

FAQ- Public Health training in the East of England

October 2021

This FAQ was updated in September 2021 by registrars currently on the training programme, based on their experiences of applying and training in the region. Please note that some of the information included is subject to change, in particular where COVID-19 restrictions impact on work and travel locations. Therefore, please ensure you read information on the FPH website (<https://www.fph.org.uk/training-careers/recruitment/>) and the Health Education England (HEE) East of England (EOE) website (https://heeo.ee.nhs.uk/public_health), and speak to the training programme if required for more information. Please also see the accompanying timeline diagrams.

Part 1: Before applying

How can I find out more information about the application process?

The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) website includes information on applying for the training programme [here](#), including a timeline of last year's application process. The application is submitted via the Oriel Vacancies recruitment portal, with the initial stage of the application taking a similar format to a job application- at this stage it is essential to demonstrate how you meet the experience requirements for the post or you will not progress to the next stage. The next stage is the Assessment Centre, sat at a test centre, and the final stage is the Selection Centre, which will be currently taking place virtually.

If possible, it is a good idea to talk to registrars who are currently training or consultants in the early stages of their careers to get their insights and advice on how best to prepare for the assessment centre and selection centre.

I already live in the East of England. If I apply to do specialty training in Public Health, can I train there?

The allocation of training locations to successful candidates depends on an algorithm, considering their overall score and rank among candidates successfully passing both the assessment centre and selection centres, and their ranking of chosen training locations. For example, a candidate placed highly in the ranking of candidates who chose East of England as their first choice is very likely to be able to train there, while a candidate lower down in the ranking is less likely to get their first choice of training location if several higher ranked candidates put it as their first choice.

What does the assessment centre involve?

The assessment centre involves 3 components: a critical reasoning assessment, numerical reasoning assessment and a Public Health Situational judgement assessment. There are several online resources that are useful in helping candidates prepare for these assessments.

What does the selection centre involve?

In previous years, the selection centre has involved 3 components: a written exercise, group exercise, and a 'steeplechase' interview, including a short presentation and discussion of an academic paper. Last year the selection centre was held virtually and included an interview only with no group or written exercises. This year it is yet to be confirmed whether the selection centre will be online or in person.

Where can I apply to do my training?

The application system for Public Health training in the UK covers England, Wales and Scotland and the Defence Medical Services. Oriol is also used for Northern Ireland recruitment into Public Health as part of a separate recruitment process.

Within England, registrars train within a Training region and will undertake all their placements* within that region.

Towards the end of the application process, candidates who have been invited to the selection centre are sent a list of all the available first training locations (subdivided by training region). From this list, candidates must rank their preferred choices of locations, and may include as many or as few locations as they like on their application. It is possible to be considered appointable following the selection centre but not to receive an offer as you did not rank highly enough and your chosen locations have been taken by higher ranking candidates. For this reason, the more locations the candidate includes in their rank, the better the chance of gaining a place, as long as you are prepared and able to relocate to the area that you are offered.

*Later in the programme, some candidates may apply to undertake a ‘Nationally Available Training Placement’ outside of their training region, many of which are based in London.

Why should I train in the East of England?

Training in the East of England offers many exciting and varied opportunities, including strong academic links with several universities (including Cambridge), and three medical schools with strong university level allied professionals training.

Alongside regional training placements, there are several national teams in the East of England including the National Cancer Registration Service, meaning a good diversity of placement options, and the proximity to London means that registrars based in the region may have the option of undertaking National placements in London without relocating.

Outside of work, the region offers a varied range of leisure opportunities including several Areas of Natural Beauty (Suffolk Coast and Heaths, Dedham Vale and the Norfolk Coast), historic cities and quick rail connections to London.

There is also a very active and supportive registrar group in the region which creates a strong network for you, which is particularly helpful if you are relocating to take up your post.

Part 2: The Application process

I’ve selected the East of England as a training region. What are the North and South Zones?

The North and South Zones refer to the groupings of locations of the first training placement, which is based in a local authority. The local authorities in the North Zone of the East of England are Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Norfolk, Suffolk, Luton, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. The local authorities in the South Zone are Essex, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Hertfordshire.

Beyond the first placement, registrars may apply to undertake placements in any other location within the region. However, they are not expected to go to a placement outside of their zone unless they choose to.

I've selected the East of England as a training region. Where will I be based?

For your first training location, you will be based in a local authority in the region. The local authority you are allocated to will depend on where there is capacity for new trainees, and your home location will also be taken into account as far as possible.

The location of your subsequent placements will depend on where you apply to undertake your placements (based on interests and educational needs in addition to supervisor capacity). For more information, and a guide to the placements available in the region, please see [this webpage](#).

Part 3: After receiving an offer for the East of England

I have accepted an offer of a training placement in the East of England and will be moving to the region for my new job. Where should I live?

The training programme recommends that you base yourself in or near to your first training location. In making this decision however, you will need to consider your ability to travel to Cambridge and your subsequent training placements from this location. The geographical nature of the region means you may have to undertake a long commute or relocate at some stage of training, depending on your combination of training placements. In deciding where to live, registrars should take into account their ability to travel and/or relocate, and any family commitments in addition to their possible routes through training.

I have accepted an offer to train in the East of England but live in London. Can I continue to live in London?

Many current and former registrars have continued to live in London and commuted to Cambridge for the MPhil, which is feasible but tiring and also obviously depends on where in London you are based.

Some registrars have chosen to stay in Cambridge during the week for attendance at the MPhil, returning to London at weekends, but this may incur additional costs which the registrar needs to fully consider.

It is important to note that the East of England is a separate deanery from London and is not an extension of the London deanery.

I already have a master's degree in Public Health/Epidemiology. Do I need to complete the MPhil at Cambridge?

The decision of whether you will complete the MPhil will depend on how recent your master's degree was, and how closely the content covered corresponds to the syllabus for the Diplomate Exam. After accepting a place to train in the East of England you will be asked to submit a CV to the Training Programme Directors who will advise on whether you will need to undertake the MPhil. This decision will normally take place after the location of the first training location is decided.

When do I find out where I will be based for my first placement?

Allocations for first training placements are typically made in the second half of April following acceptance of an offer.

How long will I be based there?

Registrars typically spend 24-30 months in their first training location, although the period from October- July of the first year is spent undertaking the MPhil in Cambridge, and during the second year, a health protection placement of 3-6 months is undertaken, based at Harlow or Mildenhall.

Registrars who do not undertake the MPhil will typically spend 18- 24 months in their first training location.

How much time will I spend in Cambridge?

Registrars undertaking the MPhil in Cambridge will be based in Cambridge from October- July of their first year. After this, group preparation for the Diplomate exam typically involves up to one day per week in Cambridge during the Autumn of year 2, and Registrar training and education days are also held in Cambridge. After completing their first local authority placement, registrars may undertake subsequent placements in Cambridge, allocated based on availability and training needs.

When will I be taking my exams?

Registrars undertaking the MPhil will sit their MPhil exams in June of their first year. Registrars then typically sit the Diplomate exam in January of their second year, with resits taking place in June. Registrars who have already done a MPhil/MPH and are not completing the Cambridge MPhil will often sit their Diplomate exam in January of their first year. The timing of the Membership exam varies from registrar to registrar but is typically sat within 12 months of passing the Diplomate exam.

How much will I get paid?

Medics are paid on the standard NHS junior doctors pay scale. Pay for non-medics is similar and worked out as a proportion of Band 8d on the Agenda for Change pay scale, which increases incrementally each year. You will also receive a 20% salary increase once you start participating in the local health protection on-call rota (after passing the Diplomate Examination). Pay protection is available if you currently earn more than the starting salary, and should be applied for through Lead Employer after being offered a place.

How can I get more information/get in touch?

For ALL enquiries about the recruitment and selection process please contact publichealthrecruitment.em@hee.nhs.uk. For more information about Public Health training specifically within the East of England please email: phschool.eoe@hee.nhs.uk.