RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SURVEYORS ASSOCIATION

Technical Membership of the RPSA

Application and Guidance: the Technician Residential Surveyor (New Build) route

Edition 1 | November 2026

1. About this guidance

Welcome to the Residential Property Surveyors Association.

This guidance explains how to apply for Technical Membership of the RPSA through the Technician Residential Surveyor (New Build) route, what evidence you must submit, how your work will be assessed, what it costs, and what happens at each stage. Please read it in full before you apply. It is written to be clear about what is expected of you, because an application that is well prepared is far more likely to succeed and far less likely to cost you time and money.

The RPSA upholds high standards of quality, professionalism, ethics and conduct across residential surveying. Consumers rely on our members for reliable and comprehensive information to help them make life-changing decisions. That is why we place requirements on everyone applying to join, whichever route they come through.

Check the scope before you apply

This route is for inspectors whose work is new-build: pre-completion inspections and post-completion snagging inspections. If that describes what you do, you are in the right place.

Membership awarded through this route recognises competence in new-build inspection work, so it is worth knowing what that recognition does not cover. If you also carry out Building Surveys, Home Condition Surveys or other condition-based residential surveys, or expect to, this grade will not extend to them and you would be holding a designation that does not match part of your practice. Full membership is the grade that covers that work, through a recognised qualification or accreditation or through the APEL route, and it has its own separate guidance.

If your work falls either side of that line, ask before you pay anything. The application fee is non-refundable, and we would far rather have the conversation first than take a fee for the wrong grade.

2. About the grade

Technical Membership is a full grade of RPSA membership with its own designation and its own entry standard. This guidance deals with one route into it, the Technician Residential Surveyor (New Build) route, which recognises competence in new-build residential inspection and reporting and is for inspectors whose competence is shown through their own work rather than through a formal qualification. Whichever route you come through, the grade you are admitted to is Technical Membership and the designation is the same.

Scope of membership through this route

Competence recognised through this route covers:

- pre-completion inspections carried out in accordance with the New Homes Quality Code and recorded on the NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist;
- post-completion snagging inspections of new homes;
- the preparation of finishing checklists and snagging schedules for the customer and the developer.

It does not cover, and members admitted through this route must not hold themselves out as competent to provide, condition-based survey work such as Building Surveys, Home Condition Surveys, Level 2 or Level 3 surveys, valuations, structural reporting, defect diagnosis on existing housing stock, or expert witness work. Members whose practice later extends into that work should apply to upgrade their membership through the appropriate route.

Designation

On admission you may use the designation **RPSATech** and display the Association logo in accordance with the RPSA rules on logo and designation use.

Use of the designation before admission

You must not describe yourself as an RPSA Technical Member, use the RPSATech designation, quote a membership number, or display the RPSA logo at any point before you receive written confirmation of your admission.

While your application is in progress the only accurate description is that you are a candidate for RPSA Technical Membership, and even that should be used sparingly and never in a way that suggests the assessment has been passed. Using the designation early misrepresents your status to clients and developers, however unintended, and the Association will ask for it to be corrected immediately.

3. Who this route is for

This route is intended for competent, experienced inspectors who do not hold the formal qualifications or accreditations required for the other membership categories, but who can demonstrate through their own work that they have the knowledge, skill and judgement to inspect and report on new homes to the standard the RPSA requires.

Typically, applicants will have:

- practical experience of new-build inspection, site work or construction trades;
- current or recent experience of carrying out pre-completion or snagging inspections for paying customers;
- access to live inspection work during the application period, since the assessment is based on real reports;
- appropriate professional indemnity insurance, or a clear route to obtaining it before admission.

There is no minimum period of experience fixed for this grade. What matters is the quality of the work you submit and your performance in the knowledge assessment.

4. What you must submit

Your application is assessed on three recent inspection reports, prepared by you, for real inspections:

1. Two pre-completion inspection reports, carried out and recorded in accordance with the New Homes Quality Code and the NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist.
2. One post-completion snagging inspection report, demonstrating that you understand how a post-completion inspection differs from a pre-completion inspection in purpose, scope and the way findings are reported.

Each report must:

- be your own work, from an inspection you personally carried out;

- be no more than six months old at the date you submit it;
- apply the version of the New Homes Quality Code that governs that particular home, rather than the most recent version by default. Version 2 (March 2026) applies to homes reserved on or after 2 March 2026, Version 1 (October 2023) to homes reserved before that date, and homes sold by a developer outside the NHQB scheme may be governed by other requirements. Your report should make clear which version you have applied and why;
- comply with the RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards, Edition 1 v1.4, November 2021;
- for the two pre-completion reports, use the standard NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist, which may be reproduced in electronic or digital format provided every check on the original template is carried out and none is altered.

Variation by the assessor

The requirement set out above is the standard one, and it suits most applicants. The RPSA-approved assessor may vary it where that is necessary to be satisfied that you have demonstrated the required competence. A variation may change the number of reports, either upwards or downwards, or specify a particular type of inspection to be submitted.

A variation might arise because your work is concentrated in one part of the sector and the assessor wants to see a wider range, because a submission leaves a specific question unanswered, or because what you have already provided answers the question in full. The purpose is always the same: to reach a sound conclusion about your competence, rather than to apply a fixed formula to work that does not fit it. Competence is what is being assessed, and the evidence needed to demonstrate it is not identical for every applicant.

How a variation is handled

The standard of competence never changes. Only the evidence needed to demonstrate it changes.

Any variation is confirmed to you in writing before you prepare or submit the work, with the reason for it and any fee that applies. You will not be asked to pay for work you have not agreed to.

Where the number of reports assessed differs from three, the assessor confirms in writing the score thresholds that will apply, calculated on the same basis as section 8.

You may discuss any variation with your Applicant Mentor before you commit to it.

Reports contain other people's personal data

The reports you send us will usually identify a customer, an address and a developer. Before you submit them, either obtain your customer's consent to share the report with the RPSA for assessment, or redact the customer's name and contact details. Leave the property address and the technical content intact, because the assessor needs those to assess the work. Removing the name does not make the report anonymous, because an address can still identify someone. It reduces the personal data in the report rather than eliminating it.

The RPSA processes your application and the reports you submit in accordance with its Privacy Notice and its Data Protection and Privacy Policy. Submitted reports are used for assessment only, are seen only by those involved in the assessment and the Council decision, and are retained in line with that policy.

5. The standards your work is assessed against

Your reports are assessed against the following, and it is worth having all of them to hand before you begin:

Source	What it governs
RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards, Edition 1 v1.4, November 2021	The Association's own standard for the pre-completion check of a complete new home. It sets the inspection method, including viewing distances and lighting conditions, the definition of a complete new home, and the principle that the surveyor must form a fair and subjective assessment where precise measurement is not practicable. This is the primary standard for this grade.
New Homes Quality Code (New Homes Quality Board), in the version applicable to the home	The customer-facing code that creates the right to a pre-completion inspection and sets the framework for it, including the requirement to use the standard Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist. Version 2 (March 2026) applies to homes reserved on or after 2 March 2026. Version 1 (October 2023) applies to homes reserved before that date. Coverage also depends on the developer having been registered and active on the Register of Developers when the home was reserved. Homes sold by a developer outside the NHQB scheme are not covered by the Code and may be governed by other requirements. The pre-completion inspection provisions are at section 2.8 of Version 2.
NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist	The standard template on which a pre-completion inspection is recorded. Every check on the original template must be carried out and none may be altered, although the checklist may be reproduced digitally.
Warranty provider technical standards, for example the NHBC Standards	The technical standards that determine whether an item is a defect, being a failure to meet the warranty provider's specified technical standard, rather than a snag, being a minor imperfection in finish. Part 9 of the NHBC Standards, covering finishes, is the part most often relevant to snagging work.
Building Regulations	Relevant where an observation raises a compliance question rather than a finish question, for example accessibility, fire stopping or ventilation.

Why the snag and defect distinction carries so much weight

More assessment marks are lost on this single point than on any other, so be precise about which definition you are working to and say so in the report.

Version 2 of the New Homes Quality Code defines a snag as a minor imperfection or fault in the new home which does not meet the expected quality or finish as set out in the contract of sale. The RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards, drawing on the definition in use when they were published in 2021, describe a snag by reference to recognised industry standards, finishings and tolerances, and categorise it as omitted or incomplete work, or faulty or defective work. The two are compatible in practice, but they are not the same words and they come from different sources.

A defect is different again. It is a failure to meet the warranty provider's specified technical standard, and under section 2.8 of the Code the developer is responsible for addressing it, ideally before legal completion or within thirty days if that is not possible.

Reports that list everything the inspector can see, without distinguishing the two or without reference to tolerances, put the customer in a weak position with the developer and expose the inspector to criticism. Reports that apply the distinction properly are immediately recognisable and score well.

6. The application process

The process runs in the following order. Please do not jump ahead, particularly at step 5.

1. Prepare your application pack: full name; address and contact details; company details if relevant; a copy of photographic identification such as a passport or driving licence; a curriculum vitae

setting out your experience, qualifications and current accreditations; and the completed Training Needs Questionnaire at Annexe A.

2. Email the pack to the Association at the address in section 14. Do not send your reports at this stage.
3. We will issue an invoice for the application fee. The fee is non-refundable, and covers all or any part of the process.
4. On receipt of payment we will provide you with a copy of the RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards, confirm who your Applicant Mentor is, and confirm the evidence required of you, including any variation under section 4.
5. Submit your first report. Submit one report at a time and wait for the assessment feedback before you prepare or submit the next one. This is the single most valuable part of the process, and applicants who ignore it almost always score worse on later submissions than they needed to.
6. Submit your second and then your third report, applying the feedback each time.
7. Complete the knowledge assessment described in section 9.
8. Complete any continuing professional development your assessor has identified as a condition of your application. See section 10. This stage does not apply to every applicant.
9. Your Applicant Mentor prepares a report for the RPSA Council, which includes your CV, your contact information and a review of your performance during the assessment.
10. Subject to Council approval, our membership team contacts you to complete the membership formalities.

7. Fees

Item	Fee	Notes
Application fee	£495 plus VAT	Covers the review and assessment of your three reports, the feedback at each stage, the knowledge assessment and the Council referral. Non-refundable, and covers all or any part of the process, except that it is refunded if the Association is unable to carry out the assessment.
Additional report assessment	£150 plus VAT	Charged for each report assessed beyond the standard three, whether because you have missed a threshold in section 8 and asked for a further assessment, or because the assessor has required more than three reports under section 4. No charge arises where a variation reduces the number of reports. The number of reports and the total fee are confirmed in writing before you begin.
Optional mentoring	£350 plus VAT per inspection, plus travel at cost	An on-site, one-to-one mentoring session, arranged if you feel you would benefit from further training or support. Entirely optional. See section 11.
Continuing professional development, where required	£10 per hour plus VAT	Only payable where your assessor identifies CPD as a condition of your application. Charged separately, and confirmed with you before you start. See section 10.
Membership subscription	£18 per month, no VAT	Payable on admission, not during the application. VAT is not charged on membership subscriptions. The application, assessment, mentoring and CPD charges above are all subject to VAT.

Fees are those in force at the date of application and may be reviewed in future years. Your Applicant Mentor will confirm the total cost of anything chargeable before you commit to it. The application fee is the same as the fee charged for the APEL route to full membership. Charges for additional assessment, continuing professional development and mentoring differ according to the requirements of each route, so the total cost of an application is not necessarily the same.

8. How your reports are assessed

Each report is assessed independently against six categories, and you receive written feedback on each category. The assessment is designed as a positive mentoring experience: it is there to help you recognise your strengths and identify what can be improved, not to catch you out.

Assessors are experienced surveyors and inspectors who regularly review new-build inspection reports. Their assessment involves professional judgement, applied consistently and supported by relevant technical knowledge and experience.

The six assessment categories

Category	What the assessor is looking for
1. Pre-inspection preparation and desk study	Plot and property details, the developer and warranty provider, the specification and any agreed changes, confirmation that the home is a complete new home as defined by the standard, access and health and safety arrangements, and confirmation of what the customer has instructed.
2. Inspection method and compliance with the standard	Correct application of the RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards, including viewing distances and lighting conditions, the inspection sequence, what was accessible and what was not, and whether the inspection should have been postponed because of lighting or weather conditions.
3. Checklist completion and scope control	For a pre-completion inspection: correct and complete use of the NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist, with every check carried out and none altered, and correct handling of any digital reproduction. For a post-completion inspection, where the Checklist does not apply, this category instead examines how you defined and held the scope of the inspection and how the schedule is structured and ordered. In both cases the assessor looks for discipline about staying within the scope of the instruction rather than straying beyond it.
4. Photographs	Coverage, clarity and relevance. Each photograph should be located, legible, and clearly tied to the item it illustrates, with scale shown where it matters. Photographs that illustrate nothing, or items described with no photograph, both cost marks.
5. Description, location and defect analysis	Precise identification and location of each item so that the developer can find and remedy it without a further visit; correct distinction between a snag and a defect; appropriate reference to tolerances and to warranty technical standards; and judgement that is fair to both buyer and builder.
6. Presentation, client communication and limitations	Wording, spelling and grammar; a clear explanation to the customer of what the inspection is and is not; stated limitations; and clear next steps, including what the customer should do with the report and what the developer is responsible for.

Scoring

For each of the six categories, your assessor allocates 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 the customer's needs.

Each report therefore receives a total score of between 6 and 24. A lower score indicates a stronger report. The score bands are:

Total score	Report assessment
6-9	A high-quality report that meets expectations and gives the customer clear, useful information that a developer can act on.
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.

The standard you need to reach

To meet the report assessment standard for this route there are three requirements, and all three must be met:

1. The combined score of the reports counting towards your assessment must be no more than 52.
2. No report after your first submission may score more than 20.
3. Your final report must score no more than 15.

Where the assessor has varied the number of reports under section 4, requirements 2 and 3 are unchanged and the figure in requirement 1 becomes 17 points for each report counting towards the assessment, plus one. That gives 35 for two reports, 52 for three and 69 for four. Your assessor will confirm the figures in writing before you begin.

A score of 21 to 24 is below the acceptable standard. Your first submission may fall within that range, because the process is built to let you learn from the feedback before you prepare the next one. Nothing after that may. Without requirement 2, the combined figure on its own would allow two reports you had already been told were below standard to be carried by a single strong one.

How the additional report works

If you miss requirement 1 or requirement 3, you may ask for one additional report to be assessed, at the fee shown in section 7. Only the three most recent reports then count towards the combined score, and the further report becomes your final report, so it must itself score no more than 15.

A breach of requirement 2 cannot be cured this way. Requirement 2 is about how you responded to feedback, and a report that scored 21 or above after you had received feedback does not stop having done so because a later one was better. We say this plainly so that nobody pays for an additional report that cannot help them. If this applies to you, your Applicant Mentor will tell you before you commit to anything further.

“Your first submission” means the first report you sent for assessment, not the earliest of the three that end up counting.

9. The knowledge assessment

As well as submitting reports, you will complete an assessment of your knowledge of the standards that govern this work. Reports show what you did on three particular days. The assessment shows that you understand the framework you are working within, which is what a customer and a developer are entitled to assume.

The assessment is taken online on the RPSA learning platform. It consists of 20 questions, has a pass mark of 80 per cent, and may be retaken as many times as you need. It is included in the application fee. It covers:

- the New Homes Quality Code and the right to a pre-completion inspection;
- the NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist and its correct use;
- the RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards, including viewing distances and lighting conditions;
- the definition of a complete new home;
- the distinction between a snag and a defect, and the developer's obligations in each case;
- health and safety on a construction site and on a handed-over plot;
- professional conduct, customer care and the limits of your role.

10. Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development is not a fixed requirement of this route. It is required only where your assessor identifies, from the reports you have submitted, that specific learning would bring your work up to the standard or close a gap that the assessment has exposed.

Where that happens, the CPD your assessor specifies becomes a condition of your application, and must be completed before your application is put to the Council. Your Applicant Mentor will confirm the courses, the total hours and the fee before you start, and the fee is the hourly rate shown in section 7.

The learning will usually be drawn from the RPSA programme, which includes the New Homes Quality Code and the Professional Inspector, New-Build Inspection in Practice, Health and Safety in Property Inspection, Writing Better Survey Reports, and Client Care and Communication. You receive a CPD certificate for each course you complete.

CPD is a remedy, not a toll

If your reports and your knowledge assessment demonstrate the standard, no CPD will be required of you as part of this application and nothing further will be charged.

Being asked to complete CPD is not a mark against you. It means the assessor can see a specific gap that is worth closing before you carry the designation, and would rather you closed it than have the application fail. Members are of course encouraged to keep their development up to date after admission, whether or not any was required to get there.

11. Optional mentoring and site support

If you feel you would benefit from further training or support during the process, an on-site, one-to-one mentoring session can be arranged. The fee is shown in section 7 and depends on location.

Mentoring is optional and separate from assessment

Taking mentoring is entirely your choice. It carries no weight in the assessment of your reports, and declining it will not count against you.

A person who has provided you with paid mentoring will not assess your final report. That submission is the one your admission turns on, and it is marked by an assessor you have not paid.

Where the same person has been involved earlier in the process, you will be told so in writing before any

session is arranged, in accordance with the RPSA Conflicts of Interest Policy, and you may decline without any effect on your application.

12. If you do not achieve the required standard

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

You may make a subsequent application, either through this route or through another membership route, no earlier than 12 months after your Applicant Mentor notifies you that your application has been unsuccessful. Any subsequent application is subject to the conditions and fees in force at the time of that application.

The decision of an RPSA-approved assessor is final and is not subject to appeal. This is why the standard, the categories and the scoring are published in this document before you pay: you are entitled to know exactly what you are being measured against.

Professional judgement and administrative error are different things

There is no appeal against an assessor's professional judgement about the quality of your work. That judgement is what you have asked the Association to provide.

That is not the same as a mistake. If you believe there has been an arithmetical or scoring error, a factual error about what your report contained, or a failure to follow the process set out in this document, tell your Applicant Mentor. It will be checked and, if it is wrong, put right. The Association does not treat the finality of professional judgement as a reason to leave an administrative error standing.

13. Successful achievement of the required standard

Once you have met the report assessment standard, completed the knowledge assessment and completed any continuing professional development prescribed under section 10, 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 formalities. You may use the RPSATech designation and the Association logo from the date your admission is confirmed in writing, and not before.

On admission you agree to abide by the RPSA Code of Conduct and the Association's rules, to maintain appropriate professional indemnity insurance, to work within the scope set out in section 2, and to keep your continuing professional development up to date.

14. Conditions of application

As a condition of applying through this 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 is handled in accordance with the RPSA Privacy Notice, which sets out the lawful basis for processing it and the limited circumstances in which it is shared, for example with an external assessor or a service provider acting for the Association. It is not sold, and it is not passed to anyone else for their own purposes.
2. To receive the communications necessary to administer your application and, if you are admitted, your membership. Newsletters, event invitations and other optional mailings are separate: you

choose whether to receive them and can change that choice at any time through your subscription preferences. Your personal information is not provided to other organisations for their own marketing.

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.
5. That the reports you submit are your own work, from inspections you personally carried out, and that you have either obtained your customer's consent to share them with the RPSA or redacted their personal details.

Who you deal with

When your application is received you will be allocated an Applicant Mentor, who is your single point of contact for everything relating to your application. Your reports are marked by an RPSA-approved assessor against the categories in section 8.

Purpose	Contact
Applications and submissions	membership@rpsa.org.uk
General enquiries	info@rpsa.org.uk, 0330 113 9670
Association	Residential Property Surveyors Association, 20 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU

15. Why join the RPSA

- Membership of a respected professional body for independent residential surveyors and inspectors.
- A designation that demonstrates to customers and developers that your competence has been independently assessed against a published standard.
- Access to specialist resources, templates, terms and conditions, guidance documents and support written for practitioners.
- A continuing professional development programme built for this work rather than adapted from somewhere else.
- Representation of your interests at industry and government level at a time when the sector is changing quickly.

This route exists because we recognise that many competent new-build inspectors do not hold the formal qualifications required by the other membership categories, and that their work is no less important to the consumer for that. By asking you to demonstrate your skill, knowledge and competence against a published standard, we help ensure that consumers can have confidence in appointing an RPSA inspector.

We look forward to receiving your application and to supporting you through the process.

Annexe A: Training Needs Questionnaire

This form helps us build a development plan tailored to you. Please complete it and return it with your application pack. It is used to shape your continuing professional development and any mentoring you choose to take. It does not form part of the assessment of your reports, and answering honestly about where you are less confident will not count against you.

Section 1: Personal information

Field	Your answer
Name	
Email address	
Telephone number	
Current employer (if applicable)	
Years of experience in surveying or construction	
Approximate number of pre-completion inspections carried out in the last 12 months	
Approximate number of post-completion snagging inspections carried out in the last 12 months	

Section 2: Areas of knowledge

Please tick any areas where you would benefit from further training or support.

Area	Tick
Building pathology and defect diagnosis	
Construction methods and build sequencing	
Structural movement, including movement joints	
Services installations (electrical, plumbing, heating and ventilation)	
Part M and accessibility	
Fire stopping and compartmentation	
Building Regulations and compliance	
The New Homes Quality Code and the Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist	
Warranty provider technical standards and tolerances	
Health and safety on site and on handed-over plots	
Report writing and client communication	
Managing customer expectations and handling complaints	
Other (please specify)	

Section 3: Skills self-evaluation

Please rate your confidence in each area, where 1 means needs improvement and 5 means highly confident.

Skill area	1	2	3	4	5
Visual inspection technique					
Applying viewing distances and lighting conditions correctly					
Confirming that a home is a complete new home					
Use of diagnostic tools					
Distinguishing a snag from a defect					
Referencing tolerances and warranty technical standards					
Photographic evidence and location referencing					
Completing the NHQB Pre-Completion Inspection Checklist					
Report writing and client communication					
Health and safety on site					

Section 4: Anything else

What support would help you most over the next twelve months?

Document information

RPSA Technical Membership (New Build): Application and Guidance. Edition 1, November 2026. Issued by the Residential Property Surveyors Association and approved for issue by the Chairman. The RPSA Council may review it and propose amendments at any time. Reviewed annually in any event, or earlier where the New Homes Quality Code, the RPSA New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards or the Association's fees change.

Preparation of this document. The RPSA uses carefully selected digital and AI-assisted tools to support limited parts of its work, including research, drafting, formatting and document review. Any such use remains subject to human professional oversight and review. The requirements set out in this document, and the standards and fees it states, were determined and approved by the Association, which is responsible for the document in full.

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