Training and development (public health consultant and specialist)

This page provides information about the programme for specialty training in public health.

Specialty training programme

The following information is summarised from the detailed information on pages of the Faculty of Public Health’s specialty training pages [1], which should be consulted for full and up-to-date details.

This is the main route for training to become a public health specialist. Trainees following this programme are referred to as specialty registrars (StRs). Public health training usually lasts five years, full time. Part-time training takes proportionately longer. The five years usually includes one year (full or part-time) on an academic course, and 48 months in specialty training posts.

Every post in public health is potentially available as a part-time post. Registrars should consult with their local training programme director or faculty adviser (or both) for more information on training part time.

Play the video to hear about a registrar’s varied experiences during training to become a specialist in public health.

Download image of public health training pathway [2]
All trainees are required to gain experience in at least two different training locations, in addition to health protection experience, in order to be exposed to a wide range of organisational cultures and public health issues.

Every post in public health is potentially available as a part-time post.

Trainees who express an interest in developing special interests are able to achieve additional learning outcomes through trainee-selected special interest options. The key areas within which competence may be taken beyond the core training requirements are:

- health improvement
- health protection
- health and social service quality
- public health information and intelligence
- academic public health

The curriculum [1] covers nine broad competency areas. These nine key areas relate to the three 'domains' of public health [4] (health protection, health improvement and healthcare public health) and are derived from a description of what a consultant in public health is able to do, in what setting and how they deliver their service.
Specialty training should equip registrars to work as public health consultants.

**Assessment**

The Part A examination is intended to test a candidate's knowledge, understanding and basic application of the scientific bases of public health. It is usually taken within 12 to 18 months of starting training.

The Part B examination is a ‘shows how’ assessment of the candidate's ability to apply relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to the practice of public health. It is designed to be taken and passed with at least two full years of training left.

**Assessing satisfactory progress in the training programme**

Responsibility for assessment lies with the employing local Health Education England (HEE) office and is achieved through an annual review of the progress trainees are making in training (called the Annual Review of Competence Progression or ARCP).

The Faculty of Public Health curriculum sets out the knowledge, skills and learning outcomes that need to be achieved during the training programme.

**Completion of training**

On successful completion of the specialty training programme, having acquired all the skills required by the curriculum, registrars are eligible for specialist registration. Registrars from a medical background will then be able to register with the General Medical Council (GMC) as specialists, while registrars from other backgrounds or will be able to General Medical Council (GMC) or the General Dental Council (GDC). Those from any other background must register with the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR).

You will be required to pursue a programme of continuing professional development in accordance with the requirements of the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) or other recognised body, to undertake revalidation, audit or other measures required to remain on the relevant register.

Once qualified, public health consultants and specialists from a medical or dental background must register with either the General Medical Council (GMC) or the General Dental Council (GDC). Those from any other background must register with the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR).

- **Academic fellowships and lectureships**

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  For those committed to an academic career, it is possible to undertake speciality training in public health in combination with training in research and education. These are called academic clinical fellowships (ACFs) and clinical lectureships (CL). You can find out
more about sample roles on our public health academic [11] role page.

- Training in dental public health

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If you're thinking of training to become a dental public health specialist in the UK you must first complete a training programme approved by the General Dental Council [8] (GDC), and then apply for the award of a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) to gain entry on to the specialist list for dental public health [12]. You must hold full GDC registration to be awarded a CCST. The GDC has approved a curriculum in dental public health [13].

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Links
[5] https://hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area