

# Guidance for applicants for UKPHR's *Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment*

## *Pre-application process*

### *February 2024*

Changes made October 2022:

- Failing the preapplication stage
- Advice re: planning to take the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) to cover Knowledge competencies
- Advice not to embed items into documents
- Reference to Framework of Competencies deleted
- Amended wording regarding feedback calls
- Amended wording regarding when applicant can expect to hear the outcome of their application
- Updated in line with the 2022 Public Health Training Curriculum
- Added advice regarding applicants with overseas work experience

Change made October 2023

- Clarification on how referee should certify certificates (page 5, number 11)
- Emphasis on CPD for previous year (section 4, page 4, bullet point 2)

Change made February 2024:

- Updated link to FPH CPD information

**This document will be updated periodically, so  
please check the UKPHR website to ensure you are using the  
current version.**

This is a United Kingdom (UK) registration intended to accredit senior public health professionals working in the UK, by retrospective portfolio assessment. In line with other regulators, UKPHR includes crown dependencies/territories, including Jersey, Isle of Man and Gibraltar within the UK remit.

If you are currently based overseas but have experience of working as a senior public health professional within the UK, you are welcome to submit a SRbPA pre-application in accordance with this guidance (please see appendix 1, pages 9-10 for detailed information for those with overseas experience). Before proceeding to submit a pre-application, please ensure that you are familiar with the requirements of maintaining your registration as a specialist, which will apply if you remain overseas.

We strongly recommend that you read each section of this document to first decide whether the *Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment* route is suitable for you and then use it to help you apply for approval and if successful compile a 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 advised to apply for public health specialist registration via [GMC's Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration \(CESR\) route](#). You are however welcome to apply under UKPHR's Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment route if this is your preference.

The UKPHR registration process requires demonstration against a set of competencies (see below) that aligns with the 2022 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.

**Before you start your pre-application, it is crucial that you read this document and all three of the following guidance documents** to gain a comprehensive understanding of the scope of this process:

- UKPHR Show How competencies and guidance
- UKPHR Knowledge competencies and guidance
- UKPHR Portfolio application guidance

We also recommend that you listen to the podcasts our Moderators have recorded. These are available on our [website](#) and our YouTube page: <https://tinyurl.com/yxdw6yzd>

Successful applicants report that the work to compile a successful portfolio is considerable. However, they feel far more proficient as a Public Health professional.

UKPHR want you to succeed BUT not at the expense of quality and standards. So, this guidance is there to help you present as coherent a case as possible for your registration.

*Please note: this pre-application should mark the end point of your specialist development, or at least have very few gaps to fill. It is strongly advised that you have everything ready for writing your portfolio as you only have 18 months from acceptance of your preapplication to submit the portfolio.*

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

There are two stages:

1. The **pre-application process** which assesses whether you are working at the right level for this route, and will be able to provide evidence across the full range of UKPHR competencies
2. **Submission of your portfolio** for assessment if UKPHR is satisfied that you are working at the right level

Before you start the pre-application process, from UKPHR's website please download and read thoroughly:

- The pre-application form
- The structured reference template
- The UKPHR Knowledge and Show How competency and guidance documents
- The preapplication matrix of evidence vs all competencies
- The UKPHR Portfolio application guidance

**Not understanding these guidance documents is one of the main reasons why applicants fail.**

[You may wish to become an assessor for the UKPHR Practitioner registration route. This will help you become familiar with looking at portfolios through the eyes of an assessor.](#)

## 3. The pre-application process

UKPHR has introduced a pre-application process for those wishing to submit a portfolio for registration as a public health specialist. This is to ensure that applicants going forward to submit a portfolio can achieve registration within three portfolio submissions. This derives from experience with the previous Defined Registration route Please note you must be working at the level of being able to apply for consultant posts working in the UK. The pre-application process reflects some of the learning outcomes of the Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum (2022) and aims to maintain equivalency with the CESR route in Public Health (Medicine) overseen by the GMC. A structured reference confirming fulfilment of the eligibility criteria is required to supplement the pre-application form.

## 4. Eligibility

The focus is to establish that you are working at the right level to ultimately be admitted to the register as a public health specialist.

You **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 Framework<sup>1</sup> or Level 11 and above in Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework<sup>2</sup>;
- Maintain and enhance professional knowledge and skills by way of continuing professional development, participating in a relevant formal CPD scheme<sup>3</sup> (*for assessment of this requirement, see section 7*). To reassure assessors of your updated learning it is advisable to show membership for at least a year prior to preapplication.
- Consistently demonstrate sound judgment in effectively using a range of advanced public health expertise and skills, by portfolio assessment against UKPHR's 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 on page 7*); and
- Be able to submit a completed portfolio within 18 months of approval to submit a portfolio.

It is important to describe your role in any work cited and to describe work in relation to the breadth of public health knowledge and shows competencies. This experience can have been built up over time and in different jobs and could have been in a wide variety of settings including health, local government, academic, voluntary sector, and independent sector.

However, this must be equivalent to a newly appointed consultant working unsupervised in the UK and therefore at least at the level of those successfully completing the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) specialty training programme.

Applicants who have failed the GMC CESR route are not allowed to apply by this route.

Applicants who have been in the formal public health training programme, but not completed for whatever reason, may apply, and use evidence acquired during that training if it demonstrates competency at the appropriate level.

## 5. What does a pre-application consist of?

UKPHR requires:

1. A comprehensive application form, including completed and signed declaration
2. A current job description
3. A current CV outlining posts held over the past 10 years. Your CV should clearly show dates of employment and the status of posts.
4. An organisational chart showing your post and that of your line manager
5. A copy of your most recent annual appraisal, conducted within one year of the pre-application which covers professional and other aspects.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> FPH CPD scheme or an FPH approved CPD scheme <https://www.fph.org.uk/professional-development/cpd/exemption-and-return-to-practice/>

6. 360-degree feedback report<sup>4</sup> and reflection, within three years of the pre-application, with reflection and cited in Personal Development Plan (PDP) / appraisal documents
7. Current Personal Development Plan, completed with the one year of the pre-application
8. Current Continuing Professional Development (CPD) arrangements that include involvement in a formal Public Health CPD scheme, for example, the UK Faculty of Public Health scheme or an FPH approved scheme. It is advised that you have been involved for at least a year, to reassure assessors of your development needs. See section 7.
9. The matrix of evidence vs competencies both Knows How and Shows How, including reflection. Using UKPHR's prescribed template, only.
10. Reference from a senior Public Health professional (Director of Public Health or equivalent) based on the eligibility criteria (see guidance and also see reference template).
11. Certified copies of qualifications, membership of professional bodies, certificate of passing Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination and marriage certificate/change of name deed if any documents are in a different name. Please note: copies your of certificates should be certified by your referee on your reference, in section 3.7 of the template they are required to complete.
12. Any relevant evidence relating to Section 8 Fitness to Practice declaration section in the pre-application form
13. Payment of a one-off pre-application assessment fee.

Pre-applications and supporting documentation need to be submitted electronically to UKPHR at [register@ukphr.org](mailto:register@ukphr.org). Please do not embed documents (e.g., emails, Word document, spreadsheets, presentations etc) into other documents. We have had problems accessing such documents which has delayed assessments. Please do not PDF documents such as the matrix, reference and application form.

Should you wish to submit paper versions, please note that 2 copies of all documents are required.

It is only once all these requirements have been received and checked for completeness in the office that your pre-application will be processed for assessment. An incomplete pre-application that departs from the requirements will not be processed.

## 6. The preapplication matrix of evidence vs competencies

The main purpose of the matrix is for you to identify any gaps you may have in evidence against all know and show how competencies. **Read both competency documents carefully** and review and review your evidence. You are strongly advised to:

1. Assess how adequate your evidence is against each competency and each part thereof. Remember that you need to have evidence of learning at a Masters' level or equivalent for the knowledge competencies and at the level of finishing the formal training scheme for show how competencies.

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<sup>4</sup> 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/>

2. Identify gaps, plan and arrange any further development you need to be able to demonstrate the full range of competencies. You should then be clear about any gaps in knowledge or experience that you may wish to fill before sending in your pre-application. Once your pre-application has been accepted you will have 18 months to complete your portfolio, which can be considerable work, so if you have gaps this will increase that work. So, getting the gaps sorted before submitting your pre-application is highly recommended. Assessing the pre-application includes looking for any gaps, which if not addressed may result in the pre-application being refused.
3. Ensure any gaps in your preapplication matrix are highlighted in your PDP. This assures the assessors that you are aware of the gaps, and you have plans to address them within your PDP, which are achievable within appropriate timescales.
4. The assessors will look in your CPD for evidence of your learning in preparation for this application. This is especially where the learning is longer than 10 years before any anticipated date of portfolio submission (see Know How guidance). Please note if you are planning to evidence your knowledge competencies by passing the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination, we strongly advise you to do so prior to submitting your preapplication. Bear in mind that you will have 18 months from preapplication approval to portfolio submission and passing the exam on the first attempt cannot be assumed.

You are advised to limit your potential evidence to the most relevant for the competency being claimed, or part thereof. Please complete the matrix by citing:

- For knowledge competencies, the course/ modules / learning title that fulfils each part of the competency, including the date the learning was completed.
- For show how competencies, the work you will use to satisfy each element of each competency

Title of the work / learning is sufficient. Do not provide a summary of the work. Please state the date for the evidence/work.

If you have identified gaps in your knowledge competencies, please complete the planned learning section of the matrix including what the course/ modules / learning title and planned date, the learning will be completed.

If you have identified gaps in your show how competencies, please complete the **planned work** section of the matrix including the title of the work you will use to satisfy the competency including the date you plan to complete the work.

This pre-application matrix is for guidance at pre-application only. Please note that if you decide that other courses and/or examples of your work will be more suited to the competency when you come to complete your portfolio, you can use them in your portfolio if you receive approval to continue.

## 7. Qualification, CPD and 360-degree feedback tools

The required **postgraduate qualification** may be in “any subject relevant to public health”. This is because of the breadth of disciplines that contribute to public health practice. The purpose of this requirement is to establish that knowledge has been acquired at the appropriate level through formal study you have undertaken after a first degree, including, postgraduate Diploma, Master’s Degree or PhD.

If there is an issue as to whether the qualification’s title or subject matter is “relevant”, this will be determined by the assessors and not the office.

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) – please scroll down the page and click on the box saying ‘Other CPD schemes accepted by the Faculty of Public Health’.

You must demonstrate that your CPD activity is recorded, follows public health competencies, and is audited in a scheme operated by a professional body. Participation in a formal scheme for a year prior is recommended as evidence of your professional development to reassure assessors.

The reason you should have experience of personal development planning (PDP), appraisal and use of a **360-degree feedback tool** is that at this senior level of practice you are to be expected to be participating in all these activities. If you achieve UKPHR specialist registration,

- a. You will be expected to follow the FPH CPD policy for specialists.
- b. 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.

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

## 8. The reference

This should be from a senior public health professional, someone with a clear strategic role or reporting to a senior decision-making body and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC), General Medical Council (GMC) or UKPHR as a Public Health Specialist. In most circumstances it would be expected to be a person to whom you have a reporting relationship, and who has direct knowledge of your work. The referee should be able to know if there are any governance or disciplinary issues in relation to you. The referee should also set out the support, if any, you will receive while preparing your portfolio for submission (e.g., study leave, mentoring support).

The purpose of the reference is to provide assurance that you:

- are working at the appropriate level to achieve registration as a public health specialist, with the full range, depth and breadth of experience and skills specified in the UKPHR Show How and Knowledge competencies for specialist registration.
- have the full set of competencies required for registration as a Public Health Specialist, at least equivalent to those completing the Faculty of Public Health Training Scheme and are therefore suitable for appointment at Public Health Consultant level
- are working within the Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016
- have the support of senior colleagues to proceed with a portfolio for assessment.

**This means the referee can only be someone who has specialist Public Health registration.**

The reference requires the referee to provide a summary statement to confirm your competencies as a public health specialist. This forms part of assessing eligibility to submit a portfolio. This confirmation should be from direct observation of your **work within the past three years from the date of the pre-application.**

The referee must have worked with you and know your work well for **at least one year in the past three years**. If you are unable to find a referee that can provide a full year reference, an additional reference will be required to make up the shortfall. Please note that all referees will still need to meet the criteria requested by UKPHR.

It is expected that the referee will share their reference with you. This information will be assessed alongside your application form. Referees are expected to have read the competencies, pre-application and portfolio guidance to be fully aware of the assurances they are providing against you.

## 9. Fee for pre-application

Please note that each pre-application incurs an assessment fee. You can find out the pre-application assessment fee on our website here: <https://ukphr.org/fees-and-charges/>

Payment can be made via the following methods:

<b>BACS:</b>	Bank: CAF Bank Account name: Public Health Register Sort code 40-52-40 Account number 00036414
<b>PayPal:</b>	Using the account register@ukphr.org

## 10. Assessment of your pre-application

Once UKPHR has received your pre-application it will be checked in the office for completeness. If a pre-application has not been received in full, it will be returned to you to address any outstanding areas.

Your pre-application will be assessed by two assessors who will each complete their individual assessment and then agree a joint recommendation. Your assessors will aim to return their assessment to UKPHR within 6 weeks and this will then be presented at UKPHR's monthly Registration Panel and ratified by UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee. When UKPHR receive your completed assessment from your assessors, you will be notified which Registration Panel and which Registration Approval Committee your application will be considered at, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of your application.

If your application is:

1. Accepted: then you have **18 months** from the date of the UKPHR response letter to submit your portfolio.
2. Not successful: then you will receive a letter detailing the reasons for this decision and you will be offered a feedback call via Microsoft Teams with one of your assessors. When we send your outcome letter, we will ask you to let us know your availability for this call within 30 days of your letter, along with your questions for the assessors to answer. Your feedback call may be with both assessors, one acting as lead and the other acting as observer and note taker to help the conversation proceed smoothly. UKPHR will record the feedback call (unless you instruct us otherwise) and the assessors will use this recording to write their notes, which will be shared with you following the feedback call. The feedback call must be scheduled within 30 days of the date of your outcome letter. When you have your feedback call with your assessors, you are welcome to ask a colleague to join you on the call. You are strongly advised to take up the offer of the feedback call.



You should then review the feedback and consider any development needs should you wish to continue, preferably with a colleague who is already registered as a public health specialist.

You can **re-apply with another pre-application 6 months after** the letter from UKPHR

Up to **three submissions** of a pre-application can be made therefore it is critical to submit a pre-application whilst fully aware of the requirements laid out in the pre-application and portfolio guidance. If you fail three preapplication attempts, you must wait for a minimum of 2 years before reapplying. Then after the 2 years, you can start your 3 attempts at a pre-application again.

You should be aware that material considered in the previous attempts will not be routinely made available to the assessors of the current application. This is to ensure assessment is unbiased. Applications therefore need to send all the information required in the guidance, for each preapplication.

If you are on parental leave or have extenuating circumstances which prevent you from submitting your clarifications or resubmissions on time, then you must apply to seek an extension from the UKPHR's Registrar.

## Appendix 1:

### Guidance for applicants with principally overseas experience

UKPHR specialist registration is a UK certification. As a result, applicants must show experience / knowledge of UK working and systems. Overseas experience is valued and can be used to support the UK knowledge or experience.

UKPHR has some relevant core principles for assessing portfolios for specialist registration:

- UKPHR registration sets out the competencies for a public health specialist to work in the UK. The role of a PH consultant is relatively unique internationally, in that they are expected to have competencies across a range of areas. In many countries public health roles are focussed on specific specialist areas.
- UKPHR registration must be at the same level of someone going through the FPH specialty training programme, which is all UK based, and which aligns with the UK medical route to consultant practice.
- UK registration should give a UK employer assurance that a person has the appropriate competencies to operate effectively and autonomously in a senior public health role, and be able to quickly get to grips with the context in which they are working

As this is registration for practicing as a Public Health Specialist in the UK, it is important to note:

1. A number of competencies require evidence to be submitted of knowledge or experience within the UK; this includes those that include the word **current**. This will require experience of having worked at a senior level in UK Public Health. See table below.
2. For Key Areas where no specific competency is listed below, these will require some UK evidence, whether knowledge or show how i.e., KH4, KH5, SH4, SH5, SH7, SH8, SH9.
3. Professional indemnity for practicing as a Public Health Specialist
4. Engagement in a formal Continuing Professional Development scheme such as the UK Faculty of Public Health own scheme or one approved by them

**Competencies where this UK knowledge or experience is explicitly required are:**

<i>Knowledge competencies</i>	<i>Show How competencies</i>
KH1.c	SH1.A
KH1.e	SH2.C
KH2.b	SH3.A
KH3.c	SH6.C
KH6.f	SH6.E

KH6.h KH6.j KH6.k KH6.l KH7.C KH7.E KH7.F KH7.H KH8.f Key Area 9 as set out in the preapplication form especially the relevant PD scheme.	
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The preapplication process requires adherence to these conditions by the applicant. So, it is important for any applicant to be sure they can fulfil all the requirements. ([See SRbPA guidance for applicants and referees on the UKPHR website](#)).

It is also important to note that to maintain registration there are similar requirements, again see [revalidation guidance](#) on the UKPHR website.