

Guidance for applicants for UKPHR specialist registration by portfolio assessment

Portfolio submission

March 2022

This guidance will be updated from time to time so please check UKPHR website that you are working with the most up to date guidance.

Revision
Electronic versions guidance

This is a United Kingdom (UK) registration intended to accredit senior public health professionals working in the UK, by retrospective portfolio assessment.

This guidance is intended to be used by individuals who have been granted approval to submit a portfolio for assessment to gain specialist registration via the pre-application process.

We strongly recommend that you work through each section of this document to help you compile an effective portfolio.

1. Background

Specialist registration with UK Public Health Register (UKPHR), General Medical Council (GMC) or General Dental Council (GDC) is an essential requirement for Consultant or Director of Public Health roles.

If you have a medical degree and are registered with the GMC, then you are strongly advised to apply for public health specialist registration via [GMC's Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration \(CESR\) route](#).

Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment: This was launched on **1st September 2018**. This requires demonstration against a new competency framework (known in this documentation as the UKPHR competency framework for specialist practice 2018) that aligns with the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum. This gives equivalence in knowledge and experience to the level attained at the end of the Faculty of Public Health Specialty Training Programme.

2. Applying for approval to begin the process of *Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment*

There are two stages to this retrospective portfolio assessment route:

1. The **pre-application process** which assesses whether you are working at the right level for this route
2. Submission of your portfolio for assessment if UKPHR is satisfied that you are working at the right level from your pre-application documents

Guidance and documents for the pre-application process can be downloaded from [UKPHR's website](#).

3. Compiling a portfolio for Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment

Before you start the portfolio, you **MUST** have received a formal letter from UKPHR giving approval, from your preapplication, to submit a full portfolio.

Please download the following documents from UKPHR's website and ensure you understand them.

- The most up-to date portfolio guidance for applicants i.e., this document, as this will be refined with experience.
- Specialist registration by portfolio assessment application form
- Structured reference form
- Specialist registration by portfolio assessment proforma

- Knowledge competencies and Show How's competencies guidance
- Matrix template
- Checklist for specialist registration by portfolio assessment applicants

4. What does a portfolio consist of?

At present UKPHR requires 4 paper-based copies of your portfolio. An electronic portfolio system is being created.

You will need to ensure that each copy of your portfolio has the following:

- Specialist registration by portfolio assessment proforma.
- Updated Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Current job description
- A description of your current arrangements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which must be as part of a formal CPD scheme
- A current Personal Development Plan
- A current reference
- Testimonials (if required)
- Knows How and Show's How matrices
- Knowledge narratives
- **Knowledge evidence**
- Show How narratives
- **Show How evidence.**

The documents in **bold and italics above** can be submitted electronically on 4 memory sticks, BUT please ensure they are readable.

If changed since your application:

- Certified copies of qualifications and membership of professional bodies;
- If applicable, a certified copy of marriage certificate / change of name deed if any documents are in a different name.

Your referee should certify any documents.

5. Submitting your portfolio

Please note that your portfolio **must be submitted within 18 months** of the letter from UKPHR approving your pre-application. This deadline is outlined in your approval letter. The Registrar may grant extensions to this deadline if you can demonstrate exceptional circumstances. Should UKPHR not be in receipt of your portfolio within 18 months, and you have not requested an extension, it will be determined that you no longer wish to submit a portfolio for assessment. If at a later stage you would like to reconsider this route, you must reapply for approval via the pre-application process.

Once you have compiled your portfolio, 4 paper copies of the documents and memory sticks as above should be submitted to UKPHR's office at the address below:
UKPHR, Suite 16a, McLaren Building, 46 Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7LR. Office opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 4:30pm.

It is advised that you inform UKPHR of the arrival of your portfolio in writing to register@ukphr.org.

An e-portfolio is in development.

You are strongly urged to use the 18 months to produce your portfolio, in order to ensure you have produced evidence of working at the right level across all the competencies. This is because you only have 2 opportunities after the initial portfolio submission to correct any issues the assessors may have and must do so within 6 months of each feedback.

6. Fees

Assessment of a portfolio incurs a one-off payment of a portfolio assessment fee.

You can find out the portfolio assessment fee on our website here: <https://ukphr.org/fees-and-charges/>

Payment can be made via the following methods and is required alongside the portfolio submission.

There are no fees relating to submitting clarifications or resubmissions. Once you are successfully registered, you will be required to make payment of registration fee, calculated pro-rata to bring you to the Register's common renewal date of 1st July for all specialists.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| BACS: | Bank: Lloyds Bank Account name: Public Health Register Account number: 00875203 Sort-code: 30-94-87 |
| PayPal: | Using the account register@ukphr.org |

7. Navigation for Evidence

You must complete the matrices for both the *Knowledge and Shows How* competencies, outlining the name of the work / course is evidence and summary used to demonstrate each competency. This must be updated with each clarification or resubmission of evidence. We recommend you retain the electronic versions. Please see examples on our website. The detailed list of each piece of evidence must be in the Portfolio Assessment proforma.

These are crucial for the assessor to be able to navigate easily within your portfolio. Poor navigation may mean your portfolio is returned as unassessable.

8. Assessment proforma

Please ensure you have completed this in full and do not amend the format of the proforma. A MS Word version of your assessment proforma must be emailed to UKPHR as it is used to record the assessment findings. This is in addition to the paper copies requested as in section 4 above.

You must update the evidence column within the proforma upon requests for clarifications and/or resubmissions using a different coloured font, see section 9 below. So, we recommend you retain an electronic copy.

9. Updating documents during further submissions

If you are required to submit clarifications or resubmissions, this will also require submitting an updated assessment proforma and matrices to aid clear signposting of additional or new evidence that has been submitted. So please retain electronic copies of these documents.

To ensure a clear audit trail we strongly advise that you update the proforma and matrices in different coloured font at each stage and leave previous text within the document. For example:

1. BLACK font for their initial portfolio submission.
2. BLUE font for any second submissions to UKPHR
3. RED font for any third and final submission to UKPHR

10. Testimonials

Testimonials from a senior public health colleague may be used in support of specific work within the portfolio. You must use the testimonial structure as set out in the appendix here and the Show How competencies guidance document.

Occasionally a Testimonial can be used as evidence or to validate other evidence where otherwise it is not documented. Testimonials must be from someone senior to you, specific to the competency being claimed and verify your personal involvement in the work cited and competence as claimed. They should not be used for Know Hows. The exception to this is if the applicant has completed MPH, provides evidence of graduation and cannot provide course content (after seeking it from the FEI institution), then specific testimonials from course tutor/developers can be used in to enhance evidence as long as the testimonial is specific to the relevant parts of the competency. However, the applicant should always attempt to submit the FEI module outlines in the first instance.

11. Certified copies of documents

Documents should be certified by your referee.

13. General issues in writing a portfolio

Reading this document carefully and following the guidance will enable the assessment to be efficient and accurate. Due attention to this guidance should lessen the risk of clarifications and so make the process easier for both the assessors and you as the applicant.

Clear signposting and an easy-to-navigate portfolio are essential. This will not only prevent delays in assessment but also allow assessors to gain a clear understanding of how you demonstrate each competency. An applicant must clearly show which **objective evidence** supports their statements and thus which competency. The proforma is essential for navigation as is citing objective evidence reference alongside the relevant text in the narrative. This precise signposting avoids the assessor having to look through a long list in the hope that one of the pieces of evidence might be relevant. An outcome of unassessable may ensue if the assessors are struggling to find relevant evidence, see para 19.

Applicants should ensure there is a full and clear explanation of how the work described meets **all the words of the competency**, noting that the assessment process will focus on the detail provided in the narrative. The evidence provided to support the claim should be relevant to the competency, demonstrate your own work and easy for the assessor to navigate

Quality of evidence is preferred over quantity. All evidence must demonstrate the applicant's personal role. Pieces of work in which the applicant has supervised others may be included as evidence but there must be a clear description of the role and responsibilities of the applicant in this work and of the guidance given to those supervised, with supporting evidence. Try to only include evidence that is really relevant to what you are claiming.

The assessor knows nothing about you and will be on your side initially.

Difficult navigation or unjustifiable claims are likely to make assessors become more hawkish.

Please note that in the interest of **environmental sustainability** please

1. Readability: Use a font size no larger than 12 and no less than 11 in your writing. Giving a clear layout of the narratives e.g. use of paragraphs and appropriate headings are all helpful for the assessor.
2. Photocopy on both sides
3. Minimise the use of plastic wallets
4. Do not duplicate evidence, but use an effective navigation reference system

Finally, often the ring binders are full, this means by the time the assessors get them, the rings themselves have been bent out of shape hence using the ring binders becomes very difficult. Please do not fill these to the maximum to help minimise the rings deforming. Sending evidence in electronically is preferable for the above reasons.

14. The Knowledge competencies

Please refer to the Knowledge competencies document available on our website.

15. The Show How competencies

Please refer to the Show how competencies document available on our website.

16. The most common issues that assessors have with portfolios are

- Each element of the competency is not addressed.
- Lack of clear objective evidence of your role, e.g., Minutes citing your name but no action / role.
- Telling the story of the work but not your role in it.
- Poor navigation between the competency and its evidence. Assessors will struggle to understand where and how your evidence fits the competency. Your portfolio may be returned as unassessable. Using a clear referencing system and page markers for your evidence is highly recommended
- Currency of some of the learning and work. For example, understanding the arrangements for health protection prior to 2013 is insufficient given the major reorganisation in England, so this would apply to both Knowledge and Show How competencies if you are based in England.
- Poor or missing reflections. Assessors want to see what you have learnt from the work, what you would do differently and you have identified any further development where

appropriate needs. See section 6 in the Show How competency document for further guidance on reflection writing.

The most common issue is applicants not reading, understanding and applying the guidance in this document.

17. Comments from applicants include:

- Clarify understanding of competencies e.g., with a Public Health trainer before starting.
- Spend less time chasing past evidence if difficult and instead move forward to do refresher course/ top up training/ private study.
- Avoid doing portfolio in a period of great change.
- Self-evaluation and self-reflection are an essential part of the process.

“If you don’t feel comfortable doing this or other people reading your work, been questioned about why you did something or reliving old ground we strongly recommend that you do not embark on this process”

- Avoid spending time putting together all your know how’s at the beginning.

“Tempting to do the easy bit – by the time you have written all your show how’s you will be much more informed and confident about putting this together. I spent a lot of time at the beginning putting all my know how evidence together and then had to come back to it again”

- Find your evidence as you write your Show How’s.

“As painful as it is, DO NOT try to find it at the end. Put it in an electronic folder as you go along, including working out your reference number. You won’t want to re-read it again and try to think about what evidence you were referring”

- Get someone to proofread everything.

18. Confidentiality

If assessors witness a breach of confidentiality in your portfolio, you will be required to redact the material constituting the breach. The breach of confidentiality will also result in an automatic requirement of a resubmission of KH8.f - even if the assessors had already accepted your KH8.f evidence.

19. Continuing Professional Development

In signing your application, you are agreeing to abide by UKPHR's Code of Conduct, which includes CPD standards. You are also declaring that you are aware of the CPD requirements for continued registration, you agree to undertake learning appropriate to your practice at specialist level and you will maintain a CPD log with suitable evidence, including reflective comment.

You are also declaring that you are aware that you must produce evidence of compliance with CPD requirements in support of your 5-yearly revalidation and if and when requested by UKPHR for auditing purposes.

It is recommended that you refer to UKPHR's Code of Conduct and the revalidation policy and guidance for specialists on [UKPHR's website](#).

Assessors will be looking for evidence of CPD and reflective practice in a number of ways:

- In the application form you must describe your current CPD arrangements in Public Health. This should be up-to date and linked to a personal development plan. You must be a member of a formal CPD programme relevant to Public Health.
- Information in the CV should reflect recent learning activities relevant to your professional development at the Public Health specialist practice level.
- There is sufficient evidence throughout the portfolio, with CPD and reflective activity included in the evidence summaries and development summaries to fulfil SH 9c.

The PDP must relate to the PH competencies, so a management PDP is insufficient unless it covers PH competencies as well.

20. What is the process for assessment?

We are greatly assisted by a group of senior public health professionals who voluntarily provide our assessment capacity.

There are a limited number of assessors and in the past, there have been considerable delays in getting the portfolios assessed. This is usually due to a high number of portfolios being received; a number of portfolios being poorly assembled either in navigation or content often due to the applicant not working at the right level. So, there are a number of assessments on the same person's portfolio to get the evidence that they have fulfilled all the competencies required. A portfolio assessment can take between 15 and 35 hours to assess.

Each portfolio is assigned to 2 assessors, having been checked for completeness by the UKPHR office. If there are any queries, the office will contact you before confirming receipt of your portfolio. Please note that any queries that are outstanding, e.g., missing matrices, CV,

etc, must be received within your 18-month deadline to constitute a complete portfolio submission.

The aim is to have assigned the portfolio within 6 months of receipt of portfolio, but this can be longer if demand is great given the finite number of assessors and their availability.

Once the assessors receive the portfolio, they will aim to return their joint assessment to UKPHR within 8 weeks.

Assessors' recommendations are discussed at monthly Registration Panel meetings, in the presence of a UKPHR Moderator who is responsible for Quality Assurance. These meetings are chaired by one of our Registration Panel Chairs and are attended by other specialist portfolio assessors.

Recommendations made by the Registration Panel go to our Registration Approvals Committee, which is chaired by UKPHR's Registrar for ratification.

It is very rare for applicants to achieve registration following initial assessment. In most cases, you should expect to receive notification that the Registration Panel, on the assessors' advice, requires you to provide some clarifications and/or resubmissions.

For reasons of fairness, we send all notifications in a letter to applicants on the day of the Registration Approvals Committee's meeting, whether they be admission to the Register, clarifications and/or resubmissions are required. The outcome of any assessments cannot be released any earlier.

In the event of clarifications being required, a telephone call with one of the assessors will be offered. One of your assessors will contact you within 10 days of the letter being sent from UKPHR to arrange this. This maybe with both assessors, one acting as lead and the other acting as observer to help the conversation proceed smoothly.

Outcomes can vary from:

- All claims have been achieved and you are **registered**
- **Clarifications** are required. These will be listed in the outcome letter, and you will be offered a telephone discussion with the assessors to discuss these in further details. You then have **6 months** from the discussion date to submit the clarifications. A clarification requires further explanation or additional evidence from work already submitted against that competence. Normally only one clarification is allowed. Exceptionally a second clarification maybe required where there are minor changes to be made to the portfolio. Additional work can be used, and you must submit an updated matrix and assessment proforma.
- **Resubmissions** are required. This requires *a completely new piece of work* as evidence, although some original evidence may still be used to contribute if supporting the competency. These will be listed in the outcome letter, and you will be offered a telephone discussion with the assessors to discuss these in further details. You then have **6 months** from the discussion date to submit the resubmissions. An updated matrix and assessment proforma must be submitted as well. Two resubmissions are allowed per competency.

The telephone call must be scheduled for within 1 month of the date of the outcome letter. If you do not take up the offer for a telephone call or it is not scheduled on time, the 6-month

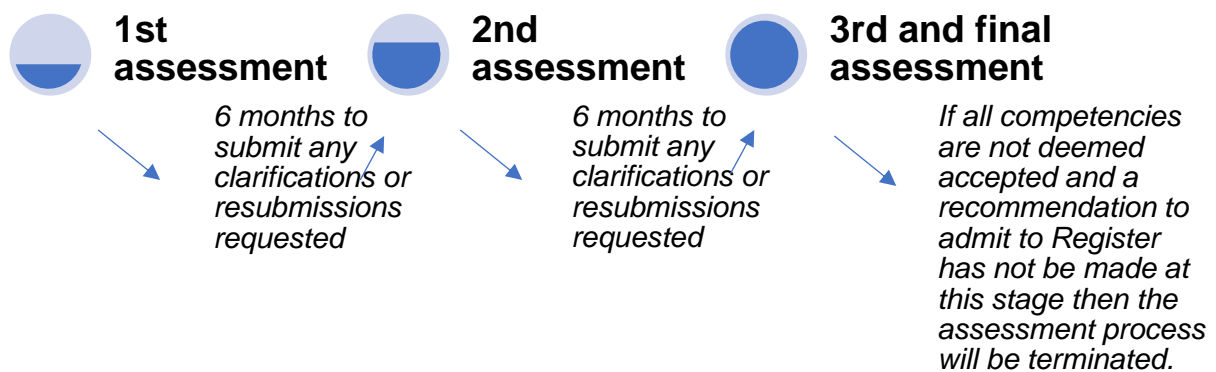
time window will apply from the date of the outcome letter. You are strongly advised to take up the offer of the telephone call.

If clarifications are requested from you but you feel it will be difficult to provide the right type of evidence required, then you may opt to resubmit i.e., provide a completely new piece of work as evidence.

- The Registration Panel recommended **moderation** of the entire portfolio or for select competencies
- The portfolio is deemed **unassessable** where the Panel feel that the applicant is working at the right level, but the portfolio cannot be assessed in its current form. This is usually due to poor navigation or narrative. This involves a moderator reviewing the entire portfolio. The portfolio should be resubmitted within 18 months of the applicant receiving the letter from UKPHR and does not require a second preapplication.

The portfolio is deemed a **complete return** when the Panel feel that the applicant is not working at the right level. This means the applicant does not demonstrate competence in professional Public Health practice at the required level and may suggest a risk to public protection. This involves a moderator reviewing the entire portfolio. This should be very rare due to the pre-application process.

It is important to note that the **maximum number of assessments is three**. Experience has shown that an applicant having to submit their portfolio three times is usually due to not providing adequate evidence.



In the event of being unsuccessful or having a complete return outcome the applicant can reapply i.e. start the process again. Please note

- You can **re-apply 6 months after** the letter from UKPHR citing this outcome.
- Up to **three submissions** to apply can be made.

21. Communication with an assessor

The telephone call offered with one of your assessors will brief you on what the problems are but not how to solve them. The call maybe with both assessors, one acting as lead and the other acting as observer to help the conversation proceed smoothly.

You should not correspond with your assessors beyond the telephone call. For example, you should not send your assessors any draft clarifications or resubmissions for their views before formal submission to UKPHR.

22. What happens if I cannot or do not submit my clarifications and/or resubmissions in time?

If you have exceptional circumstances which prevent you from submitting your clarifications or resubmissions on time, then you must apply to seek an extension from the Registrar. This can be done via a short application form. Please contact the office to request this. The Registrar has the discretion to authorise extensions up to six months each on two occasions and exceptionally.

If you do not submit your clarifications or resubmissions within the allotted time and you do not request an extension, you are technically out of time. The Registration Approvals Committee, chaired by the Registrar will ultimately decide whether you are provided additional time. The Committee may decide not to provide additional time and your assessment will no longer proceed.

If you decide not to proceed further with submitting clarifications and/or resubmissions, please notify us via email so that we can notify your assessors and stop your assessment.

23. What is the Appeals process?

UKPHR's appeals process can only be on process of application and assessment, not on the content of the assessment nor for an "unassessable" outcome. The full details are on [UKPHR's website](#).

An appeal must be submitted in writing by the applicant to the Registrar and must be received within 20 working days of the date of the decision appealed against.

24. Updates on assessment

Once UKPHR are reassured that all documents are in order via their initial office checks, applicants will receive written confirmation that UKPHR are in receipt of their portfolio.

Periodically, UKPHR will e-mail applicants with updates on where their portfolio may be placed in the queue to be assigned to two assessors. Applicants are also able to contact UKPHR at any time to request this update.

We appreciate that current or prospective employers may request an update on your application during any point of your assessment. UKPHR are unable to provide an update on a portfolio apart from the applicant themselves. UKPHR are willing to issue letters of current status as evidence to demonstrate to employers how far along the process applicants are. Applicants must request this in writing at register@ukphr.org and a letter will be issued to the applicant for their use.

Appendix

Testimonial to support portfolio assessment for UKPHR's *Specialist Registration*

Section 1 – Applicant details

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Title: | |
| Forename(s): | |
| Surname: | |

Section 2 – Details and credentials of person providing testimonial

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Title: | |
| Forename(s): | |
| Surname: | |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Professional registration and number: | |
|---------------------------------------|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Your current position and place of work: | |
| Your position and place of work when working with applicant relevant to information covered in this testimonial: | |
| Relationship to the applicant when working with them: | |

Section 3 – Details of competency

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Competency: | <i>[Specific competency and description]</i> |
| Submission: | <i>[Title of Narrative in which competency is being claimed]</i> |
| Summary: | <i>[Short summary of work done by applicant, with the dates when work was undertaken]</i> |
| Key Skills: | <i>[Details of the skills and competencies demonstrated by the applicant in relation to this competency] Word limit – 300</i> |
| Evidence: | <i>[Confirmation that evidence listed in the Narrative has been cited and is the work of the applicant]</i> |
| Signature: | <i>[Confirmation that information provided in this testimonial is true and current]</i> |
| Date: | |