courtesy Occupational Therapy Europe will inform the relevant National Association of nominations via other routes than themselves.

Nominations can be submitted at any time and the call for nominations is circulated to National Associations a couple of times per year and through all relevant websites and newsletters.

*This will remain in place.*

COTEC Executive Committee will forward information on relevant events, publications, consultations or projects for the Expert groups and in that way offer the Experts an opportunity to be involved in the development of European social and health care issues. All Experts also receive the COTEC Newsletter four times a year.

*This will initially remain in place, to be reviewed when Occupational Therapy Europe is fully launched.*

The first meeting of the Register of Experts was arranged June 2016 in Galway as many Experts were present at the 1st joint COTEC-ENOTHE Congress.

The option of an Expert meeting should be considered when planning European wide meetings.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE OT-EU REGISTER OF EXPERTS

What is an Expert Group and who is an Expert?

European OT Expert Groups - Guidelines for Establishment and Management –document was prepared by an appointed working group in November 2011. The paper defines Experts and Expert groups as follows:

“Expert groups are made up of people who are expert in their field. The definition of an Expert can be expressed in a number of ways.

We would suggest the following attributes describe an Expert;

- Intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding
- Vision of what is possible and be an effective advocate for the profession
- An ability to conceptualise and look at an issue from a range of perspectives (strategic thinking)
- A deliberative approach
- Ability to work successfully in a team
- Ability to consult effectively with colleagues/stakeholders
- A recognition of the boundaries to own knowledge and thinking and the acceptance of fallibility

Individuals may develop their expertise as communicators, practitioners, managers, educators, or researchers and some will have expertise across all or a number of these areas of practice.

It should be noted that experts may also be invited from outside the occupational therapy profession. Service users, students, other professionals, or members of other expert panels may be co-opted onto the working group as required.”

How to find the Experts?

Call for nominations should be sent to COTEC Member Associations, ENOTHE member universities and the ROTOS network. Nominations should be sent to Occupational Therapy Europe by the associations or the universities or individual Occupational Therapists.

Process of nomination;

Through submission of an up to date CV and covering letter identifying the preferences for engagement in order to best match people to events e.g., speaking at conferences, working groups, political meetings, membership of an Expert group etc.

Whilst there is often the need to field an individual Expert, there are also occasions when an Expert group is needed.

## How to define the need for Expert groups - Task and Finish Expert Groups and Standing Expert Groups

There may be a need to set up an Task and Finish Expert Group to respond to a particular issue which needs more than individual Expert input - this would be set up on a time limited basis to deliver a defined response and usually limited to 8-10 people in order to make coordination and delivery manageable.

Standing Expert Groups - the topics for these groups should be based on the priorities for WHO Health 2020 and Europe Health 2020 (or similar documents). The approximate length of time to be spent and the expected output (e.g.: report, article, presentation) will be identified at the outset and reviewed by the Occupational Therapy Europe Coordinating Group on a regular basis. The membership of these groups should not be restricted, but as inclusive as possible whilst remaining manageable.

These groups will, from time to time be reviewed by the OT-EU Coordinating Group to identify the need for a new Standing Expert Group, or to terminate an existing group.

## Composition of an Expert group

When considering the composition of and nominees to a certain group, the OT-EU Coordinating Group (or the appointed working group) will select the members based on their experience and CV. Geographical representation of as many European countries as possible should be considered within the participants.

## How to use the Expert groups or individuals

Occupational Therapy Europe may turn to individual Experts or Expert groups when they need the expertise in answering consultations, preparing articles or presentations or when asked for representation at a certain event. Work of experts for Occupational Therapy Europe is on voluntary bases. OT-EU Coordinating Group (or an appointed working group) will clarify the expectations required in terms of time commitment, financial arrangements and the brief for the invitation, with the individual concerned. Expenses will be covered by Occupational Therapy Europe when an Expert is asked to represent Occupational Therapy Europe at a meeting, congress or similar and a written contract of this will be prepared. The representative will be asked to write a report of the event. When face-to-face meeting of Experts is required, it should be agreed with the OT-EU Coordinating Group, who retain overall responsibility for the strategic direction and consequent choices and actions taken.

Apart from using the register of experts, experts can be identified by searching well known international databases like Pubmed, Medline, Cinahl and OT seeker.

Experts can be put forward by peers.

## References;



Draft guidelines for OT-EU Expert groups (Anu Söderström 2016)

OT-EU Register of Experts - Review of Register (Anne Lawson - Porter 2017)

5th COTEC General Assembly. Vienna 2017