



UKPHR

*Public Health Register*

Protecting the public – improving practice

# Guidance for Applicants, Assessors and Verifiers

*Public Health Practitioner Registration*

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DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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# 1. Overview and principles

This document describes the framework and process for gaining registration with UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) as a public health practitioner. It contains guidance for applicants, assessors and verifiers. It should be read in conjunction with the *Supporting Information* document.

Registration of public health practitioners protects the public by:

- Setting and promoting standards for admission to the Register and for remaining on the register;
- publishing a Register of competent professionals and
- dealing with registered professionals who fail to meet the necessary standards.

Registration supports practitioners as it formally recognises their ability to apply public health knowledge and understanding and demonstrates this to peers and employers.

Practitioners wishing to gain registration are required to produce a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their competence against the UKPHR Practitioner Standards. Assessment and verification of the portfolio against these standards is a prerequisite for registration.

As with all regulators, registration with UKPHR will incur a one-off administration fee plus an initial registration fee and subsequently an annual registration fee. The current fees are available on UKPHR's website.

This guidance is applicable to practitioners working in a range of settings, including local government, health care and the voluntary sector. Their job titles may not include public health, for example, health improvement, health development, health intelligence, health promotion, and their roles may not be based in a public health team.

## 1.1 Joining a local assessment scheme

Practitioners wishing to gain UKPHR registration must first apply to a local assessment scheme. There are a number of local assessment schemes in operation and prospective applicants should check UKPHR's website for information on the current availability of schemes. Applicants should in the first instance contact the local assessment scheme coordinator and express an interest to apply.

Plans are underway to roll out practitioner schemes across the whole of the UK to ensure equitable access to public health practitioner registration.

The feasibility of a national registration process is being considered.

## 1.2 Overview of assessment and verification processes

Practitioners are assessed against the UKPHR Practitioner Standards by locally appointed, UKPHR-trained assessors, and on the recommendation of the local UKPHR-supported Verification Panel. Assessors and verifiers are the custodians of the standards of practice and their roles are of the utmost importance.

In addition to the training and support of assessors and verifiers, UKPHR provides quality assurance including moderation.

The assessment and verification processes must be both robust and consistent in maintaining standards, and proportionate to the risks posed to the public by the workforce. It should provide a system in which professionals, employers and the public can have confidence.

The assessment process should be supportive for the applicant and embedded as far as possible in existing infrastructures such as continued professional development (CPD), personal development planning and appraisal, providing a system that is sustainable into the future.

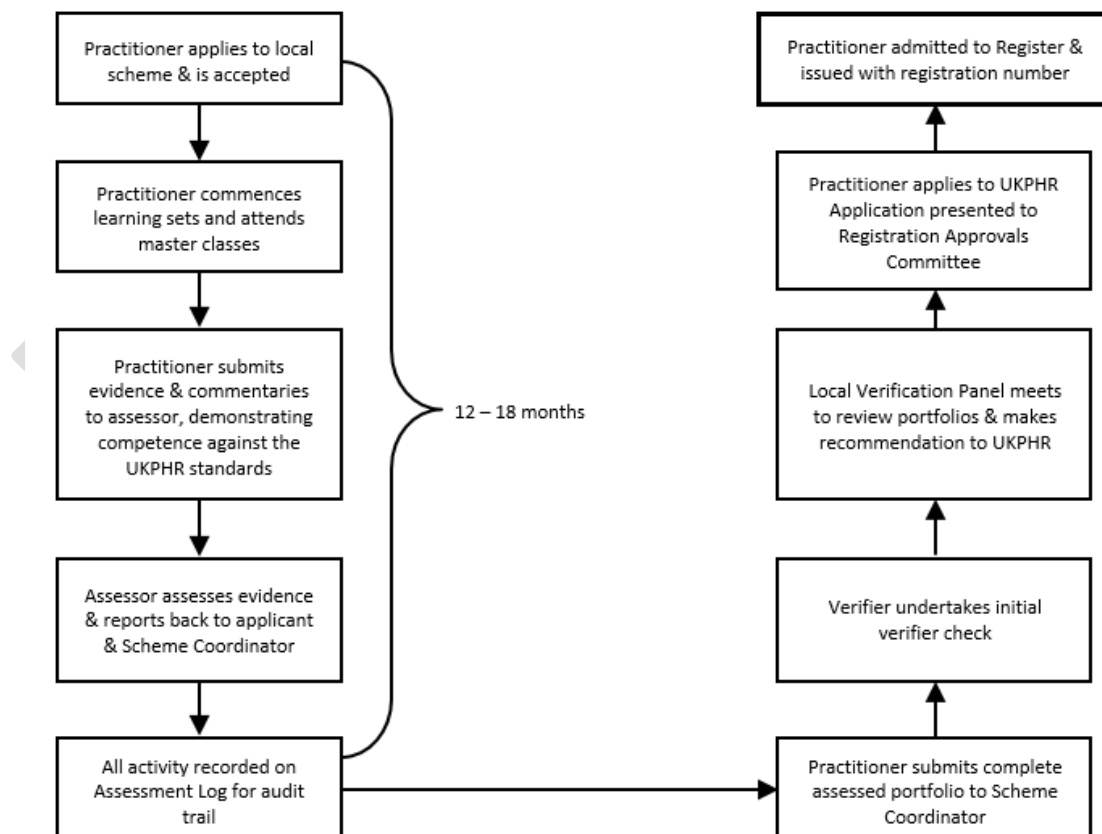
The assessment process should be transparent with a clear audit trail; to achieve this, the applicant, assessor and scheme coordinator share the assessment log as an open document between them.

The assessment log is the record of the progress and outcome of the assessment, and provides the audit trail. It is very important in both the assessment and verification processes and should be completed with care and attention to detail (see later sections).

Once the assessment has been completed, the portfolio and assessment log is passed to a verifier, who checks that the assessment process has been undertaken appropriately and the audit trail is clear. Their findings are documented in the log.

A local Verification Panel then considers the submission. Once the Verification Panel has recommended the applicant for registration, the applicant has three months in which to apply to UKPHR for registration.

The process is outlined in the figure below.



## 1.3 The standards for practitioner registration

The previous standards have been reviewed and this document applies to the new standards. Further information on the review is available on UKPHR's website.

The standards are aimed at those already working as autonomous public health professionals in their own area of public health practice. They have been framed around four areas of practice: professional and ethical practice, technical, context and delivery. They require adherence to an ethical framework and a general understanding and application of public health with a focus on public protection: they do not cover all the competencies public health practitioners may require in specific posts.

Each area is described by standards of effective practice. There are 34 standards, which are given in full in Annex 1.

Where the standards use the phrase 'public health function', this means 'improves and protects the public's health and reduces health inequalities between individuals, groups and communities, through coordinated system-wide action' (PHSKF 2016).

## 2. Guidance for applicants

### 2.1 Eligibility

You should be already working as a public health professional with autonomy in your own area of public health practice; you will be managed rather than supervised; you will continually develop your own area of work and support others to understand it; you may contribute to a programme of work in a multi- agency or multi-disciplinary environment (see Annex 2 for further detail on levels of practice).

It is likely that you will have had at least two years' work experience in an autonomous public health role. As registration is based on their own work, most practitioners need this amount of experience to be able to demonstrate competence.

As a public health practitioner, you should also see yourself on, and be keen to pursue, a public health career pathway.

### 2.2 Applying to a local scheme

Practitioners wishing to gain registration with UKPHR must first apply to join a local assessment scheme. Local schemes may wish to see evidence that you intend to pursue a public health career, and possibly that you have started the process of building your portfolio and gathering evidence. This may require you to undertake a baseline self-assessment of your competence against the standards, identifying any gaps and outlining your plans to address these. It may also require you to provide evidence of support for your application from your line manager.

## 2.3 Planning your portfolio

Once accepted by a local scheme, you will be supported in producing your portfolio of evidence to demonstrate competence against the practitioner standards. This support may include facilitated learning sets, master classes and attendance on taught courses.

When planning your portfolio, you should begin by identifying at least **three** key pieces of work you have undertaken, primarily within the last five years, and map that work against the standards.

A portfolio consists of a number of commentaries **with their associated supporting evidence**. A commentary is your account of your role in a piece of work, which is linked to the standards being claimed. The number of commentaries in a portfolio therefore reflects the number of pieces of work from which evidence has been derived, but at least three are required. The commentaries must relate to different aspects of your work.

The standards are intended to be relevant to a wide range of public health practitioners, not all may have public health in their job title.

## 2.4 Demonstrating knowledge, understanding and application in practice

Applicants are required to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application of ALL the standards.

The standards recognise that knowledge supports practice, so they do not have separate knowledge and practice statements. You must demonstrate how you have gained knowledge in an area, which has then underpinned and supported the work that you have done.

Knowledge may have been gained through learning on formal, accredited courses; on the job learning; learning through attending meetings/ conferences; private study or other means. It is important that you are able to describe clearly what you have understood from that learning and how you have applied it in practical examples.

The level of knowledge required is broadly equivalent to first degree (Bachelor's), although all knowledge may not necessarily be acquired through formal study; a wider range of sources may be accessed.

Where formal study has been undertaken, relevant syllabuses should be made available as evidence for assessment, but the applicant must provide additional commentary concerning what has been learnt from participating in the course.

## 2.5 Presentation of evidence

Your evidence should be drawn from work that you have done in the past or are currently involved with and should be real examples, which the person providing your testimonial is able to sign off as your work (see section 2.9). The work can be from your paid role or from voluntary work with other organisations other than your employer.

Be selective about which and how many pieces of work you use to demonstrate competence. It should be possible to derive evidence for competence against more than one standard from a single piece of work.

Your choice of evidence is a good indicator of your understanding of the standards. Ensure your evidence is relevant to the specific standard and use the minimum number of items of evidence possible.

The portfolio submission must consist of three or more discrete pieces of work each accompanied by a commentary, which explains:

- which standards you are addressing through this piece of work and why
- the context in which the work was done and why it was done
- your role in the work and why you were involved.

The commentary should include a reflective section, in which you can draw out particular aspects of your work or address specific points, which may be unclear. You should also outline lessons you have learned.

Each standard should be evidenced from a **single** piece of work.

Your evidence must be referenced in the assessment log column “applicant evidence”. Each item of evidence must be labelled clearly.

Remove any reference to an identifiable client/patient/user; refer to organisations or roles, rather than individual professionals. Standard 2.2 concerns the importance of data confidentiality and disclosure. You need to demonstrate this competence throughout your portfolio. Further information of confidentiality is given in the *Supporting Information*.

The commentary is important in explaining the relevance of your work to the specific standards. It contributes to the demonstration of competency, and in particular your understanding of the standard. Explicit evidence derived from that work is still required.

The following types of evidence can be submitted to support your commentary:

- written reports
- emails
- minutes of meetings and agendas
- examples of social or other media
- a detailed testimonial of your contribution from a manager or senior colleague (this must refer to the specific standard)
- video/audio file
- observation by an appropriate professional with a detailed testimonial (referring to the specific standard).

Evidence can reflect competence gained in any country or setting; the evidence must be presented in the English language.

Whilst work programmes can extend over many years, **it is a requirement that overall half numerically of the items of evidence submitted should be from within 5 years of the date of application for registration to UKPHR.**

As it may take you a year or more to complete the assessment process, you will need to plan in advance to ensure that half of your evidence is current at the date of application to UKPHR for registration.

Evidence of knowledge, which is drawn from learning undertaken more than 5 years before registration, will be deemed to be current if you also provide evidence of how this knowledge has been kept up to date, for example through CPD.

## 2.6 Working with your assessor

As soon as you have prepared your first commentary and its accompanying evidence, your local scheme coordinator will assign you a UKPHR trained assessor.

The assessor must meet UKPHR's assessor role specification (see Annex 3) and will be appointed only after successfully completing UKPHR training.

The assessment process is intended to be supportive of applicants. Local schemes may find that practitioners going through the assessment process benefit from access to a mentor. It is important to separate the role of an assessor from that of a mentor. An assessor cannot, for example, act as a mentor to the same individual. A comparison of the roles is given in Annex 4.

You should discuss and agree a way of working with your assessor including a submission time line. You are not expected to submit all the evidence for your portfolio at the same time. You can submit consecutive commentaries so that you build up your evidence over time. The whole process should be completed within a reasonable time; a maximum of 18 months is required by UKPHR, but a lower limit may be set by your local scheme.

Should you experience difficulties meeting your agreed timescales, your assessor and local scheme coordinator must be informed.

## 2.7 The assessment process

You are required to produce evidence for each and every standard listed in Annex 1. The standards are also clearly listed within the assessment log.

Your assessor will provide feedback, via the assessment log, on the evidence you have supplied for each standard; this will clearly state whether the evidence is **adequate** to demonstrate competency, or whether **clarification** or **resubmission** is required.



Clarification means that:

- Your assessor believes that you do have, or could provide, from the work you have already submitted against this standard, the evidence to demonstrate competence, but requires more detail or information in order to be assured of this.
- Your assessor will explain, on the assessment log, the reason for the clarification and this should be addressed in your response.
- In response to a clarification request, you can expand your submission by statement(s) in your commentary, to amplify why a particular piece of evidence already submitted supports the standard, or provide additional detail relating to evidence already submitted. You may also provide supplementary evidence relating to the **same work**.
- All clarifications should be submitted within two months of the request from your assessor. This is the time frame UKPHR recommends but your local scheme may set its own lower time limit. It should be noted that clarifications are part of the assessment process and are to be expected.

Resubmission means that:

- Your assessor considers that you will not be able to demonstrate competence against the standard using evidence from this piece of work. This results in a resubmission for that particular standard. You will need to provide new evidence from work not previously submitted against this standard. Your assessor should clearly explain the reason for resubmission.
- You may have to consider undertaking further work to provide new evidence.
- Resubmission evidence should be submitted within six months of the request from your assessor. This is the time frame UKPHR recommends, but your local scheme may set its own lower time limit.
- If your new evidence is still considered inadequate to demonstrate competence against the standard, you can make one further resubmission within a further stipulated time period, as long as this does not take you beyond the agreed timeframe for complete portfolio submission.

As a general rule, it is not expected that you should clarify your evidence or resubmit your evidence more than twice for any one standard.

This process of submission, clarification and resubmission of evidence will continue until your assessor is satisfied that all the standards have been met, or until you consider that your evidence is as good as it is likely to be and you have made a statement to this effect on the assessment log. At this point you can request that your scheme coordinator puts forward your portfolio to be considered by the Verification Panel.

For further information, read the sections below, 'Guidance for assessors', and 'Outcomes of assessment'.

## 2.8 The assessment log

The process of evidence submission and assessment is recorded throughout on the assessment log, which you must complete. The assessment log is a “live document” that moves between the applicant, the assessor and the scheme coordinator until all standards have been assessed as met. The assessment must be kept electronically or on e-portfolio if used by the local scheme.

The log will show how each of the standards has been met and what evidence has been presented to demonstrate this. The appropriate sections must be completed and signed by both your assessor and verifier before the log is submitted to the verification panel. Once accepted, the log will form part of the assessment documentation.

You must complete the assessment log with a list of your evidence against each standard. Your assessor will record on the log, the date when each standard has been assessed and ultimately agreed as met, and their view on why and how your evidence meets the standard in terms of knowledge, understanding and application in practice. The verifier will also record their views on the log. All assessment and verification decisions remain on the log, thus ensuring a complete audit trail.

## 2.9 Verification and the registration process

Once your assessor considers that you have met all the standards, the assessor will notify you and the local scheme coordinator of this. The local scheme coordinator will pass your application to a UKPHR trained verifier. The verifier will check that the assessment has been carried out appropriately and will provide independent scrutiny.

Your verifier will be a registered public health specialist of at least two years standing, and will not know you personally or your work. Verifiers will have met the UKPHR verifier role specification (see Annex 5) and will have successfully completed UKPHR training.

For the verification stage, you should prepare the following documentation:

- A completed verification application form (which is in the Supporting Information document) this should be provided in hard copy form with an original signature.
- A current CV
- A current job description (please see Supporting Information if you are not employed or you are self-employed at the time of registration)
- Certified copies of original certificates for qualifications and courses
- A testimonial and a reference.

The reference should be from someone who knows you professionally, who can confirm that there is no professional, or fitness to practise, reason that you should not be included on the Register. The referee should be able to provide general comments about your ability as a public health practitioner.

The testimonial should be from someone who has reviewed the evidence you have submitted for assessment and can confirm that it is your work. The writer of the testimonial should be able to comment on the quality of the evidence submitted and confirm that you are working, or capable of working, at public health practitioner level. This overall testimonial is separate to any testimonials you may have included as part of your evidence.

Both the reference and testimonial are required for the verification process and both will also be required when you submit your application for registration to UKPHR. The same reference and testimonial should be used for both purposes. Further information on testimonials and references is given in the Supporting Information document.

Verifiers will meet locally as a Panel on a regular basis to consider applications. Your evidence will not be submitted routinely to UKPHR, although applications can be called in by UKPHR for moderation or audit at any stage of the process.

On the recommendation of the Verification Panel, successful applicants will have three months in which to apply to UKPHR (using the appropriate registration application form and enclosing the appropriate fee). Please see section 5 for more information.

### 3. Guidance for assessors

Applicants are assigned an assessor by the local scheme coordinator. An assessor need not be a registered public health professional, but must be able to meet the role specification in Annex 3 and satisfactorily complete the training provided by UKPHR.

An assessor should not normally commit to assessing more than two practitioner applications at the same time.

#### 3.1 Assessment of evidence

Practitioners submit evidence to demonstrate competence against the standards and assessors assess this evidence, to determine whether the standards have been met, and complete the assessment log. Support and practice on judging whether evidence meets the standards is given as part of UKPHR training and ongoing support.

Guidance on the use of UKPHR's assessment log, and on the amount, nature, currency and content of evidence to meet the standards, is given in the section 'Guidance for applicants'.

For every standard, you must complete the columns headed "Assessment outcome" and "Assessor's comments" in the assessment log:

- If you accept the evidence indicate this with an A and date the column.
- If clarification is required, indicate with a C and the date (see section 3.4 for more information on clarification).
- Where the evidence is inadequate and you believe that the applicant will not be able to provide evidence from the work presented, indicate that resubmission is required with an R and date (see section 3.4 for more information on resubmission).

Under the assessor's comments column in the assessment log, summarise how you reached your decision, briefly explaining how the evidence has met the standard and refer to the understanding and application of knowledge (see the next section for guidance). In other words, state (briefly) "this evidence meets the indicator because..." and mention knowledge, understanding and the application of knowledge in practice. It is important that the reasons for your decisions are clear to the applicant and verifier.

To maintain a full audit trail, a new assessment decision following a request for clarification or resubmission must be listed beneath the original decision (rather than over writing it) and dated accordingly e.g. C 23/9/11, A 28/10/11.

Once the portfolio has been fully assessed, you must complete the assessor section "Overview of Portfolio" before submission for verification. The clarifications and resubmissions should be listed and the currency of evidence confirmed. **It is a requirement that overall half numerically of the items of evidence submitted should be from within 5 years of the date of application for registration to UKPHR.** Assessors should check the currency of evidence with applicants as they progress through the assessment.

Evidence should be assessed at the level of autonomous practice. Guidance on benchmarking this level will be given in the assessor training and a more detailed description of the level of practice is provided in Annex 2.

Evidence need not be presented for assessment for all standards at the same time, but individual standards or groups of standards can be 'signed off' at intervals over time. Therefore, assessment is a supportive process, which can enable practitioner development. Feedback to practitioners should be via the log.

The applicant needs to know what they must do to address your concerns, but should not be told how to do this. It is important to separate the role of assessor from that of mentor. An assessor cannot act as a mentor to the same individual. A comparison of the roles is given in Annex 4.

The applicant and assessor should agree a formal contract at the start of their relationship, including confirmation of contact details and agreement on key milestones, such as submission of commentaries and return of assessments.

The turnaround time for assessing a single commentary with its associated evidence should be within three weeks. The whole assessment process should be completed as quickly as possible, and should not normally take longer than 18 months at the most; a lower time period may be stipulated by the local scheme. Any difficulties with timeframes should be discussed with the scheme coordinator as soon as possible.

As described in the section on 'Guidance for applicants', evidence for standards may not necessarily be written, and can also involve an appropriate professional observing the applicant e.g. in a meeting or making a presentation. A detailed testimonial must be provided (see Supporting Information).

Assessors are encouraged to ask fellow assessors to review their work at any time, and to discuss their assessments with one another. However, an assessor must retain the responsibility for the assessment decisions and for the information entered on the log.

## 3.2 Demonstrating and Assessing Understanding

Applicants are required to demonstrate their competence by providing evidence of Knowledge, Understanding and Application against each standard or indicator of effective practice. This is achieved through the submission of three or more commentaries, in which discrete pieces of work are described which relate to specific standards/indicators.

The role of the applicant in the work, its context and the standards/indicators claimed are set out in the commentary, as is how knowledge was acquired and how it was applied. Specific evidence to back up the narrative in the commentary is required. This evidence usually relates directly to knowledge and application, which raises the question of how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.

Understanding is the bridge between knowledge and application and is important because it relates directly to the purpose of registration, the recognition that practitioners are competent and safe to practise autonomously. In the practitioner registration process, it is demonstrated and assessed explicitly through:

- the choice of the standards/indicators for a particular piece of work
- the explanation of this choice (commentary)
- the explanation of how the standard/indicator has been demonstrated in the work, which provides a convincing narrative to the assessor (commentary)
- reflection on the work (commentary).

Separate evidence for understanding is not required, although the choice of appropriate evidence for knowledge and application, and the description of these in the commentary, will add to the assessor's assurance that the practitioner has understanding.

## 3.3 Confidentiality and data protection in evidence

Standard 2.2 concerns the importance of data confidentiality and disclosure. Applicants must demonstrate competence in this area throughout their portfolios.

**None of the evidence submitted should contain personally identifiable information.**

A breach of confidentiality of patient information (or private information such as home telephone numbers for work colleagues or clients), wherever it occurs, will require resubmission with new evidence against standard 2.2. The identifiable information should also be removed from the portfolio.

Summaries or reflective notes are not an opportunity to complain about individuals, organisations or professional groups. Where colleagues who can be identified are presented in an unfavorable light, whilst resubmission may not be required, the assessor should draw this to the attention of the applicant as poor practice.

### 3.4 Making decisions on evidence

You may find the following questions useful to assist in making decisions on the applicant's evidence:

1. Is the evidence the applicant's own work, and is it clear what role the applicant played in the work described?
2. Does the commentary make clear what standards are addressed in the evidence, what the applicant did, key results and outcomes, and reflection on their learning?
3. Is the standard fully addressed by the commentary and the evidence itself?
4. Is there evidence of how the applicant acquired the relevant knowledge – at least to a level broadly equivalent to that of a Bachelor's degree?
5. Does the evidence, and/or the commentary accompanying it, display understanding of the relevant knowledge? And do they demonstrate the application of the relevant knowledge in practice?
6. Has the applicant worked collaboratively with others?

### 3.5 Assessment decisions

It is expected that each standard will be covered by evidence derived from a specific piece of work.

If the assessor considers that the evidence presented demonstrates competence against a standard in terms of knowledge, understanding and application in practice, then the standard should be accepted.

If an assessor considers the evidence for a standard is inadequate, they should request a clarification of the existing evidence or request resubmission with new evidence where necessary – and make a clear note of the reasons for the decision in the assessment log. A resubmission should generally follow a clarification, i.e. the applicant should be given the opportunity to demonstrate that evidence can be derived from the work already submitted.

The difference between clarification and resubmission will be covered in the training, but in summary:

- **Clarification**

The assessor believes that the practitioner does have, or could provide from the work presented, the evidence to meet the standard, but requires more detail e.g. on the content of a course or what the individual actually did.

Applicants can expand their current submission by statement(s) in the commentary, which amplify why a particular piece of evidence already submitted supports a standard, or by providing additional detail relating to evidence already submitted. Supplementary evidence relating to the same piece of work may also be provided.

All clarification evidence must be received by the assessor within two months of their discussion with the applicant. This is the time frame UKPHR recommends, but your local scheme may set its own lower time limit.

Following clarification, three outcomes are possible:

1. The evidence for the indicators is accepted
2. Further clarification is needed (no more than twice for any specific standard)
3. Resubmission is required

- **Resubmission**

The assessor believes the evidence is inadequate to meet the standard and new evidence derived from a different piece of work is required. The reason for resubmission should be explained clearly.

The applicant should undertake further work as necessary and resubmit new evidence with a commentary, relating to a different piece of work, within 6 months. This is the time frame UKPHR recommends, but your local scheme may set its own lower time limit.

If the new evidence is still considered inadequate to meet the standard, the applicant can make one further resubmission within a further 6-month period.

It is not expected that applicants should clarify their evidence or resubmit their evidence more than twice for any one standard.

### 3.6 Outcomes of assessment

Following this process of acceptance, clarification and resubmission of evidence, as necessary, one of three outcomes is possible:

1. Usually the assessor is confident that all the standards have been met. The application (including all the evidence) is then passed to the verifier (see next section).
2. The assessor still has concerns about competence against a particular standard(s), and these concerns are accepted by the applicant. The applicant should be advised, and wherever possible supported, to undertake continuing professional development and to resubmit their entire portfolio of evidence at a future time. Such a resubmission would consist of evidence that has been “banked”, i.e. accepted as adequate, and new evidence as necessary. The assessment log should be carefully retained, and resubmitted with the portfolio with the evidence of standards that had been “signed off”. The normal currency rule would still apply, but the 18-month time limit for the completion of the portfolio would be extended.
3. The assessor still has concerns about competence against a particular standard (s) and these concerns are **not** accepted by the applicant. In this case, the application in its entirety should go forward to a verifier, who should ensure that it is discussed at a verification panel. The decision of the verification panel shall be final (apart from any moderation and the appeal process set out below).

A moderator should be consulted if the second or third outcome is being considered.

## 4. Guidance for verifiers

Verifiers must be registered public health specialists in good standing (registered with the GMC, GDC or UKPHR) and have held a consultant or senior specialist post or a post of equivalent responsibility for at least two years.

Verifiers will be appointed following the satisfactory completion of training provided by UKPHR. They must be independent and should not have any detailed knowledge of the work or performance of the applicant.

Verification is a key part of the quality assurance process. It is a process of independent scrutiny, with the purpose of providing confirmation that the assessment process has resulted in a portfolio of evidence that meets the standards.

Verification is **not a reassessment** of the portfolio of evidence. Verifiers do not need to look at all the evidence provided. They should instead focus on ensuring that the process of assessment has been carried out correctly by examining the assessment log. The assessment log should be filled in correctly by both the applicant and the assessor and allow the verifier to understand the progress of the assessment and the decisions taken. Verifiers then need to **sample** the evidence, particularly where clarifications or resubmissions have been sought or where evidence has been provided through observation or testimonials, to assure themselves that the assessment process has been undertaken appropriately.

Verification has two stages: the initial verification check of the assessment by the verifier independently, followed by discussion of the initial verification at a verification panel meeting, at which recommendations to UKPHR are agreed.

### 4.1 Initial verification check

Verifiers undertaking an initial verification check should:

1. Check that the assessment log has been fully completed by the applicant and the assessor, i.e. for each standard:
  - a) evidence is cited
  - b) the process of assessment is clear
  - c) whether clarifications or resubmissions of evidence were required, for what reason, and when;
  - d) the date the standard was agreed as met.
2. Undertake a brief sampling of the evidence.

Do not undertake a second assessment, focus on standards where clarification and resubmission has been required or where evidence is based on observation or testimonials.



Key questions to ask as a verifier:

- Is the assessment log fully completed for each standard? How you ticked and dated the verifier check column?
- Does the portfolio appear to be the applicant's own work?
- Does clarification and resubmission evidence appear to be sufficient?
- Have any observations been carried out by an appropriate professional?
- Which evidence have you sampled?
- Have you checked all the supporting information e.g. curriculum vitae, reference and testimonial?

If you are satisfied with the application, tick and date each indicator in the verifier column of the assessment log, highlighting where evidence has been sampled, then complete the verifier overview in the assessment log, which you will then present at the next meeting of the verification panel. **If you have any concerns**, record these in the verifier overview section at the front of the assessment log.

The completed assessment log should be circulated **one** week in advance of the Panel meeting to ensure all panel members have a chance to read the summary assessment comments and your recommendation.

The initial verification of an assessment should take no more than two hours. If the verification of a portfolio appears problematic, the verifier should inform the scheme coordinator, who will seek advice from a moderator if necessary.

## 4.2 The verification panel

All applications that have completed the initial verification process will go to a verification panel for discussion and recommendation. Verification panels are constituted locally and must be comprised of trained UKPHR verifiers and be subject to UKPHR moderation. The verification panel may meet virtually (e.g. by teleconference) if agreed as appropriate.

The panel should be chaired by one of its members, or it may be appropriate for the scheme coordinator or their representative to undertake this role. The minimum number of verifiers at a panel meeting should be two where one or two portfolios are to be discussed, or a minimum of three verifiers if three or more portfolios are to be discussed. It is important to encourage all verifiers to attend as many panel meetings as possible, to ensure scrutiny of decision making and maintain verification expertise.

For verification panel meetings held by teleconference, all panel members should be sent at least the completed assessment log, including the verifier's comments, in advance of the meeting, and the chair should have the full documentation accessible in case of questions. For verification panel meetings held in person, the full portfolio documentation should be available at the meeting.

When necessary, an assessor may be contacted to explain and discuss any assessment issues, if this will facilitate a decision being made by the panel on an application.

The decision of the verification panel will be final, subject to moderation and the applicant's right of appeal (see below).

UKPHR requires information (which will remain confidential to the process) from verification panels for quality assurance purposes. Full minutes of verification panel meetings must be taken, recording the main areas of discussion of each portfolio and the recommendation. The minutes will be considered by UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee, together with the assessment logs and a certificate of verification, listing all the applicants that were put forward to the verification panel, whether successful or unsuccessful.

### 4.3 Second assessments at verification stage

Where the verification panel is unable to recommend registration, and therefore is in disagreement with the assessor, the Panel may ask for a **second assessment** to be undertaken; the advice of the moderator should be sought before this decision is taken. The second assessor should undertake their assessment "blind", and then discuss their assessment with the first assessor and if possible, **agree a shared, joint assessment**.

Second assessments have been extensively used for specialist registration for many years, and are an effective means both of assuring quality of assessment and also of embedding learning within the assessor community.

Assessors are encouraged to ask fellow assessors to review their work at any time, and to discuss their assessments with one another. An assessor must retain responsibility for the decisions taken and the information entered on the log.

For detailed guidance on the second assessment process at verification, please see Annex 6.

### 4.4 Following verification

If there are any concerns about the quality of verification, this should be discussed between a UKPHR moderator and the scheme coordinator, and the verifier offered feedback and further training. A scheme coordinator may ask a second verifier to look at a portfolio for quality assurance purposes at any time.

Once a portfolio has successfully concluded the assessment and verification processes, the completed assessment log will be returned to the applicant, unless the portfolio is selected for moderation by UKPHR. The verification panel will send a certificate of verification, listing the practitioners considered and whether or not they are recommended for registration, to UKPHR. The practitioners may then proceed to apply for registration with UKPHR.

## 5. Application for registration with UKPHR

A practitioner recommended for registration is notified by the local verification panel and the completed assessment log returned to them. There is a **3-month** window following the date of the verification panel when the practitioner may apply to UKPHR for registration, using the appropriate registration application form, together with the fee payable to UKPHR.

Applications made after three months have elapsed will not be considered by UKPHR, but will be referred back to the local scheme coordinator for a decision by the local verification panel on how to proceed.

Once accepted for registration, practitioners are awarded a UKPHR registration certificate valid for 5 years (this time frame will be kept under review as revalidation processes are developed), provided the annual registration fee is paid and there are no fitness to practise issues.

Before the end of the five-year period the UKPHR Board will want to be satisfied that the practitioner remains fit to practise. For this purpose, the Board will follow revalidation procedures recommended by its Education and Training committee. They will be based around a programme of CPD based on 'Good Public Health Practice'.

## 5.1 Registration Procedure

Once a verification panel has recommended that a practitioner should be admitted to the Register, the local scheme coordinator will advise the practitioner, who must submit a completed application, with supporting documents and fees, to UKPHR.

Applications to UKPHR will consist of:

- Completed application form ensuring that the declaration is signed and dated
- Payment of a one-off administration fee plus the first year's registration fee
- A CV detailing relevant qualifications, training and experience, and a current job description if appropriate (see Supporting Information)
- A testimonial in support of the portfolio, which will have been provided at the verification stage.
- A reference from someone familiar with the applicant's current work, again provided at the verification stage.

In turn, the local scheme will submit to UKPHR the verification panel minutes at which the recommendation was made, the completed assessment log and verification certificate. Once all these documents have been received, UKPHR's office will, unless an objection has been received from a Moderator, recommend the applicant's registration at the next monthly meeting of UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee.

UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee, which is chaired by the Registrar, will make the formal decision to admit (or refuse to admit) the applicant to the Register.

Applicants receive UKPHR's notification of registration immediately after UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee has agreed to admit to the Register.

Registrant names are visible on the publicly viewable Register shortly after the Registration Approvals Committee has made its decision to admit.

Log in details are sent to registrants by email to enable them to keep their contact details up to date.

## 5.2 Registration fees

Current fees are available on UKPHR's website.

Payment of fees can be made either via cheque made payable to *Public Health Register* or via bank transfer using the details below.

Bank: *Lloyds Bank*

Account name: *Public Health Register*

Account number: *00875203*

Sort-code: *30-94-87*

## 5.3 UKPHR quality assurance processes

UKPHR ensures consistent and robust standards of assessment through the provision of the following services: guidance, training and support for assessors and verifiers, moderation, oversight by the Registration Approvals Committee and an appeal process for applicants.

The applicant is responsible for keeping a copy of the complete portfolio of evidence. This evidence is not routinely submitted to the UKPHR although applications can be called in for moderation or audit.

A team of Moderators support UKPHR quality assurance processes. Information on their role is provided in the *Supporting Information* document.

The Moderator role includes liaison with both assessors and verifiers to provide support and to ensure early identification of any problem areas or issues of interpretation. They also participate in the verification panel meetings.

Moderators do not override the assessment and verification process: their advice is an invitation to reconsider and is fed back to the assessor, verifier and/or scheme coordinator as appropriate.

Note, however, that the Moderator who attended a Verification Panel can ask UKPHR's Registration Panel to consider objections to an application for registration (if UKPHR guidance is not followed or the Moderator otherwise has a concern) before the application is considered by the Registration Approvals Committee.

Retrospective audit of both the application process and the assessment is an important part of quality control.

The quality assurance role of UKPHR's Registration Approvals Committee includes to ensure that standards are consistent across different local schemes and across the UK as a whole, by considering the outcome of moderation and issues arising from feedback from verification panels.

Everything possible will be done to ensure the integrity of the assessment process and the fair and impartial consideration of applicants.

## 5.4 Appeal process

Applicants may appeal to UKPHR against a decision that they have not met the practitioner standards following assessment and verification.

The purpose of the appeal procedure is to allow an applicant to challenge any perceived flaw in the handling of the application, on the grounds either that the decision was not warranted on the basis of the information provided, or because the procedure was flawed. The onus will be on the practitioner to establish that the decision should be reviewed.

No new material relating to the application can be submitted for an appeal hearing, because the appeal is against the assessor's and verifier's recommendations. The inclusion of new material would constitute a reapplication rather than an appeal.

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## Annex 1. The standards for practitioner registration

[See consultation draft]

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## Annex 2. Definition of level of autonomous practice for UKPHR Registration

Differences between levels of practice concern: **autonomy, responsibility and decision-making** required in a post. The following are words and phrases extracted from two Skills for Health documents, which illustrate these differences:

1. Summary of Attributes and Definitions for Career Framework Levels (August 2010)
2. Comparison of attributes of the Career Framework Levels 2 to 8 (2010)

### Level 4

- Requires specific factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work, enabling them to undertake tasks that may otherwise have been undertaken by an autonomous practitioner
- Work is guided by standard operating procedures, protocols or systems within which the worker makes judgements, plans activities and demonstrates self-development; exercises a degree of autonomy and undertakes well-defined tasks requiring limited judgement
- Plans and manages their role under guidance in a work context that is usually predictable
- May have responsibility for supervision of some staff

### Level 5

- Requires comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work: enables them to work with a considerable degree of autonomy
- Works independently: work is managed rather than supervised and requires problem solving which may include handling unpredictable change
- Plans, organises, and prioritises own work including more complex tasks
- Makes judgements which require analysis and interpretation
- Actively contributes to service and self-development
- Uses evidence to enhance and underpin their practice
- May have responsibility for supervision of staff or training: may have line management responsibilities but will not be responsible for service delivery

## Level 6

- Critical understanding of detailed theoretical and practical knowledge
- Works independently, is specialist and/or has management and leadership responsibilities
- Demonstrates initiative and is creative in finding solutions to problems
- Deals with complex, unpredictable environments
- Uses and develops evidence to inform their practice
- Has some responsibility for team performance and service development
- Consistently undertakes self-development

Level 5 is the level required for UKPHR registration.

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## Annex 3. The role and requirements of assessors

Assessors are appointed by local schemes following confirmation of satisfactory completion of initial training by UKPHR. It is an unpaid role.

Assessors are appointed for an initial term of three years, with an option for a further term or terms. Assessors should complete a minimum of two whole assessments per year (consideration of clarifications and resubmissions is not enough).

UKPHR will deliver development sessions for assessors each year and assessors are expected to attend at least one such event every two years. Assessors are also required to participate in assessor teleconferences as organised by their local schemes.

### Role

- To assess applications by practitioners, and make recommendations to the appropriate verification panel
- To be available to present and discuss assessments at meetings of the verification panel if required
- To provide feedback and advice to applicants on their portfolio of evidence

### Requirements

- To be skilled in assessing evidence submitted to demonstrate competence – successful completion of training is mandatory
- To be thoroughly conversant with the public health standards
- To be able to maintain impartiality in the role whilst providing support to applicants
- To be willing and able to devote the necessary time and to give the role appropriate priority
- To be able to provide appropriate references
- To be able to provide evidence of current continuing professional development

### Removal from role of assessor

Assessors may be removed from their role for any of the following reasons:

- Professional misconduct
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Inability or refusal to perform the duties of an assessor and to meet the quality assurance requirements
- Inappropriate behaviour or continued poor performance

## Annex 4. The role and requirements of assessors (with thanks to Public Health Wales)

### Assessors

The role of the Assessor is to:

- Agree, with the practitioner(s) assigned to them, the dates for submission of 'chunks' of work and the turnaround time for assessment feedback. This will be done through the development of an 'Assessment Contract' (previously referred to as the Learning Contract)
- Impartially\* assess evidence submitted by practitioners to demonstrate competence against the practitioner standards
- Feedback the outcome (pass, clarification or resubmission) of the assessment and give brief advice to applicants following assessment through the completion of the Assessment Log. An Example Assessment Log has been produced and will provide types of brief feedback the Assessor will be expected to give.
- Present and discuss assessments at a meeting of the Welsh Verification Panel, where necessary

*\* The Assessor should not provide guidance and input to draft commentaries – this is the role of the mentor.*

### Mentors

The role of the Mentor is to:

- Facilitate the process of self-directed learning of the practitioner throughout the portfolio development process (this may include the points below)
- Facilitate / give advice on self-assessment against the practitioner standards (how standards may be demonstrated, identifying relevant development opportunities for filling competency gaps)
- Informally review evidence and draft commentaries providing advice and guidance through a dialogue with the mentee. This may include advising on competences / standards not claimed that could be claimed and strengthening those being claimed.

## Annex 5. The role and requirements of verifiers

Verifiers are appointed by local schemes following confirmation of satisfactory completion of initial training by UKPHR. It is an unpaid role.

Verifiers are appointed for an initial term of three years, with an option for a further term or terms. Verifiers must attend a minimum of one verification panel per year. If this requirement cannot be met for any reason verifiers will need to retrain.

UKPHR will deliver development sessions for verifiers each year and verifiers are expected to attend at least one such event every two years.

### Role

- To verify applications that have been previously assessed
- To be available to discuss assessments at a meeting of the verification panel
- To provide feedback and advice to assessors

### Requirements

- To be a registered public health specialist with the GMC, the GDC or UKPHR, to be in good standing and to have held a consultant or senior specialist post or a post of equivalent responsibility, for at least two years.
- To be skilled in providing independent scrutiny of the portfolio of evidence submitted to demonstrate competence – attendance at training is mandatory
- To be thoroughly conversant with the public health standards
- To be able to maintain impartiality in the role
- To be willing and able to devote the necessary time and to give the role appropriate priority
- To be able to provide appropriate references
- To be able to provide evidence of current continuing professional development

### Removal from role of verifier

- Professional misconduct
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Inability or refusal to perform the duties of a verifier and to meet the quality assurance requirements
- Inappropriate behaviour or continued poor performance

## Annex 6. Guidance on second assessment process

The second assessor should undertake their assessment independently, i.e. “blind” without sight of the first assessment. They should then discuss their views with the first assessor, with the objective of reaching a single, shared assessment written up within a single assessment log.

Double assessment has been used successfully by the UKPHR for specialist assessment for many years, and contributes to assessor learning and development as well as to the rigour and consistency of the assessment process.

Guidance on the subsequent steps to be followed:

- If the second assessor cannot reach agreement with the first assessor, point moderation will take place (the scheme coordinator should contact a UKPHR moderator)
- If the second, joint assessment concludes that further evidence is required on a standard, the applicant will then be given the opportunity to clarify or resubmit evidence as necessary; the feedback to the applicant should be given by the first assessor in normal circumstances. The first assessor should consider clarified or resubmitted evidence, with the second assessor being available for discussion of this new evidence.
- The first assessor should complete the assessment log for final sign-off.
- The practitioner should then resubmit their Application for Verification to the scheme coordinator or direct to the verifier (if agreed with the scheme coordinator)
- The same verifier should consider the second assessment. If this is not possible it can be considered by another verifier, and then considered at the next Verification Panel meeting.
- If having considered the second assessment, the verifier remains concerned, point moderation should take place before the portfolio is considered again at a Verification Panel meeting. The scheme coordinator should contact a UKPHR moderator to arrange this.