

RPSA APEL applicant guidance 2026

This guidance explains how to apply for RPSA membership through Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), including report assessment, fees and the final continuing professional development (CPD) requirement. Please read it carefully before applying.

Being a member of the Residential Property Surveyors Association demonstrates that, as a residential surveyor, you work to the highest standards in the industry in respect of quality, professionalism, ethics and conduct. Our clients rely on us to provide them with reliable and comprehensive information to help them make life-changing decisions.

To ensure that all RPSA members achieve these demanding standards, we place requirements on all those applying to join the Association.

Membership of the RPSA is open to those who hold specific qualifications and accreditations, or who are studying towards relevant surveying qualifications. Details are available in the membership section of our website, www.rpsa.org.uk.

However, we recognise that many competent surveyors do not fall within these membership categories. In such circumstances, we need to establish that applicants have the competence, knowledge and skills to inspect and report on residential property to the standards required by the RPSA.

The APEL route to RPSA membership requires you to submit three recent Building Survey reports, as described in the RPSA Survey Inspection & Reporting Standards, Edition 1 v5.2, November 2020. These will be assessed through our recognised Quality Assessment programme. Reports should have been prepared no more than six months before the date of your first application. Following report assessment and completion of the required CPD, your application will be considered for membership as described below.

The APEL application fee is **£495 plus VAT**. This fee is **non-refundable**, including if only part of the application process is completed. The required CPD and any additional report assessment are charged separately, as explained below.

To help you prepare reports for assessment, the RPSA will provide:

1. A copy of the RPSA Survey Inspection & Reporting Standards, Edition 1 v5.2, November 2020.
2. A Building Survey template in Word format. You are not required to use this template, but any alternative format must allow you to demonstrate compliance with the RPSA Survey Inspection & Reporting Standards.
3. Contact details for your **Applicant Mentor**, who will be your first point of contact for all matters relating to your application.

The application process

Please submit the following to your Applicant Mentor:

1. Full name
2. Address and contact details
3. Company details, if relevant
4. A copy of photo identification, such as a passport or driving licence
5. A CV detailing your experience, qualifications and current accreditations

Once we receive this information, we will issue an invoice for the **£495 plus VAT** APEL application fee. As noted above, this fee is **non-refundable**. An assessor's decision is final and is not subject to appeal.

Once payment is received, the RPSA will provide the Survey Inspection & Reporting Standards and the Building Survey template in Word format.

You can then prepare and submit your first survey report for assessment.

Submit only one completed survey report at a time. Wait for assessment feedback before preparing or submitting your next report.

Your report will be assessed across six categories, with specific feedback on each:

- Pre-survey and desk study
- Report content, nature of inspection and limitations
- Report photographs
- General presentation, including wording, spelling and grammar
- Report detail, including descriptions, the relevance of text to photographs, limitations and defect analysis
- Services

Our assessment process is designed to provide a positive mentoring experience. It helps surveyors recognise their strengths in report preparation and identify areas for improvement through the assessor's guidance and recommendations.

Assessors are qualified surveyors with considerable experience of reviewing reports submitted by residential surveyors from a range of backgrounds. Their assessments involve professional judgement, applied consistently and supported by relevant technical knowledge and experience.

Applicants benefit from applying their assessor's recommendations to subsequent reports. Read the feedback carefully before preparing your next report, then use it to improve that submission.

For each of the six categories, your assessor will allocate a score as follows:

Score 1 - This category achieves a high standard of quality and meets all expectations.

Score 2 - This category has been completed to a satisfactory standard but would benefit from some additional information.

Score 3 - This category would be greatly improved with a modest amount of additional work and information.

Score 4 - This category would benefit from wider and more thorough reporting, as it is currently unlikely to meet a client's needs.

Each report receives a total score of 6 to 24. Lower scores indicate a stronger report. The score bands are:

Total score	Report assessment
6-9	A high-quality report that meets expectations and gives the client clear, useful information.
10-15	A good report that meets most expectations. Some additional information or adjustments would improve it further.
16-20	The report covers the basics, but some areas need additional information, clarity or explanation.
21-24	The report needs significant review and adjustment. It lacks information in several areas and does not meet the minimum required standard.

To meet the report assessment standard for the APEL route, the combined score of the three reports reviewed (the total final score) must be **no more than 52**, and the final report must score **no more than 15. Both requirements must be met.**

Although individual reports do not receive a separate pass or fail result, a score of 21 to 24 is below the acceptable standard. An applicant's first report may fall within this range, but subsequent reports are expected to show consistent improvement.

Applicants with a total final score above 52 may request assessment of one additional report, at an additional charge of **£150 plus VAT**. In these circumstances, only the three most recent reports count towards the total final score. The final report must still score no more than 15.

Where your total final score is 52 or less and your final report scores no more than 15, your Applicant Mentor will prepare a report for the RPSA Council to consider. This will include your CV, contact information and a review of your performance during assessment. Your Applicant Mentor will normally recommend membership only when satisfied that you have achieved the required standards. Any recommendation remains subject to completion of the required CPD.

As a condition of applying through the APEL route, you agree:

1. To the RPSA using your contact details and other information provided for purposes connected with your application and other activities of the Association. Your personal data will not be shared with third parties.
2. To receive notifications, updates and other information from the RPSA. Your personal information will not be provided to other organisations for marketing purposes.
3. Not to share, distribute or copy templates, assessment processes or other documents provided to you by the RPSA, except where they are already in the public domain.
4. That the decision of an RPSA-approved assessor is final and is not subject to appeal.

Failure to achieve the required standard

If, after you have completed the APEL assessment process, your Applicant Mentor considers that you have not achieved the required standard, your application will be rejected.

You may make a subsequent application through APEL or another membership route, but no earlier than 12 months after your Applicant Mentor notifies you that your initial application has been unsuccessful.

Any subsequent application will be subject to the conditions and fees in force at the time of that application.

Continuing professional development

Following successful completion of your report assessment, you will be required to complete a **minimum of 9 hours** of CPD as the final stage of the APEL process, before your membership application is finalised. This will **normally total between 9 and 15 hours**, with the content and duration tailored to your assessment outcomes and any additional learning or support needs identified by your Applicant Mentor.

This may include RPSA courses such as Health and Safety in Property Inspection, Writing Better Survey Reports, and Client Care and Communication, together with other relevant learning recommended by your Applicant Mentor.

The CPD is **charged separately** from the £495 plus VAT APEL application fee. **For 2026**, the rate is **£10 per hour plus VAT**, giving a charge of **£90 to £150 plus VAT** for 9 to 15 hours. Your Applicant Mentor will confirm the required courses, total hours and fee before you start. Fees may be reviewed in future years.

Successful achievement of the required standard

Once you have achieved the required report assessment standard and completed the prescribed CPD, your Applicant Mentor can recommend to the RPSA Council that you be invited into membership. Admission remains subject to Council approval.

Following Council approval, your Applicant Mentor will pass your details to our membership department, which will contact you directly to complete the membership application process.

Notes

The APEL route to RPSA membership has been created to enable competent residential surveyors to benefit from the support and credibility provided by being a member of the Association. By asking you to demonstrate that you have the skill, knowledge and competence to inspect and report on a residential property to a high standard, we are helping to ensure that consumers can have faith and trust in appointing an RPSA surveyor.

We are proud to be members of the Residential Property Surveyors Association and look forward to working through this process with you to help ensure that RPSA continues to set the standards in residential surveying.