

UKPHR's Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I apply for registration by UKPHR's Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route?

UKPHR's Board opened UKPHR's Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route on **01 September 2018**. This route involves retrospective portfolio assessment.

It has a core principle of **equivalence in competencies and process** wherever possible to the CESR (Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration) route operated by the GMC (General Medical Council) and the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum (2015 Curriculum).

UKPHR has published the [framework of required competencies](#) for the new Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route.

The knowledge competencies are based on the 2015 Curriculum.

An **implementation group** helped the Board prepare for implementing the required changes, including:

- Eligibility criteria for the new equivalence route
- Application process and forms
- Guidance
- References and testimonials requirements
- Quality assurance arrangements
- Training for assessors.

The Board and the implementation group agreed a **two-stage application process**.

Stage 1 requires an application to satisfy UKPHR as to eligibility and readiness.

Stage 2 requires applicants who pass Stage 1 to submit a portfolio for assessment.

2. Where can I find the application forms for my completion?

For application forms and accompanying guidance [see UKPHR's website](#).

3. What tests are applied by UKPHR is deciding whether to grant preapplications?

The preapplication is designed to ensure that:

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

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

Applicants must:

- (i) Be able to demonstrate competence in public health practice at least equivalent to a specialist newly qualified through the Training Programme; and
- (ii) Hold a post graduate qualification (in any discipline relevant to Public Health); and
- (iii) Maintain and enhance professional knowledge and skills by CPD, participating in a relevant formal CPD scheme.

Applicants must also:

- (1) work in a public health role, following Good Public Health Practice;
- (2) Use a range of advanced public health skills in working at senior organisational levels;
- (3) Have experience of Strategic Leadership and Collaborative Working for Health; and
- (4) Be able to submit a completed portfolio within 18 months of approval to submit a portfolio.

It is recommended that intending applicants use the matrix of competencies that is on UKPHR's website to self-check that these requirements can be met before embarking on their preapplication.

4. 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 will be preparing a portfolio?

In assessing portfolios received by UKPHR under previous routes, assessors have always had regard to the **age of evidence** provided when determining the current skills and knowledge of applicants.

For this route, there are some rules which govern currency of evidence specifically.

Some **knowledge competencies** require current knowledge, for example of knowledge of current health protection structures and procedures. In these cases, knowledge of out of date law or systems is not acceptable.

For other knowledge competencies, if the knowledge was acquired more than seven years previously, it will be necessary additionally to show how the knowledge has been kept up to date by activity such as CPD since.

If applicants have passed Part A of the Faculty of Public Health exam in the 7 years prior to their application, then they do not have to produce any further evidence for the knowledge competencies.

For Show How evidence, overall, 50 per cent of the evidence produced for assessment must be no more than five years old. This is a general requirement across a portfolio, but assessors may pick up on the strength of evidence produced to demonstrate an individual competence, and age of the evidence may be relevant to strength.

5. Why does UKPHR say that passes in the Part A exams will be an optional means of proving all the knowledge requirements, rather than the only acceptable way of proving knowledge?

The status of Part A exam passes 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 Part A exams for its CESR route to registration.

Given the principle of equivalence, UKPHR's position is therefore that all applicants by this new route must prove all the knowledge requirements of the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Programme Curriculum. They may do so at their option either by passing the Part A exams or by producing in their portfolio evidence to satisfy two experienced assessors that they possess all the knowledge requirements.

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

UKPHR has 15 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. For the new Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment route, which UKPHR opened on 01 September 2018:

- A single assessor will assess preapplications;
- Two assessors will assess portfolios of (as in the present defined specialist portfolio system).

As readers may know, portfolio assessments by two assessors are discussed by those assessors and their peer assessors and a Moderator at monthly meetings of UKPHR's Registration Panel. These discussions usually result in applicants being asked to provide further information and/or evidence by way of clarification and/or resubmission. The process is tried and tested, it is rigorous, and it is robust.

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.

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

UKPHR's Quality Assurance work is led by UKPHR's **Moderation Team**, comprising six Moderators, one of whom is the Lead Moderator. The Moderators oversee the registration processes in respect of specialists and practitioners. They attend every Registration Panel held by UKPHR (and every verification panel held by every local practitioner registration scheme). They will select portfolios at random for moderation, they may be asked by the Registration Panel to moderate a specific portfolio and assessors may ask for their advice at any time. Moderators provide guidance for applicants and assessors. The Lead Moderator writes an **annual report** which UKPHR publishes in its Annual Report.

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.

8. When Specialty Registrars are within 6 months of completion of the programme, they are able to look for Consultant roles and confirm they will be finished on a set date. Will UKPHR’s Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route allow for the same system, or set timescale for when they will finish?

The **two-stage application process** for this Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment route means that applicants must first satisfy UKPHR as to their eligibility and readiness to produce a portfolio evidencing their competencies across the 2015 Curriculum.. It will only be after UKPHR has given permission in response to this application that applicants will be able to submit a portfolio for **retrospective** evidence assessment.

Once permission has been given for submitting a portfolio for assessment, the applicant’s eligibility and readiness to apply will have been confirmed. However, there will no doubt be considerable variability in how long applicants will take to prepare and submit their portfolios (applicants have up to 18 months from being given permission to submit their portfolio for assessment) and how long UKPHR and its assessors will take to complete the assessment process.

Whilst UKPHR will be happy to confirm to applicants and employers (with applicants’ permission) that an applicant has made a successful application for permission, and to give information about progress made in assessing a portfolio, we would be unable to say that the applicant’s portfolio would be six months away from being successfully assessed and that they would be eligible for consultant posts on a specific date in the way that the Specialty Training route provides.

9. The competencies for UKPHR’s Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route are proposed to be equivalent to the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum, how is this being achieved?

All applicants by this new route must prove all the knowledge requirements of the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Programme Curriculum (and may do so at their option either by passing the Part A exams or by producing in their portfolio the necessary evidence to satisfy two experienced assessors that they possess all the knowledge requirements). Applicants must also demonstrate understanding and application of the knowledge requirements (the “Show Hows”).

UKPHR [published its mapping](#) of the “Show Hows” to the 2015 Curriculum’s learning outcomes and [published guidance](#) for applicants as to how they are to be assessed. This is kept under review by UKPHR.

10. UKPHR's Specialist registration by portfolio assessment 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 registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) as a medical practitioner. For a doctor who is a public health specialist this is an alternative to successful completion of the Public Health Specialty Training Programme.

UKPHR's Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route will be an alternative way of achieving registration with UKPHR as a public health specialist. This is an alternative to successful completion of the Public Health Specialty Training Programme.

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

UKPHR's Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route 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.

The GMC allows applicants the option of passing the Part A exams as proof of the knowledge required by the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Programme Curriculum for its CESR route to registration.

UKPHR allows applicants the option of passing the Part A exams as proof of the knowledge required by the 2015 Public Health Specialty Training Programme Curriculum for its equivalence route to registration.

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 new route.

11. Does UKPHR provide an E-portfolio for this route?

UKPHR does not yet offer an **e-portfolio** facility for those who may wish to apply under the new route, but UKPHR's Board has an ambition to introduce an e-portfolio and development work has been started.

12. What is the anticipated workforce impact of introducing the new Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route?

Since UKPHR's foundation in 2003, it has contributed to the development of a strong, **multidisciplinary** core public health workforce in the UK.

UKPHR has not made an estimate of the likely registration rate under the new Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route which opened on 01 September 2018 but is aware that there remains interest within the public health workforce for such a route to registration to be available from the responses received in its 2017 consultation.

UKPHR is working on the assumption that new registrations through the new route will be approximately the same as the number of registrations through the defined specialist route.

13. 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 has not had resources to provide **support and mentoring**. UKPHR will try to match applicants with registrants in their area who have registered by portfolio assessment routes. In some parts of the UK, it has been known for Workforce Leads to provide advice, and there have been some ad hoc support schemes in operation.

We would like there to be system-wide support for the core public health workforce to help them with their development and career progressions. 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.

14. Why does UKPHR say that this route is not a development route?

The portfolio assessment is retrospective: the applicant provides evidence demonstrating to two assessors that he or she has the requisite competencies. It is not intended as a process under which public health professionals receive training and development during the assessment process.

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 no part of UKPHR's role to provide training and development.

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

If you have any queries related to UKPHR's new Specialist registration by portfolio assessment route you can contact UKPHR's Chief Executive, David Kidney with your queries. His email address is d.kidney@ukphr.org and telephone 0121 293 4371.

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