



CHIEF ASSESSOR INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the FMC portfolio guidance and template.

These documents have been extensively redesigned and rewritten to make the process of completing the portfolio as straightforward as possible.

I hope you will find the process of preparing the portfolio interesting and part of the process of developing your knowledge and confidence as a mediator. At the end of this document, you will find a table setting out the stages of working towards accreditation.

The aim of the portfolio is to build on the knowledge gained in the foundation training and provide an opportunity for you to develop your ability to make purposeful interventions as a mediator, within the mediation process which you can then reflect on and consider whether they have achieved the expected intention or something entirely different and how you can incorporate what has been learnt into your practice as a mediator.

Remember, the only evidence of your competence as a mediator is the information which you submit and the means by which you submit it. We have no other means of understanding your work as a mediator. For this reason, try to make the portfolio as easy to read and assess as possible. If the assessor cannot locate the evidence in the place you have referenced, they immediately begin to question your ability to be accurate and organised.

The temptation for candidates when they complete their foundation course is to begin mediating immediately and think about how to write the portfolio later. This is the most challenging approach to completing the portfolio.

A structured approach will help you to understand the rationale behind each part of the portfolio and gather the evidence in such a way that each element builds on the last and develops previous learning.

Try to see the portfolio as an extension of your education and development as a mediator rather than a hurdle to be overcome.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

If you have a disability or learning need which makes it difficult to complete any aspects of the portfolio, you should contact us at portfolios@familymediationcouncil.org.uk so that the FMSB can consider whether reasonable adjustments can be made. Candidates should include any relevant correspondence with the FMC about these adjustments in the portfolio when it is submitted.

ENQUIRIES AND QUESTIONS

All correspondence with FMC Assessors (including the Chief Assessor) about a specific mediator or portfolio should go through the FMC office to portfolios@familymediationcouncil.org.uk so that a record of correspondence can be kept.

REQUIRED READING (or at least download for reference)

These are the documents which you should download BEFORE you start to gather the evidence.

[Family Mediation Council Standards Framework](#)

This is the foundation for your mediation practice and principles. It will help you to understand the standards which are expected of you as a mediator regarding your duties and responsibilities.

[The Family Mediation Council Code of Practice](#)

This governs how a mediator should practice and what their work should include.

[The FMC Accreditation Guidance Document](#)

This which explains the process following foundation training and how you will be assessed.

[The Family Mediation Council Portfolio Template](#), this is the format in which the undertaken and evidence presented by the candidate should be submitted. **The portfolio must be submitted using the template**, including application form, portfolio checklist and completed competence grid.

A good place to look for other documents and resources is [here](#).

WHAT PART OF THE PORTFOLIO

[This document](#) indicates in which part of the portfolio competencies can be evidenced.

UNDERSTANDING THE FAMILY MEDIATION COUNCIL TEMPLATE

The template has been designed to provide the best possible opportunity of gathering the evidence and submitting the documentation in a format which has the highest likelihood of success.

It is recommended that wherever possible the candidate completes the sections of the portfolio in the order in which they have been listed. This supports a structured approach to your development as a mediator.

PDF Doc 1: First Stage Documentation

This is the starting point for the portfolio and ensures you have gathered the necessary documentation before starting work on the case commentaries. It includes:

- **Training and Development Plan**, ideally in consultation with your PPC, means that you can develop an understanding of the gaps in your knowledge as a mediator and ensure during the portfolio preparation you attend the training events which mean those gaps can be filled.
- The **PPC Log** should be started after you complete your foundation course. Its format will help you can ensure you understand the requirements and meet them. Remember it is 10 hours for the duration of the portfolio and 4 hours per year to meet FMC requirements in periods of not less than 30 minutes. The assessors will check both.
- The **Competency Grid** should be started as soon as you start work as a mediator and completed as your casework and experience develops. It must be completed and submitted.
- **Observation of an FMCA** should be “evaluative”; this means the candidate observes and evidences they can recognise that the FMCA is using mediation skills within the stages of the mediation process.
- **Case Study Questions** can be answered within the first stages of completing the portfolio, the answers can be revisited but it can help to feel a section has been completed.
- **MIAM Case Commentaries** can be completed separately rather than as part of a case commentary.

PDF Doc 2: Primary commentary (or commentaries) and evidence of practice

This must include AIM case OR one child and one financial case, session records, outcome documentation, OSFI and full case paperwork (for either the AIM or financial case)

PDF Doc 3: Secondary commentaries

This must include one child and one financial case including session records, outcome documentation and OFS (for the finance case)

PDF DOC 4: PPC Feedback and Reflective Account

This is the last section to be compiled by the candidate, although the observation by the FMCA or PPC is in this section it can be undertaken at any point in the preparation of the portfolio.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUBMISSION

- All documents submitted must be anonymised.
- Submit your portfolio to portfolios@familymediationcouncil.org.uk and use your URN as a reference.
- You will need to pay a submission fee which covers the cost of assessment, verification and administration of your portfolio. Information about fees can be found [here](#).
- The assessment process will generally take up to twelve weeks. At the end of this process, you and your PPC will be informed of the outcome.

FAQS ABOUT THE PORTFOLIO PROCESS

What are the reasons that people do not get full FMCA on the first occasion?

The Family Mediation Council has started to record the reasons that mediators are not awarded full accreditation on the first occasion. These are categorised as follows:

- **A** Anonymisation not fully completed
- **B** Documentation missing / incorrect
- **C** Competencies not evidenced
- **D** Domestic Abuse Assessment & Safeguarding expertise

This informs the Chief Assessors' Q&A and guidance given to candidates.

Initial data showed that a high number of portfolios were not fully anonymised, or were incomplete. Publishing this information has resulted in the number of portfolios being returned unassessed as a result of lack of anonymisation has significantly decreased.

The portfolio template and the guidance have been written with this data in mind and aims to improve the numbers of candidates achieving full accreditation on the first occasion and to make it as easy as possible to ensure that all the competencies can be evidenced throughout the portfolio.

What can I do to make sure I have the best chance of being awarded FMCA first time?

See above, try to ensure as a minimum all the documents are present, and they are all anonymised.

Try to understand the importance of each aspect of the portfolio you are being asked to evidence as this will help you to meet the criteria (e.g. the requirement for anonymisation relates to the data protection responsibilities and the need to keep information confidential; the requirement to provide different types of information in an accessible way relates to the process of gathering, ordering and sharing disclosure).

Can I use the same piece of text to evidence lots of competencies?

Try not to evidence too many competencies using one piece of text. Occasionally sharing information followed by an open question can evidence more than one competence but try not to evidence multiple competencies using one piece of text.

What are the timescales for submitting my portfolio?

Candidates usually have three years from passing their foundation training course to submit their portfolio, but this can be extended in certain circumstances. Information about applying for extensions can be found [here](#).

What are assessors looking for in the portfolio?

Assessors are not looking for perfect mediations to be observed, or for perfect cases in which every competence is demonstrated. They are looking for competencies to be evidenced across the portfolio. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their understanding that the skills and knowledge from a previous profession support their mediation, they do not replace mediation skills. The guide explains what evidencing a competence means and how compile the portfolio with the best chance of FMCA on the first occasion.

FURTHER INFORMATION

FAQ about the portfolio can also be found on the FMC website [here](#). If you have a question about the portfolio, please read the guidance and FAQ first, before contacting us at portfolios@familymediationcouncil.org.uk.

I wish you well in the preparation of your portfolio and look forward to receiving your submission.

Juliette Dalrymple

Chief Assessor

THE STAGES OF WORKING TOWARDS ACCREDITATION

FOLLOWING FOUNDATION TRAINING Before acting as a sole or lead mediator, or representing themselves to the public as a family mediator working towards accreditation MUST	
REGISTER WITH THE FMC as working towards accreditation	See here to find out how to register.
POST-TRAINING REVIEW	a) Undertake one PPC session. b) This may be organised by the provider of the initial training but can also be organised by the mediator working towards accreditation independently. c) In this meeting the PPC will review the candidate's readiness to mediate and, if necessary, agree additional measures for gaining experience before starting to mediate d) This is the first of the 10 portfolio PPC sessions with the candidate's PPC
OBSERVATION	Observe or co-mediate in a mediation session conducted by an FMCA mediator. The candidate should produce an evaluative account of the session. This must be included in the portfolio
FIRST MEDIATION CASE PRE CASE DISCUSSION	Before the candidate undertakes a first case as a sole or lead mediator, the candidate must have a pre-case discussion with the PPC before starting to mediate or to assess clients' suitability for mediation. In the pre-case discussion, the PPC will, if necessary, identify any additional support that the mediator needs before starting the first session.
POST CASE DISCUSSION	Hold a post-case review with their PPC
The mediator working towards accreditation can act as a sole mediator in privately funded cases or lead mediator in co-worked cases with an FMCA and can represent themselves to the public as a family mediator working towards accreditation.	

DURING PORTFOLIO PREPARATION	
PPC	<p>The candidate must have had at least ten hours one-to-one support from their PPC recorded in the PPC log countersigned by the PPC which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date of PPC meeting, • duration of PPC meeting, and • type of session (group or individual). <p>This includes the PPC contact outlined below but must not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time spent co-mediating with the PPC or observing the PPC mediate, or • the FMC requirement of four hours per year of PPC contact expected of all mediators.
OBSERVATION OF WTA	
BY PPC	<p>a) Within two years of completing initial training</p> <p>b) One mediation session (not a MIAM) observed by their PPC (it should not be a session co-mediated with the PPC).</p> <p>c) Ideally should ideally be near the beginning of the post-foundation training period.</p> <p>d) More than one observation is encouraged, including observation of an initial assessment/ consultation meeting. The candidate's PPC's or FMCA written feedback on a minimum of one session should be included in portfolio submission</p>
OBSERVATION BY OTHER FMCA	<p>If it is particularly difficult for a candidate to be observed by their registered PPC, they may be observed by a another PPC or FMCA with three years post accreditation experience, with the agreement of and approval by the candidate's registered PPC. See page 8 of the FMCA Portfolio Guidance.</p> <p>In these circumstances, the following must be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the substitute observer's account of the session; and • a response from the candidate relating specifically to areas for development identified by the substitute and how these can be

	<p>addressed in their practice or through future supervision with their Registered PPC.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The Registered PPC's statement in support must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the circumstances which led to the decision to use a substitute (e.g. geography, diary issues etc); • the basis on which the Registered PPC thinks they have sufficient knowledge of the candidate to make their statement in support; and • confirmation that the registered PPC has discussed the observation notes undertaken by FMCA and candidate's feedback with the mediator candidate.
CASEWORK	<p>The candidate must take a minimum of three cases through to completion. These will need to be written up for assessment.</p> <p>Alternatively, four cases (see section 4.2 below) can be written up if an 'All Issues' case is not submitted. the candidate must discuss 'All Issues' cases in the reflective account.</p>
CPD	<p>Comply with the requirements for continuing professional development and on-going PPC support applicable to FMCA (4 h per year - see page 7 of the FMCA Portfolio Guidance).</p>
CIM	<p>Attend a Child-Inclusive Mediation (CIM) Awareness and Understanding Course. This must be a minimum of one day long and provided by either an FMC approved foundation course provider, or an FMC approved CIM provider.</p> <p>The purpose of this is to ensure that all family mediators can explain the principles, purpose and the basic process of CIM to parents as they should routinely detail this in initial assessment meetings.</p>
PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION	<p>Submit a portfolio to apply for FMCA status</p>
ASSESSMENT	<p>12 weeks for assessment</p>
RESULT	<p>The candidate and their PPC will be informed of the outcome</p>