

OT-EU Register of Experts - Review of Register of Experts June 2017

Background to Review

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 has been successful in attracting around 108 people drawn from 16 European National Association nominations. Some countries have nominated multiple people for an expert area, others only one, others have nominated a specialist group and some NA have not nominated anyone.

The purpose of establishing the register was to make it easier to contact known experts in a particular field so that COTEC could have the best representation and the best available evidence in a timely way for the occasions when COTEC was asked to respond to a consultation or attend a significant meeting. The Register as it currently stands has occupational therapists drawn from practice, education and research nominated by their NA.

The current topic areas are as follows:

- Ageing
- Dementia
- Mental Health
- Poverty Reduction
- Children and Adolescents
- Primary Care
- ICT and Innovations
- Equal Access to Health Care

Rationale for the Review

As stated, the Register was established in 2015 by COTEC, and for the past two years the names of people on the Register have been affirmed each year and new names have been added.

A number of issues have been identified that have informed this review:

- Only around half of COTEC members have nominated experts meaning that the Register is not representative of the whole of Europe.
- Some countries have as many as five experts in a part of the Register which might create a bias of opinion in creating European statements or making representation.
- Existing topic areas may no longer be relevant, may be too broad in interest e.g. mental health, children and adolescents, and new areas may need to be added.
- As we continue to work towards one strong voice for Europe through OT-EU there is a need to make the Register inclusive of ENOTHE and ROTOS who may wish to make their own nominations to the Register, although the Register already includes

individuals from education and research but nominated only from NAs. This would mean that the Register of Experts would form part of the OT-EU brand and not solely of COTEC.

Review of Current topic areas and addition of new areas

As stated, some of the current topics are very broad and others may no longer be relevant and / or not reflect occupational therapy practice and developments.

It is proposed that the following topic areas are rationalised:

- Mental Health should have two subsections - adult mental health and children and adolescent mental health
- New sections should be added on:
 - work and employment,
 - migration and refugees,
 - health promotion,
 - social and community care
 - neurological issues
 - rehabilitation
 - client / service user shared decision making

What makes an expert?

The procedure for identifying an expert has rested with the individual NA thus far. It is the case that OT-EU needs experts from across Europe whilst recognising that an expert in one country may have expertise at a different level to another country or indeed may have no experts at all.

COTEC and ENOTHE established a working group in 2011 and the following is taken from that report:

'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*
- *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 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 groups as required.' (Expert Groups Working Group, 2011)

The OT-EU Coordinating Group have added some additional criteria since this publication and have included the following criteria for consideration:

Experts may be individuals who:

- Are members of a specialist group or section. These people could be outside the profession or represent a multidisciplinary group.
- Have published in the topic area
- Continue to update their CPD in the topic area
- Have high level presentation skills and have presented on the specialist topic area
- Have a substantial network
- Can be available
- Can communicate in a professional level of English

Process and criteria for nomination to the OT-EU Register of Experts (taken and adapted from a paper written by Anu Söderström for COTEC and ENOTHE, 2016)

How to find the experts?

Call for nominations should be sent to COTEC Member Associations and ENOTHE member universities and the ROTOS standing committee. Nominations should be sent to OT-EU by the associations, the universities or ROTOS. Should an expert wish to nominate a colleague, this should be done through the association/university.

How to define the need for Expert groups on the Register

OT-EU Coordinating Group (or an appointed working group) may from time to time review the list of Expert groups and identify a need for new Expert groups or terminate an existing group. The topic of the groups should be based on the priorities for WHO Health 2020 and Europe Health 2020 (or similar documents).

Groups are elected for a period of three years at a time, the first term being 2018-2020.

Composition of an Expert group

Groups should have a maximum of 15 people and no more than three people from one country may be in one Expert group. Should there be more nominees to a certain group, the OT-EU coordinating group (or the appointed working group) may select the members based on their experience and CV. Geographical representation of as many European countries as possible should be considered, being mindful that the required level of expertise may not be available in all countries.

How to use the Expert groups

OT-EU may turn to Expert groups when they need specific, evidence based expertise in answering consultations, preparing articles or presentations or when asked for

representation at a certain event. 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 OT-EU when an expert is asked to represent OT-EU at a meeting, congress or similar and a written contract of this will be prepared. The representative will be obliged to write a report of the event, for which a template already exists, and a short report for relevant newsletters. When face-to-face meeting of Experts is required, it should be agreed with OT-EU.

Timeframe for OT-EU Register for Experts

- COTEC Register of Experts will be used as until now till the OT-EU Register of Experts will open
- October 2016 – January 2018 - the Guidelines for OT-EU Register of Experts will be worked on, the Register will be published on OT-EU website: definition with information about the developing of the Register to be open in 2018
- June 2017 – Guidelines of OT-EU Register of Experts finished and ready for circulation with COTEC GA Agenda July 31st
- October 2017 – both GAs to approve the Guidelines of OT-EU Register of Experts

***The following steps will require that both GAs approve the proposed guidelines*

- November 2017 – call for nominations for Register of Experts circulated to COTEC Members and ENOTHE Members and ROTOS, deadline for nominations January 2018
- January 2018 – OT-EU Register of Experts 2018-2020 will be launched
- February 2018 – names of Experts listed on OT-EU website (name, affiliation, country)
- Annual review of the Register, new term 2021-2023 prepared in 2020

Action required

The GAs of COTEC and ENOTHE and the ROTOS standing committee are invited to consider and approve the following:

- The establishment of an OT-EU Register of Experts
- The criteria for what makes an expert
- The amended topic areas
- The process and criteria for nomination to the Register
- The proposed timeline for finalisation

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The Expert Group working group, 2011

5th COTEC General Assembly, October 1st, 2017, Vienna