



Creating a Portfolio

Purpose

All doctors are required to keep an accurate and up to date portfolio in some form as part of their career development. At each career stage, it can play a role in selection for specialty training, progression through training or revalidation to practice.

If you are in a training Foundation post in the UK you will have access to an electronic e-portfolio when you are appointed to the Foundation Programme.

If you are a Specialty Trainee you will then maintain a portfolio which will be determined by the Royal College. Each specialty will have different requirements and formats and this is usually assessed online by an annual ARCP Panel.

Foundation doctors usually make use of the Eportfolio as part of the interview process for specialty training for most training programmes. Usually one of the interview stations involves assessing the portfolio and this counts towards the overall interview score. At this stage, all or part must be downloaded to a paper based version and presented at interview.

Structure

The basic structure of the portfolio is set out by the training programme you are in, but it is still important to “personalise” and make it stand out, especially for recruitment.

The Foundation portfolio can be downloaded and organised under the existing headings specified in the online version. However, you can enhance it further by adding additional content that falls outside the content specific of the e-portfolio e.g. reflections, photographs, achievements, interests outside medicine.

However you organize it, it is important to make sure that sections are separated, indexed and material well-organized. This makes a positive statement about you and will make a panel's job easier.

Content

The core content of the portfolio will be determined by the training programme in line with evidence needed for assessment. This will include progression evidence such as mini CEXs, DOPs, posters, conferences, research and audits need to be included. Original certificates (Medical Degree, Membership of Royal Colleges, other qualifications e.g. MRCP) will also need to be included or uploaded.

It is therefore helpful to collect this as you go along and set it out, so that you can easily see evidence gaps. Leaving portfolio maintenance to the last minute can lead to omissions and lost opportunity to address weaker areas.

The portfolio is an evidence log but is also a tool for reflection, so include case studies about your training which highlight good areas of practice. Critical incident reflections also show how you have learned from challenging situations and thought about what you would do differently the next time. This shows that you are not only working through the process of medical training but learning and taking note of your experiences.

Key point about portfolios:

The portfolio is a record of your training and is not a tick box exercise. The GMC revalidation process has embedded the portfolio of continuing practice as an important part of the lifelong learning process and a reflection tool for all doctors, from junior trainees to senior consultants.

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Top Tips for Foundation Doctors:

Aim to build at least one to two hours into your working week to ensure you are collecting and uploading required evidence from training.

- Work on reflection – find a reflection “buddy” and help each other to develop cases and stories. It’s often easier to think experiences through with a “critical friend”.
- Think back to significant achievements at medical school and include anything that is relevant to your career choices.
- If you are considering a specific specialty, find opportunities to generate evidence that shows you are genuinely interested in this career path e.g. talks, conferences, posters. Include this in a specialty interview portfolio (but remember to showcase different things for different specialties!).
- Check the Royal College recruitment websites for Applicant Guidelines, well before you begin preparing for applications. Find out exactly what is expected for your interview – some may not require a hard copy portfolio at all and some may only ask for certain items.
- Look also at guidelines for self-assessment of your evidence – some specialties will ask you to score your portfolio against a grid, which you will then discuss at interview.
- Don’t see your portfolio as something that’s over and done with after F2 – you will need all of it and more as you continue your medical career.
- If you spend time in another activity or role before applying for Specialty Training, keep adding to your portfolio. This may include locating, work or travel abroad, further study, volunteering etc.
- Make sure you have downloaded everything before access to the Foundation e-Portfolio ends.
- Learn to love your portfolio! It will be with you throughout your career – so make it

work for you.

Additional Information

Further guidance for the e-portfolio for Foundation Doctors can be found at:

<http://bit.ly/1uAgzoB>

An interesting article about the importance of an e-portfolio:

BMJ Careers Article – The e-portfolio, Avinash Aujayeb

<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/viewarticle.html?id=2991>

GMC Trainee Doctor Article 14: Application Guidelines

This is the portfolio route to the GMC Specialist register for doctors who progress their careers towards being a consultant via SAS pathways

http://www.gmc.uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/ssg.asp

UK Health Careers Website:

Contains guidance and top tips for setting up and maintaining a portfolio:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/>

Specialty Specific guidance if you are a Core or Higher trainee:

All Royal College Websites will have information about keeping an up to date portfolio for their specialty training, look here for specialty-specific information.