

UKPHR Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment (SRbPA)

Frequently Asked Questions

February 2024

UKPHR registrants who have experienced our portfolio assessments tell us that this is rigorous, searching and challenging but very helpful in strengthening their effectiveness as public health specialists.

1. Who can apply for registration by UKPHR's SRbPA route?

This registration route is aimed at those who are working at the level of a newly qualified Consultant in Public Health but have not achieved Public Health Specialist registration by other routes, such as the Faculty of Public Health training route, or are not registered with the GMC/GDC on their Public Health Speciality registers. Also see question 5.

2. What must an applicant consider before applying?

To be considered for registration via this route, we would firstly recommend that you view all the guidance, including the Show How and Knowledge competencies that you will be required to demonstrate evidence of in your portfolio. You can view these on our website: <https://ukphr.org/5-specialist-registration-by-portfolio-assessment/>

Please note **this is not a developmental route**, see question 21.

3. What is the process to achieving registration by UKPHR's SRbPA route?

To apply for registration via this route, there is a two-stage application process:

Stage 1 requires a pre-application to satisfy UKPHR as to your eligibility and readiness. If approved, you have **with 18 months** to send in your portfolio.

Stage 2 requires submission of the portfolio, but only after approval of Stage 1.

4a. What is and how long does the *pre application process* take?

Preparing your pre-application

Before you start your pre-application, collating all the relevant information and completing the required documentation can take a considerable amount of time as there are several items we require; this includes:

- Your completed application form
- A current job description
- The matrix we ask you to complete to show how you will meet all the competencies we require evidence for
- A structured reference from a registered Public Health specialist
- Your up-to-date CV, appraisal, and PDP
- An organisation chart showing your post and your line manager
- Evidence of your CPD
- Certified copies (by your referee) of certificates
- Your 360-feedback report (within 3 years of your preapplication)
- Certified (by your referee) copies of qualifications

It can take several months to collate everything required for your pre-application and we urge you to keep checking our website to ensure you are using the current templates and the latest guidance.

Assessment of your pre-application

Once UKPHR receive your pre-application, it is checked for completeness and then if complete, the application is sent to two assessors. They aim to assess this within 6 weeks. The assessors' recommendation is considered at our monthly Registration Panel and subsequent Registration Approvals Committee meetings. After the Registration Approvals Committee, we email your outcome letter to you.

If your outcome is successful, you will have 18 months in which to compile and send in your portfolio. If it is unsuccessful, you will be provided with the option of a feedback call with your assessors.

Therefore, from UKPHR receiving a pre-application to you finding out whether it has been approved can take 2-3 months.

4b. What is and how long does the *portfolio process* take?

Preparing your portfolio

Once your pre-application is approved, you have 18 months to send in a portfolio. When sending your portfolio, you **must read and adhere to all the guidance** on our website. Make sure you check the UKPHR website to ensure you are using the latest versions. If you do not follow the guidance, then you risk having your portfolio rejected after the first assessment and having to submit another portfolio.

Assessment of your portfolio

On receipt of a portfolio, UKPHR office sends it to 2 assessors who aim to assess this within 8 weeks. Their findings are taken to our monthly Registration Panel and subsequent Registration Approvals Committee. We will email your outcome letter to

you on the Monday after the Registration Approvals Committee meeting. An online feedback meeting is offered if clarifications and/or resubmissions are requested. We will also offer a feedback meeting if your portfolio is deemed as unassessable. See para. 8 below.

You have 6 months from your feedback meeting for any clarifications/resubmissions to be sent to us.

Once we receive your clarifications/resubmissions, the above assessment process takes place again, with the same assessors whenever possible.

If further clarifications/resubmissions are required, the process is repeated.

For this registration route, there are **only 3 assessments** available for each portfolio. So, it is crucial to read our guidance carefully when collating your portfolio and use the narrative template available on our website.

From experience of this and the previous Defined Specialist portfolio route, there is a very high chance that on initial portfolio submission, the applicant will receive a number of clarifications and resubmissions. It is very rare that a portfolio will be assessed and found to be fully acceptable on the first assessment.

As you will note from the information above, from preparing your pre-application, then sending a pre-application to submitting a portfolio to this being assessed and if successful, gaining registration, can take a number of years. Therefore, it is important that you are virtually ready to write / complete your portfolio before submitting your preapplication. This will minimise your time and hopefully the number of reassessments.

5. How does UKPHR decide if a preapplication is successful?

The preapplication is designed to ensure that:

- a) The applicant is working at the right level (i.e., at least the level of a newly qualified consultant); and
- b) can show competencies across **all key areas** of public health.

For information, knowledge competencies for key area 9 (professional, personal and ethical development) and key area 10 (integration and application of the competences for consultant practice) are assessed at this stage.

The applicant must:

- Work in, or have worked previously in a public health role and will be able to demonstrate practice in accordance with Good Public Health Practice
- Be able to demonstrate competence in public health practice equivalent to a newly qualified public health professional who has completed the Public Health Specialty Training Programme
- Hold a post graduate qualification (in any relevant public health discipline) i.e., Level 7 and above in the Qualifications and Credit Framework¹ or Level 11 and above in Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework²

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

² <https://scqf.org.uk/interactive-framework/>

- Maintain and enhance professional knowledge and skills by way of continuing professional development, participating in a relevant formal CPD scheme³
- Consistently demonstrate sound judgment in effectively using a range of advanced public health expertise and skills, by portfolio assessment against the SRbPA Show How and Knowledge competencies
- Use a range of advanced public health skills in working at senior organisational levels to deliver population health in complex and unpredictable environments
- Have experience of Strategic Leadership and Collaborative Working for Health
- Be able to submit evidence of recent and complete appraisal documentation together with PDP and 360 feedback (for assessment of this requirement, see important note below); and
- Be able to submit a completed portfolio within 18 months of approval to submit a portfolio.

Applicants must use the matrix of competencies that is on UKPHR's website to self-check that all the Knowledge and Show How requirements can be met before embarking on their preapplication. This will help you identify any gaps, which you then need to plan for, and can you still fill these in the timescales? See the preapplication guidance for much more detail.

Once all these requirements are checked for completeness by the UKPHR, your pre-application will be processed for assessment by two assessors. Once the assessors have completed their assessment, it is then considered at UKPHR's Registration Panel and ratified by UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee, after which you will be informed of the outcome.

An incomplete preapplication that departs from the requirements will not be processed.

6. How will I know whether the CPD scheme I am part of is relevant, and how long should I be a part of a CPD scheme before I send in my pre-application?

Do UKPHR have a list of 360-degree feedback tools?

The reason you should already be participating in a relevant formal CPD scheme is that at this senior level of practice you are to be expected to be keeping, maintaining, and enhancing your competence in a structured way. The most obvious formal CPD scheme in public health practice is that operated by the UK Faculty of Public Health, or an FPH approved CPD scheme: [Exemption from CPD - Faculty of Public Health \(fph.org.uk\)](https://www.fph.org.uk/professional-development/cpd/exemption-from-cpd/) – please scroll down the page and click on the box saying 'Other CPD schemes accepted by the Faculty of Public Health'.

It is open to you to demonstrate that your CPD activity is recorded, follows specialist public health competencies, and is audited in a scheme operated by a professional body.

³ <https://www.fph.org.uk/professional-development/cpd/exemption-from-cpd/>

We recommend membership of a formal CPD scheme for at least a year before you send in your pre-application. This reassures your assessors.

If you achieve UKPHR specialist registration you will be expected to follow the FPH CPD policy for specialists and you will be subject to UKPHR's revalidation requirements, and for this we do specify the use of only approved 360-degree feedback tools and a professional appraisal then.

The 360 completed report needs to be a relevant tool (e.g., one of, or similar to, the tools approved by UKPHR for use in connection with revalidation). You can view these on our website here: <https://ukphr.org/registration/revalidation/>

If there are any queries as to whether you have used an appropriate 360-degree feedback tool, this will be determined by the assessor and not the office.

7. How many attempts at pre application and application can I make when I apply under this registration route?

The pre-application:

You can send in up to **3 pre-applications**. If you are unsuccessful on your first/second attempt, you must wait 6 months before sending in a further pre-application. If you are unsuccessful after your third pre-application, then you will need to wait 2 years before you can start the pre-application process again.

The portfolio:

When you have submitted a portfolio, be aware that there are **3 assessments** per portfolio. Therefore, we would urge anyone who has had their pre-application approved, to read again carefully UKPHR's Portfolio applicant guidance along with the Know How and Show how competencies and guidance before assembling their portfolio.

8. What are the outcomes of portfolio assessment?

There are 6 outcomes:

<i>Accept</i>	You will be registered on the SRbPA register.
<i>Clarifications</i>	Minor amendments are required.
<i>Resubmissions</i>	Either the work presented is not appropriate, or there have been at least 2 clarifications already and the assessors judge that the narrative / evidence is not clear enough.
<i>Unassessable</i>	The assessors cannot find the evidence supporting your claims easily. Either the navigation from the narratives to the evidence is poor, or too many competencies are being claimed from one piece of work with poor evidence for each competency, so making sense of it all is difficult. If your first portfolio is deemed unassessable, you will be allowed only 2 further attempts to send in your portfolio.

Complete return Applicant does not seem to be working at the right level. The process is stopped, and you need to start again 6 months after this outcome. This should not happen given the preapplication process and is why the preapplication process was adopted for this registration.

Unsuccessful If you wish to reapply then you start the whole process again, starting at least 6 months after this outcome.

9. What support is available for public health professionals who may wish to apply for registration as a public health specialist under the new route?

UKPHR and the Faculty of Public Health recently published a joint report in which the two organisations recommended that such system-wide support should be put in place.

UKPHR's Moderators have produced podcasts which are on our YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH5_KdfOJZLLaQeUhPfdqOw/featured.

We are aware of a group open to all those interested in registering via this route, called Public Health Specialist Portfolio Network. If you would like further information on this, please email portfoliogroup@adph.org.uk for further details.

Some regions and areas are beginning to establish support programmes for applicants wishing to progress their careers and apply for UKPHR public health specialist registration. We suggest you ask senior Public Health colleagues in your area or the UKPHR office. In some parts of the UK, it has been known for Workforce Leads to provide advice.

UKPHR does not have resources to provide support and mentoring and should not be the regulator.

10. Who does the assessment if there are no exams?

UKPHR has many years experience of assessing evidence of knowledge. UKPHR maintains a pool of senior public health professionals, from a wide range of relevant disciplines, including medicine, who give their time voluntarily to assess portfolios. A minimum of two assessors will assess preapplications and portfolios. These assessors are trained specially for this role and are required to participate in regular development activities.

11. How does UKPHR assure the quality of the assessments made?

One of the four UKPHR Specialist Moderators attend every Registration Panel held by UKPHR. Moderators may be engaged in at any stage, and they can be asked by the Registration Panel to moderate a specific portfolio i.e., assessing the portfolio and cross checking against the outcomes of the assessors. The moderator report is then discussed at the Registration Panel for a final decision. Assessors may ask for their advice at any time. Moderators provide guidance for applicants and assessors.

UKPHR has standards in place for providing quality services to all registrants, stakeholders, and members of the public, backed by a detailed policy for handling complaints, compliments and comments from all sources. There are clear governance arrangements in place, including rules covering Board members and Board and Committee meetings. The Registrar's independent role is clearly set out.

The Nolan Principles for public service are incorporated in UKPHR's Code of Practice for Directors, assessors and others who do work for UKPHR.

12. Are UKPHR able to provide examples for Knowledge / Show How competencies?

There are no "model" examples, as practice in public health varies. Please refer to the Narrative template on our website in the Show How guidance to help you present your Show How evidence. It is important to follow all the guidance and provide all the information your assessor needs, and it is essential that you provide information which relates to the exact specifics of the competency.

13. Is it possible to have a summary reviewed and receive feedback prior to submitting the whole portfolio?

UKPHR is a regulatory body and cannot review summaries/information before they are submitted. You are strongly advised to ask a colleague who has registered with UKPHR via a portfolio route to read through your submissions before sending them to UKPHR.

Please also refer to question 9 re: support available for this route.

14. When including emails as evidence in a portfolio, how much do I redact/leave in?

If in public domain, then the information need not be redacted. Work details of colleagues should not be redacted but personal details of colleagues or any details of members of public should be redacted, including names of care homes. Redacting work details of colleagues can negate the value of the evidence by not being clear who the applicant has communicated with.

15. I have read that evidence to be provided with a portfolio will be subject to a currency rule. What does this mean for applicants who are preparing their portfolio?

Some knowledge competencies require current knowledge, for example of knowledge of current health protection structures and procedures. Current means current, not the previous version.

For other knowledge competencies, if the knowledge was acquired more than 10 years ago when you submit your portfolio to UKPHR, it will be necessary to show how the knowledge has been kept up to date by CPD since. The detailed requirements are set out in the Know How competency guidance.

If applicants have passed the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) in the 10 years prior to their portfolio submission, then they do not have to produce

any further evidence for the knowledge competencies. We strongly advise to pass the exam BEFORE submitting your preapplication. You will have 18 months from preapplication approval to portfolio submission, and passing the exam on the first attempt cannot be assumed.

For Show How evidence, overall, 50% of the evidence produced for assessment must be no more than 5 years old when you submit your portfolio to UKPHR. Evidence must be from work at the right level of senior public health practice.

16. Why does UKPHR say that passing the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination will be an optional means of proving all the knowledge requirements, rather than the only acceptable way of proving knowledge?

The status of the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination pass was extensively considered during the lifetime of the task & finish group set up to advise UKPHR on the requirements for its equivalence route. The issue was also raised in the formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

The General Medical Council does not require passes of Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination for its CESR route to registration. For equivalence then UKPHR has the same requirement. See question 19.

17. When Specialty Registrars (those on the FPH training programme) are within 6 months of completion of the programme, they can look for Consultant roles and confirm they will be finished on a set date. Will UKPHR's SRbPA route allow for the same system, or set timescale for when they will finish?

UKPHR cannot confirm a timescale for when an applicant's portfolio will be accepted and thus become registered. As this depends on the quality and length of the portfolio being assessed. Given the applicant has 18 months to submit a portfolio and the assessors need time to assess, no estimate can be given.

UKPHR is happy to confirm to applicants that they have made a successful application for permission to submit a portfolio and will give information about progress made in assessing a portfolio,

18. The competencies for UKPHR's SRbPA route are proposed to be equivalent to the Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum; how is this being achieved?

UKPHR published its mapping of all the competencies to the 2015 Curriculum's learning outcomes and published guidance for applicants as to how they are to be assessed. This is kept under regular review and in 2022, we reviewed and updated UKPHR's SRbPA Knowledge and Show How competencies in line with the 2022 Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum.

19. UKPHR's SRbPA route is said to be an equivalent process to the CESR route operated by the General Medical Council; how is this being achieved?

CESR is an alternative way of achieving Specialist registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) for medical practitioners. For a doctor who aspires to be a public health specialist this is an alternative to successful completion of the Public Health Specialty Training Programme as well as being to apply for UKPHR SRbPA route.

The GMC's CESR process requires applicants to complete an application form, submit evidence for assessment against the competencies and pay a fee.

UKPHR's SRbPA process requires applicants to complete an application and submit evidence (first, in an application for permission to proceed and then secondly in a prescribed form of portfolio) for assessment and pay a fee.

Both the GMC and UKPHR allow applicants the option of passing the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination as proof of the knowledge required by the 2022 Public Health Specialty Training Programme Curriculum for their portfolio registration routes. Both have competencies for assessment based on the current Curriculum.

A public health doctor who has previously applied to the General Medical Council for a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration and has been refused will not be able to apply to UKPHR under the SRbPA route.

For those who are not medical doctors, there are 2 routes to achieve registration with UKPHR as a public health specialist.

- UKPHR's SRbPA route
- Successfully complete the Faculty of Public Health's Specialty Training Programme.

20. Does UKPHR provide an e-portfolio for this route?

UKPHR does not yet offer an e-portfolio facility for this route but UKPHR's Board has an ambition to introduce an e-portfolio and development work has been started. At present, much of the documentation required can be submitted electronically.

21. Why does UKPHR say that this route is not a developmental route?

The portfolio assessment is retrospective: the applicant provides evidence demonstrating to two assessors that they can demonstrate the requisite competencies. It is not intended as a process under which public health professionals receive training and development during the assessment process. The previous Defined Specialist route process did not have the preapplication step. Many portfolios in that route took years to complete all the gaps and thus took a lot of time for the applicant and assessors in repeated assessments as well as lengthening the time taken to start the assessments given the backlog. Clearly for many applicants this became a development route.

If there are any gaps in your competencies, you will need to ensure that you have a realistic plan to fill these by the time you send in your preapplication. You only have 18 months from preapplication acceptance to submit your portfolio. It is crucial that you understand the range of Knowledge and Show How competencies BEFORE the preapplication.

There are legitimate issues about availability of developmental opportunities for members of the public health workforce, but these are matters that need to be addressed by the public health system as a whole system; it is not part of UKPHR's role to provide training and development.

22. I've read all the FAQ's, the Show How and Knowledge guidance and the pre-application and portfolio guidance and I'm ready to start my pre-application! Where can I find the application forms and other templates to begin my pre-application?

For application forms and other documents you need to send for your application and their accompanying guidance, please see [UKPHR's website](#).

23. Who should I contact if I have any further queries?

If you have any queries related to UKPHR's Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment route you can contact UKPHR by emailing register@ukphr.org