

UKPHR Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment (SRbPA)

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated May 2026

1. Who can apply for registration via 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 completing the formal public health training programme. This is for individuals who are not registered as a Public Health Specialist with the GMC or GDC.

2. What must an applicant consider before applying?

We recommend that you first thoroughly read the pre-application and portfolio guidance documents and review the Show How and Know How competencies, as you will be required to demonstrate evidence of these in your portfolio. You can view these on our website: <https://ukphr.org/specialist-registration-by-portfolio-assessment/>

Any potential applicants should discuss their plan to apply with their employer, and seek their employer support and buy-in. This process is time consuming and can be stressful for applicants. We have produced some FAQ's aimed at employers. These can be found on the SRbPA page of our [website](#).

We would also strongly recommend finding a mentor in Public Health who has already registered with UKPHR, ideally via a portfolio route so they can provide advice and additional support.

If you are not practicing at the level of a newly qualified consultant long enough to demonstrate experience at that level, you should not apply.

3. What is the process for UKPHR's SRbPA route?

There is a two-stage application process:

Stage 1 consists of a pre-application to satisfy UKPHR that you are eligible and ready to submit a full portfolio. If approved, you have **18 months** to send in your portfolio. You should **only submit a pre-application when you are portfolio ready**. **This means you can already show evidence across the full range of competencies**, or you have only small gaps left and a clear plan to address them.

Portfolio development typically takes between 2-4 years on average, depending on factors such as the evidence you already have available and the time you can allocate - this will vary depending on job roles and personal circumstances.

Stage 2 is submission of a full portfolio, including evidence that maps to each of the competencies.

UKPHR have produced podcasts which are on our YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH5_KdfOJZLLaQeUhPfdqOw/featured. Do listen to them as feedback indicates that they are helpful.

4. What is in a pre-application?

A pre-application includes:

- Your completed application form
- Your current job description
- A matrix which maps all the competencies to your evidence. This is particularly important as it helps you reflect upon your evidence and identify any gaps you may have. Completing this should help you to decide if you would be ready to submit a portfolio if your pre-application is approved.
- A structured reference from a registered Public Health Specialist
- Your up-to-date CV, appraisal, and PDP
- An organisation chart showing where your post and your line manager fits into the organisational structure
- Evidence of your CPD (you must show that you have been actively participating in a formal CPD programme that includes reflection for at least one year prior to submitting your pre-application)
- A 360-feedback report dated within 3 years of your pre-application
- Certified (by your referee) copies of certificates
- Certified (by your referee) copies of qualifications
- Certified (by your referee) copy of ID (we accept passports and government-issued ID).

5. How long does the pre-application process take?

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.

We strongly recommend that you ask someone who has been through a UKPHR portfolio registration process to read your application forms, matrices, and summaries before submission and ask them for honest feedback on your drafts.

Once UKPHR receive your pre-application, it is checked for completeness and then when complete, the application is sent to two assessors. They aim to assess this within 6 weeks, although it could take longer. The assessors' recommendation is considered at our monthly Registration Panel and Registration Approvals Committee meetings. After the Registration Approvals Committee, we email your outcome letter to you. We aim to let you know the outcome within 10 weeks of sending your application for assessment, but this may not always be possible.

If your outcome is successful, you will have 18 months to compile and send in your portfolio. If it is unsuccessful, you will be provided with the option of an online feedback meeting with your assessors. Most people find these helpful.

Sometimes assessors don't agree, or an application is borderline. If this is the case, a moderation of your pre-application may take place. If this happens, we will let you know. A Moderator undertakes an independent assessment and presents their findings to the Registration Panel, who will make a final recommendation to our Registration Approvals Committee.

From UKPHR receiving a pre-application through to you finding out whether it has been approved can take 3-4 months, and a little longer if your pre-application is moderated. If there is a backlog of applications, it could take even longer. The UKPHR office is happy to keep you appraised of timescales.

6. What is the portfolio process and how long does it 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 the current Portfolio and Know How and Show How guidance**. Make sure you check the UKPHR website to ensure you are using the latest version. If you do not follow the guidance, you are unlikely to have a successful outcome.

Some registrants who have been through this process have said the **time taken** for collating a portfolio then actioning clarifications and resubmissions after assessment can be **at least 10 hours per week for 2+ years**. Remember, this is on top of your day job and other personal commitments.

Before sending your portfolio to UKPHR, aim to leave at least a month to collate everything.

Assessment of your portfolio

Please note: the timescales listed are indicative and may vary due to assessor availability.

On receipt of a portfolio, UKPHR make internal checks to ensure everything has been received. Two assessors are then identified. This can take a little while, but we aim to send portfolios for assessment within 3 months of receiving them. The assessment itself should take about 12 weeks, but we will let you know if there are delays. Assessor findings are taken to our monthly Registration Panel and subsequent Registration Approvals Committee. We will email your outcome letter to you within three working days after the Registration Approvals Committee meeting. An online feedback meeting is offered if there is not a successful outcome.

Assessors might determine that they require clarifications or resubmissions relating to specific competencies. You have 6 months from your feedback meeting to submit any clarifications/resubmissions for review.

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

Clarifications or resubmissions can be requested up to 4 times; there is a fee payable for each assessment (check here <https://ukphr.org/fees-and-charges/>).

Most applications have some clarifications and resubmissions. It is unusual for a portfolio to be fully accepted on the first attempt.

As you will note from the information above, the entire process can take several years. Therefore, it is important that you are virtually ready to write / complete your portfolio before submitting your pre-application i.e. **ensure you are portfolio ready at pre-application**. This will minimise the time taken to assess your application and hopefully the number of reassessments.

7. How does UKPHR decide if a pre-application is successful?

The pre-application 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.

Know How 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:

- You currently work, or have previously worked, in a senior public health role.
- You use advanced public health skills at senior level to improve population health in complex and changing settings.
- You consistently demonstrate sound judgment in using a range of advanced public health expertise and skills, and this must be mapped to the required competencies.
- You can show practice that is consistent with Good Public Health Practice.
- You can demonstrate competence across the breadth of public health practice at the level of a newly qualified consultant.
- You hold a relevant postgraduate qualification* at Level 7¹ or above, or equivalent (level 11 and above in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)².
- You have been part of a formal CPD programme for at least one year - this must include reflection.
- You have recent appraisal documentation, a current personal development plan, and 360-degree feedback.
- You have experience of strategic leadership and collaborative working for health.
- You believe you can complete and submit a full portfolio within 18 months of approval.

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

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

Applicants must use the matrix of competencies to assure themselves that all the Know How and Show How requirements can be met before embarking on their pre-application. This provides an ideal starting point for applicants and will assist in identifying any gaps to be addressed over the next 18 months.

Once all these requirements are checked for completeness by the UKPHR, your pre-application will be considered 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 pre-application that departs from the requirements will not be processed.

8. How long should I have been undertaking CPD before I send in my pre-application?

Does UKPHR have a list of approved 360-degree feedback tools?

CPD

You must demonstrate that you have been actively participating in formal CPD activities for at least one year prior to submitting your pre-application. By formal, we mean that your CPD must be submitted as part of an established and quality assured CPD scheme and include reflective aspects.

The Faculty of Public Health runs a CPD scheme and publishes a list of reasonable alternatives: [Exemption from CPD - Faculty of Public Health \(fph.org.uk\)](https://www.fph.org.uk/other-cpd-schemes) – please scroll down the page and click on the box saying 'Other CPD schemes accepted by the Faculty of Public Health'.

At this senior level of practice, you are to be expected to be keeping, maintaining, and enhancing your competence in a structured way. You must demonstrate that your CPD activity is recorded and follows public health competencies. Participation in a formal scheme for a year prior is evidence of your professional development to reassure assessors.

360-degree feedback

The 360-degree feedback report should come from one of the tools approved by UKPHR for use in connection with revalidation, or something similar. You can view these on our website here: <https://ukphr.org/registration/revalidation/>

We recommend that your 360 is undertaken as close to your pre-application submission date as possible.

If there are any queries as to whether you have used an appropriate 360-degree feedback tool, this will be determined by the assessors; the UKPHR office cannot provide advice on this.

9. What are the possible outcomes of portfolio assessment?

There are 6 potential outcomes:

Outcome	Meaning	Next step
Pass	All competencies met	Registration
Clarification	Minor gaps	Submit within 6 months of feedback meeting or 6 months from outcome letter date if no meeting takes place
Resubmission	New evidence required	Submit within 6 months of feedback meeting or 6 months from outcome letter date if no meeting takes place
Unassessable	Cannot assess	Major revision required – resubmit within 18 months
Complete return	Below required level	Restart process with pre-application after waiting 18 months
Moderation	QA check has been requested ³	The Moderator will assess your portfolio and present their findings to a future RP.

10. How many attempts do I have?

You can send in up to **4 pre-applications**. If you are unsuccessful after your fourth pre-application, then you will need to wait 2 years before you can start the pre-application process again, as it will be very unlikely that you can fulfil the requirements without significant CPD.

If your full portfolio assessment outcome is clarifications, resubmissions, or unassessable, you have another 3 opportunities to submit what's required, for a total of **4 assessments** per portfolio. Remember there may be a fee involved so please check the latest fee information on the website at <https://ukphr.org/fees-and-charges/>

We would urge anyone who has their pre-application approved to read again carefully the Portfolio applicant guidance along with the Know How and Show how competencies before assembling their portfolio.

11. What support is available for public health professionals applying for Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment?

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

³ A moderation is not unusual. It may happen for a variety of reasons i.e. assessors do not agree, the evidence is difficult to interpret, or a random spot check may be undertaken.

There is a group run by the Association of Directors of Public Health which is 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 countries in the UK have or are working to establish support programmes for public health professionals to help them apply for UKPHR public health specialist registration. We suggest you ask senior Public Health colleagues in your area or your local public health workforce team.

UKPHR does not directly provide support and mentoring, although we have contributed to the development of local and national support programmes.

12. Who are the UKPHR Assessors?

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

13. How does UKPHR assure the quality of the assessments?

Specialist Moderators work for UKPHR to provide quality assurance. Moderators may be engaged in at any stage of assessment and can be asked by the Registration Panel to moderate a specific portfolio. They may spot-check specific competencies or may reassess the portfolio. The Moderation report is discussed at the Registration Panel for a final decision on the application. Assessors may ask for Moderator advice at any time. Moderators are subject matter experts on the SRbPA process and competencies.

UKPHR has standards in place for providing quality services to all registrants, stakeholders, and members of the public, backed by detailed policies and processes. There are clear governance arrangements in place, with the Registrar's independent role 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.

14. Are UKPHR able to provide examples for Know How / Show How competencies?

There are no "model" examples, as practice in public health varies widely. 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. It helps to put yourself in the role of the assessor and ask: 'what do I need to assure myself that this competency is being met?'.

15. Know How narratives – how many should be included, and how long should they be?

The guidance for Know How competencies explains that if you are unable to evidence your learning directly, you should instead describe your understanding of the relevant parts of the competency. If at the point of portfolio submission your Master's degree is more than 10 years old, you need to show how you have updated your learning, this may be by completing a relevant Master's level module - particularly if you cannot otherwise evidence a specific competency.

Assessors often note recurring issues where portfolio submissions fail to address the full range of a competency or don't fully follow the guidance. This can occur even when course materials, such as lecture slides, are included, as assessors may struggle to find where specific parts of the competency are covered. Attendance certificates are also sometimes missing. It is therefore essential that applicants take care to ensure all aspects of each competency are fully addressed in their evidence.

As an alternative, applicants may choose to write narratives to demonstrate their knowledge. Effective narratives are concise, clearly aligned to the competency, and supported by references. While they can be as short as two pages, most submissions are typically three to four A4 pages in length. Narratives should draw upon learning from your original MSc, workplace experience, appropriate academic texts, or discussions with experts in the relevant field. All narratives must be written in your own words - assessors are alert to issues of plagiarism and use of AI.

Narratives for all Know How competencies are acceptable, though this approach may not be ideal for every applicant. It is important to avoid writing lengthy documents that lose focus or omit key elements of the competency. As one assessor commented, "Being a public health consultant, especially in local government, means you must write concisely." Applicants are encouraged to keep this in mind when preparing Know How narratives.

There is a narrative template available on our [website](#) for applicants to download and use, in the 'Stage 2 - Submission of your portfolio' section.

16. 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.

17. When including emails as evidence in a portfolio, how much do I redact/leave in? Are there any tips on demonstrating evidence?

If information is in the public domain, it doesn't need to be redacted.

Colleagues' work-related information does not require redaction unless it includes material of a sensitive or confidential nature (for example, appraisal documentation). All personal details must be redacted without exception, as must any information that identifies members of the public, the names of staff with whom the applicant has experienced conflict, and the names of care homes.

When demonstrating evidence, it is important to find the right balance between providing enough detail and being concise; this is a skill you will be expected to have in a consultant role when producing succinct reports.

There are a lot of tips about evidence in the portfolio and competency guidance - please read them carefully.

18. What are the rules regarding currency of evidence?

Some Know How competencies require “current” knowledge, for example knowledge of current health protection structures and procedures as these can be subject to change. These competencies must always reflect current best practice.

For other Know How 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 Diplomate exam less than 5 years from the date of their portfolio submission, they are exempt from providing additional evidence for all Know How competencies.

If applicants have passed the Diplomate exam 5 -10 years prior to the date of their portfolio submission, they are exempt from most Know How competencies except for those containing the word ‘current’ (KH6.f, KH6.h, KH7.c, KH7.e, KH7.f), where **they must demonstrate up to date knowledge of the current situation.**

We strongly advise you pass the exam BEFORE submitting your pre-application. You will have 18 months from pre-application approval to portfolio submission, and you may not pass the exam on the first attempt.

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.

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

The General Medical Council in its statutory capacity does not require a pass of Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) examination for its own portfolio route to medical specialist registration. There are other ways of demonstrating evidence. For the sake of equivalence and fairness, the UKPHR has adopted the same requirement.

19. 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 a timescale for when the process will be finished?

UKPHR cannot confirm a timescale for when an applicant's portfolio will be accepted and 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 guaranteed.

UKPHR is happy to confirm to applicants that they have made a successful pre-application, which gives permission to submit a full portfolio. We can also confirm the stage of assessment a portfolio is at but will not share any details of an assessment with external parties except to confirm registration status.

20. Is UKPHR's SRbPA route equivalent to the GMC's Portfolio Pathway for medical doctors looking for specialist registration in public health?

GMC's Portfolio Pathway is a way of achieving Specialist registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) for doctors and is an alternative to successful completion of the Public Health Specialty Training Programme. Doctors are also eligible to apply for the UKPHR SRbPA route.

The GMC's Portfolio Pathway process requires applicants to complete an application form, submit evidence for assessment against the competencies and pay a fee, in a similar way to the SRbPA. However, the GMC does not have an equivalent to the pre-application; a full portfolio is required at the outset.

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 for their respective portfolio registration routes. Both assess competencies based on the most current public health Curriculum.

A public health doctor who has previously applied to the General Medical Council for Specialist Registration and has been refused may apply to UKPHR under the SRbPA route, provided they wait 18 months from the unsuccessful GMC notification.

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

- UKPHR SRbPA route
- Successful completion the Public Health Specialty Training Programme.

21. Can I submit my portfolio to UKPHR online?

Most of the required documentation can be submitted electronically via file sharing, although we do request some printed items. Please check the SRbPA Portfolio guidance for further details.

To note, in Spring 2026, we are working on an ePortfolio for this route; please bear this in mind as we are planning to launch this for pre-applications and portfolios in Autumn 2026.

22. Why does UKPHR say ‘this 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.

Therefore, when sending your pre-application, you will need to be confident that you are ‘**portfolio ready**’ – i.e., that you can meet all the required competencies, or have very few gaps to fill. If your pre-application is approved, you will find that the 18 months to collate your portfolio alongside your everyday life and work, can go by very quickly. Therefore, we urge any applicants to consider this carefully and ensure if they have significant gaps, these are completed before sending a pre-application.

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 pre-application. You only have 18 months from pre-application acceptance to submit your portfolio. It is crucial that you understand the range of Know How and Show How competencies BEFORE submitting a pre-application.

If assessors do not think you can realistically achieve any gaps within 18 months, your pre-application will be declined.

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; it is not UKPHR’s role to provide training and development, but we are working closely with the system to try to ensure opportunities are available.

23. What feedback have you received from those who have registered via the UKPHR Portfolio route? What would they say to prospective applicants?

We asked our registrants this question and they said:

- Read the guidance document carefully, then read it again.
- Clarify your understanding of the competencies before you start, for example by discussing them with a senior public health colleague familiar with the SRbPA competencies.
- If you’re considering undertaking the DFPH exam for your Know How competencies, we’d strongly recommend speaking with individuals who have previously undertaken the exam to gain a clear understanding of the scale of the work involved and the expectations of the process.
- You may wish to consider how periods of significant personal or professional change could affect your capacity, and plan accordingly.
- Develop strong self-evaluation and reflective practice from the outset, as these are essential to the process.
- Become a registered practitioner with UKPHR; local practitioner schemes are well-supported and help familiarise practitioners

with interpreting competencies and compiling evidence to demonstrate that they are met.

- Consider becoming a local assessor for a UKPHR Practitioner Registration scheme, as this can help you understand how portfolios are approached by assessors.
- Ask someone who has registered as a specialist by the UKPHR portfolio route to review your application form, matrix, and portfolio summaries before submission, and to provide honest feedback on your drafts.
- Be open to constructive criticism, as feedback on your assessment can be challenging.
- Think about how an assessor will read your narrative and **focus on how the work demonstrates the competency** rather than simply describing what you did.
- If you draft your Know Hows first, revisit them after completing your Show Hows, as considering how knowledge is applied may change how you want to frame your evidence.
- Work through your evidence as you write your Show Hows rather than leaving it until the end. Keep it organised in an electronic folder as you go and establish an evidence navigation system early.
- Focus on the quality of evidence rather than the quantity and include only evidence that is genuinely relevant to the competencies you are claiming.
- If finding older evidence is challenging, consider moving forward with refresher training, top-up training, or self-directed learning, or other forms of professional developments. Any such activity should be realistic within the applicant's personal circumstances, working patterns and available resource.
- Make sure you are comfortable with others reading and assessing your work, questioning your decisions, or revisiting material you have already covered.
- Write concisely and succinctly, as this is an important skill in a consultant role.
- Consider your own wellbeing throughout this process to prevent burn out, which is why a clearly thought-out PDP plan is important

24. Can I use AI when creating my portfolio?

You should not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to write any part of your application, including forms and portfolio narratives. However, when AI has been used to deliver public health activity, you should cite and appropriately acknowledge use of AI, including why you used it, what you learned from this experience and any advantages and disadvantages you have found when using AI. AI tools to check spelling and grammar are acceptable. However presenting work created by AI without suitable acknowledgement is considered plagiarism.

25. I've read all the FAQ's, the Show How and Know How competencies, 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?

All application forms and other documents, as well as all necessary guidance, are published on [UKPHR's website](#). If you're not sure, please ask us.

26. What are the fees for pre-application and portfolio assessments?

Here are our current fees: <https://ukphr.org/fees-and-charges/> . These may change from time to time.

27. 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 us by emailing register@ukphr.org