

A Guide to Creating an Effective Evidence Folder

What is an Evidence Portfolio?

An Evidence Portfolio (also known as “evidence folder” or “application portfolio”) is a record of your learning, professional development and achievements. It supports a process of continuing professional development and provides a vehicle for demonstrating this to another person.

How does Evidence Portfolio differ from CV or e-Portfolio?

A CV provides a short summary of your employment history, qualifications, skills and experience, with a strong emphasis on specific skills relating to the position applied for.

e-Portfolio allows you to store evidence progress towards completion of a particular training programme in an electronic format. When you attend interviews or selection centres for specialty training, they will not have access to your e-portfolio.

In contrast, a portfolio is a physical collection of documentary evidence that learning and development have taken place. Most selection panels will expect you to bring this “evidence folder” to the interview to demonstrate that you meet the person specification and have the skills required for the post.

Apart from applications for specialty training, an evidence folder may be required when applying for ‘career grade’ posts and when going through appraisals or revalidation.

How to compile and structure an Evidence Portfolio?

The interviewers will form an impression of your organisational skills by how easily you can find your way around the portfolio and identify relevant examples.

Usually, you will have guidance on how your specialty selection panel want your portfolio to look (layout, ordering and content). Please familiarise yourself with their specific requirements well in advance of your interview.

This guide aims to give you extra tips on creating an effective evidence portfolio.

When you bring your portfolio to a selection centre, the assessors will have 10 minutes to verify your evidence against the claims you made on the application form. You need to ensure that your evidence folder is well structured, and all the relevant items can be easily located in seconds.

- ✓ Invest in high quality ring binder and durable plastic pockets with pre-printed or insertable subject divider tabs. You will also need lots of good quality simple clear pockets.

- ✓ Your portfolio should start with the main contents page, which lists the main sections with a corresponding index tab number. If available, follow your specialty's guidance on the exact order of the sections.

In general, your evidence portfolio is likely to have the following main sections:

1. Additional degree(s)
2. Postgraduate degrees and qualifications
3. Prizes and awards
4. Training courses attended
5. Publications
6. Presentations
7. Audit / Quality Improvement project
8. Teaching experience
9. Commitment to specialty
10. Achievements outside of medicine
11. Procedures (log book, DOPS, mini-CEX, etc.)
12. Other evidence (specify)

3) You can insert an A4 with a list of contents for *each section* into the relevant pocket with a tab number, so that the interviewers can have an overview of what evidence they will find in a particular section. You can then place each piece of evidence (e.g. a course certificate) in a simple clear pocket in the corresponding section of the evidence folder.

For example, you can insert an A4 sheet entitled "Commitment to specialty" into the pocket number 9 listing available evidence that can be found behind it:

- Summary of a Special Study Module undertaken at medical school (related to specialty of choice);
- A signed letter from <...> detailing Taster Week activities;
- A leaflet designed for patients with <...>.

4) Behind the contents page, put a copy of your CV in a clear plastic wallet (if the interview states not to bring this, you can always remove it but it's safer to have it with you just in case).

What may count as acceptable "evidence"?

If available, follow the guidelines available as a part of your specialty's application pack. Check whether your selection panel will require original documents or copies.

Below are some ideas of what would generally count as suitable evidence (this list is not exhaustive):

Degrees and Qualifications:

- ✓ Exam certificate, OR
- ✓ Official letter from awarding body stating 'pass'.

Prizes/scholarship:

- ✓ Prize certificate, OR
- ✓ Official letter from an awarding body.

Publications:

- ✓ Printout of your paper/book chapter (including reference), OR
- ✓ If it is an e-publication, print it out (including reference) and indicate where it was published;
- ✓ If accepted for publication but not yet published, letter of acceptance from journal.

Oral presentation at conference:

- ✓ Conference programme with your name and title of presentation, OR
- ✓ Letter of acceptance from conference organiser;
- ✓ A printout of your PowerPoint slides can be included but unlikely to be sufficient without one of the above.

Poster at conference:

- ✓ Conference programme showing title of poster and your name, OR
- ✓ Letter of acceptance from organiser,
- ✓ A4 copy of your poster can be included but unlikely to be sufficient without one of the above.

Audit or QI project:

- ✓ Project summary on A4 (including charts/graphs and outcomes) signed by Supervisor, OR
- ✓ Letter from audit department confirming project completion, OR
- ✓ Feedback from presentation (including your name and name of project) and presentation slides (for projects already presented) - signed by Supervisor.

Teaching courses:

- ✓ Certificate of attendance.

Teaching delivered:

- ✓ A programme of event, confirming your name, date and place where delivered, OR
- ✓ Letter from event organiser confirming your name, date and place where delivered and any feedback received, OR
- ✓ Feedback forms including your name, date and title of teaching session.

Teaching Programme designed and led:

- ✓ Official letter from your training administrator confirming your Organiser role + a training/teaching programme (including dates and presenters' names).

Instructor on courses:

- ✓ Course programme showing your name and date delivered, OR
- ✓ Letter from course organiser confirming your role.

Taster week:

- ✓ Letter from supervising Consultant(s) with dates and details of experience, AND
- ✓ A paragraph of your personal reflection (e.g. from your e-Portfolio) on what knowledge/skills you gained.

Attendance at meetings/events/conferences:

- ✓ Certificate of attendance.

Achievement outside of medicine:

Requirements for evidence are less strict than for other sections, and will depend on what you state are your achievements. For example:

- ✓ For voluntary work, include a letter from an authorised person confirming your contribution and over what period of time you supported their cause(s);
- ✓ For a society committee role, include a letter from an authorised person (e.g. current President of that society) confirming your role, dates and what your contribution was during that period of time.

Be aware:

- A single piece of work cannot be awarded marks in two separate sections (e.g. if you presented your audit project at a regional meeting, you will not get marks in *both* the “Presentations” and “Audits” sections, or if your oral presentation won a prize, marks cannot be gained in both the ‘Prizes’ and ‘Presentations’ sections). If a shortlisting scoring framework is available for your specialty (see below), it can help you decide which section will yield the greatest number of points.
- A large project (e.g. your research as a part of an MD/PhD) that generates a presentation as well as a publication may gain points in both of these sections.
- Teaching presentations should be mentioned in the “Teaching” (not ‘Presentations’) section.

Importance of Shortlisting Scoring Frameworks

Shortlisting scoring frameworks (also called self-scoring, autoscores, automated scores or self-assessment for shortlisting) outline the weighting that is placed on each domain (e.g. publications, presentations) in the context of your application. These are the criteria that your completed application form will be scored against and to which you need your “evidence portfolio” to correspond.

Some specialties make shortlisting scoring frameworks publicly available on the lead recruiter’s website, at the discretion of the recruiting organisation. For example:

CT1 Recruitment autoscores for achievements in seven assessed domains:

<http://www.ct1recruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/applying/application-scoring>

Psychiatry ST1 and ST2 shortlisting scoring framework can be found here:

http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/Shortlisting%20Framework%20ST1%20and%20ST2%202016_2.pdf



Tip: If there is no specific shortlisting scoring framework available for your specialty at the time of your application, you can get some ideas about weighting that is placed on various skills and experience domains by doing an online search for scoring frameworks from previous years or other specialties.

Recommendations for creating a good evidence portfolio

- 1) **Plan early!** Exams, publications and audits take months to years to complete. It can take some time to get your Supervisor and others to write confirmation letters or to countersign various pieces of evidence in your Evidence Portfolio to confirm validity of your claims. You also need to allow sufficient time to photocopy various pieces of evidence, if required by your specialty.
- 2) Keep a record of all key activities you undertake throughout the year and store all certificates, letters and feedback forms in one place. The time window when applications are open is usually very narrow, and it can be challenging to work full time and prepare for exams while compiling your portfolio and writing application forms at short notice.
- 3) Even if you are currently undecided about which specialty to apply for, start building up your portfolio of evidence. With the exception of General Practice, there is a great overlap in the selection criteria.
- 4) Be careful about making statements about achievements that are still in progress (e.g. incomplete audits presented as complete). Speak to your Supervisor or a Career Advisor if unsure whether to mention such work in the evidence folder.
- 5) If you are applying for more than one specialty, you will need separate portfolios for each to highlight information more relevant to one speciality than another. Use nationally agreed person specifications for various specialties and levels of entry for self guidance:
<http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/specialty-recruitment/person-specifications-2013/2015-person-specifications/>
- 6) Know the contents of your evidence folder inside out. This will be particularly relevant if you are asked “*What are you most proud of in your Portfolio?*” during a Portfolio station (you can then not only tell them but show the evidence).

Useful Resources

Health Careers advice on Portfolios:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/developing-your-career/learning-and-development/your-portfolio/e-portfolios>

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/medical-specialty-training/interviews-and-medical>

UK Foundation Programme Office – guides and documents for Foundation Programme e-portfolios:

www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/foundation-doctors/e-portfolio