



Royal College of  
General Practitioners

# Applying for General Practice Registration via the Portfolio Pathway

Guidance for applicants

## What is the Portfolio Pathway and who can apply?

The pathway is designed for doctors who trained and qualified as a general practitioner outside the UK. Applicants submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that they have achieved the knowledge, skills and experience required to work unsupervised as a general practitioner in the UK. Applicants are asked to demonstrate their capability in 13 broad areas. The application is measured against the standards of our [general practice training curriculum](#).

Before applying via the Portfolio Pathway, applicants must either hold a qualification in general practice or have completed at least six months specific training in general practice anywhere in the world.

Successful applicants are included on the GP register. They must then complete an [induction programme](#) to prepare for independent practice in the National Health Service (NHS).

## How do I apply and how long does the process take?

You apply online via the General Medical Council (GMC) website and upload your supporting evidence electronically. You structure your evidence around the 13 curriculum capabilities, uploading documents to the relevant capability.

The GMC reviews the evidence and may ask for more evidence or for more information and will write to your nominated referees. This part of the process may take up to three months. Once the GMC is content that the application is ready for evaluation, the complete application is sent to the RCGP.

The RCGP is given a period of seven weeks to evaluate the evidence and submit a detailed report to the GMC. The GMC then has five weeks to consider the College's report and recommendation, make their final decision and write to you confirming the outcome. If your application is unsuccessful, you will be given specific recommendations outlining how you can meet the standard required and how to make a review application with submission of new evidence. It is also possible to appeal the decision.

## How is my application assessed?

Each application is considered holistically and on its individual merits. Simply, your evidence will be considered in the round to determine whether it demonstrates the curriculum standard across the capability areas.

The quality of the evidence you present will determine whether your application is successful so you should allow sufficient time to prepare your evidence carefully.

A variety of evidence should be provided to demonstrate each capability. Some types of evidence, for example, case studies, can be used more than once as they often provide useful evidence in several areas.

## What kind of supporting evidence do I need to provide?

Advice on the evidence that we expect to see is provided in the [Specialty Specific Guidance](#). We also recommend that you visit our [web page](#), study our Mini Guides, watch our videos for applicants and review examples of suitable evidence and other [resources](#) provided there. If you have a question or would like to discuss your evidence, please contact the GP Specialist Applications team: [gpsa@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:gpsa@rcgp.org.uk) or telephone 020 3188 7656.

## What are the RCGP evaluators looking for?

The evaluators look for good quality, relevant evidence to demonstrate the 13 capabilities. They also want to see evidence that you have a good understanding of what to expect as a general practitioner in the UK, how this differs from your current practice and the skills you may need to develop.

Reading and learning about NHS general practice and your personal reflections on your learning should form a key part of your evidence. Your Personal Development Plan should include the learning needs you have identified before starting work in the UK and detail how you will address these.

As the curriculum and its 13 capabilities place particular emphasis on comprehensive care and understanding the context of general practice in the UK, the evaluators expect your evidence to reflect this. Your case studies, in particular, are likely to demonstrate this. Try to include your thoughts and reflections on how the case might be managed in general practice in the UK.

Evidence which shows your personal, active participation is much stronger and will carry more weight than evidence which simply reports it. For example, your personal reflections on a challenging case or the protocol you designed in response to a significant event will be stronger evidence than a testimonial, certificate or minutes of a meeting.

Poorly presented evidence that is difficult to read and interpret, with no explanation or comments about its relevance to the capability you wish to demonstrate is unhelpful. Make sure that all your documents are clear and easy to read. Add a cover page or introductory paragraph telling the evaluators why you have included the evidence and how it relates to the capability.

Think about whether you might be including too many documents, or documents that add very little in terms of demonstrating the 13 curriculum capabilities. A lot of extraneous evidence is distracting. As a guide, we suggest that your application should contain no more than 600 pages of evidence.

You can find more advice in the Specialty Specific Guidance and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

If you have a question or would like to discuss your evidence, please contact the GP Specialist Applications team: [gpsa@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:gpsa@rcgp.org.uk) or telephone 020 3188 7656.

### **Who should I choose for my referees?**

You will need to nominate a minimum of three referees to provide [a structured report](#) in support of your application. Your primary referee should be your current employer or the general practitioner with whom you have worked most recently, or the programme or medical director responsible for your recent educational supervision. At least two of your referees should be general practitioners. Doctors to whom you refer patients or with whom you work in a management, collegial or leadership role can also be nominated.

Try to choose referees who can comment authoritatively on your skills and experience as a general practitioner from their own direct observation in the last five years.

### **Who evaluates Portfolio Pathway applications in General Practice?**

Applications are considered by a panel of experienced clinicians and members of the RCGP who then make a recommendation to the GMC. The final decision to approve or decline the application is made by the GMC.

### **If my application is not successful what are my options?**

You can apply for [a review](#) within 12 months of receiving the GMC's decision and submit new evidence. In a review application, you only provide evidence to meet the specific recommendations given when your original application was declined. Alternatively, you can appeal the decision or make a full application again at a later date. Most unsuccessful applicants choose to apply for a review.

If you are given a large number of recommendations, you may want to consider applying to the general practice training programme. If you would like your experience overseas to be considered as counting towards the three year training programme, you can apply to have this considered after six months in training. Your progress in your first six months of training is considered at the same time. You can read about the application process for Combined Training on our [website](#).