

Plant Health Professional Register Guidance for applicants

This document provides guidance on the competency framework used for assessing candidates' applications for inclusion on the Plant Health Professional Register together with information on the application process.

The Plant Health Professional Register has been created in response to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Government Office of Science reports^{1,2} recommending development of plant health skills and creating opportunities for a wider community of trained plant health professionals.

The Department is working with professional bodies to embed greater awareness of plant health as a key competency and component of continuous professional development. The register was created in 2016 for government inspectors and related officials, enhancing their official training programme to provide a better and more professional service. In 2018, a pilot exercise engaged with the Horticulture sector to extend the register to all relevant horticulturalists and is now being incorporated into the plant health assurance scheme being developed by the HTA. Work with all other relevant sectors is ongoing.

Inclusion on the Plant Health Professional Register is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with and supports 'Protecting Plant Health – A Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307355/pb14168-plant-health-strategy.pdf

You will recognise that plants and trees are an essential economic, environmental and social asset making a vital contribution to our food and timber supply, rural economy and provide important ecosystem services.

For all applicants, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will help in protecting agriculture, forestry and the natural environment both nationally and internationally whilst recognising the need and importance of international trade in plants and plant products. You will understand that threats to plant biosecurity have increased with the globalisation of trade and travel and that predicted climate change effects may influence the impact of damaging pests not yet present in the UK, but also ones that are present and have associated management practices. The level of your involvement and influence will range from local, regional, national to international and short term to long-term with increasing responsibility and competency level from associate, to registered, to senior plant health professional.

Assessors will be looking for evidence for the following areas in tree health and plant biosecurity:
Understand:

- What plant biosecurity is, the principles of good practice and why it is important

¹ [Defra/GoS \(Dec 2014\) Animal and Plant Health in the UK: Building our science capability](#)
[Defra \(April 2014\) Protecting Plant Health-a Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain A Vision and high-level Strategy for UK Animal and Plant Health Research To 2020 and Beyond \(2016\)](#)

- The range of plant pests and diseases that can cause damage, how they may be introduced and/or spread
- The value of the accurate identification of both hosts and pests and the approaches used to achieve this
- Impacts of pests and diseases on agriculture, forestry and horticulture throughout the entire supply chain and the impact on landscape, amenity and the wider environment
- Principles of protecting plant health through risk based decision making and the appropriate use of international Phytosanitary legislation
- Factors that can influence risk such as globalisation of trade and predicted climate change
- Responsibility for reducing risk sits with those who benefit from the reduction of those risks (where appropriate)
- Diversity of organisations affected by plant health
- Impact of pests and diseases on health and safety particularly in relation to trees e.g. Oak Processionary Moth or Tree /limb falls due to cankers etc.
- Principles, implementation and impact of control strategies and measures

The level of knowledge and evidence will increase with the competency level from associate, to registered to senior plant health professional.

Competency framework

The application for inclusion on the Plant Health Professional Register is based on a competency framework. The assessors will therefore be looking for examples of how your knowledge and expertise is applied to each of the required areas.

Applications should be written in the first person. If you are applying for registered level, you should address competencies listed for associate and registered levels, similarly senior level applicants should address competencies listed for all levels.

Applicants may wish to use a STAR approach in providing evidence for each competency as this may help you to focus on your specific role/knowledge rather than a more general knowledge. The STAR approach is described below, but it is not essential to use this approach:

Situation: A brief explanation of the context in which the problem/challenge is defined. **Task:**

A description of what the applicant needed to achieve within the given situation to include the desired outcome.

Action: A description of what the applicant did and the reasons why

Result: A description of the outcomes of the applicant's action.

The table below provides an overview of the type of evidence that the assessors will be looking for in relation to each competency. This is followed by more detailed examples of the type of evidence that could be provided at each of the three levels – Associate, Registered and Senior.

Competency	Assessment
1. Understand how Plant Health Services operate in the UK and reporting mechanisms for plant health concerns	Assessors will need to see how your specialist practical knowledge contributes to the operation of UK Plant Health Services
2. Understand the significance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) International Plant Health Standards b) International Plant Protection Convention c) EU Plant Health regime d) Plant Health and Plant Health (Forestry) Orders and associated powers. d) Procedures for import of Licensed plant pests, pathogens, soil and plants 	Assessors will need to see an explanation of your understanding of the significance of standards and regulations connected to UK plant health in relation to your role
3. Understand Plant Biosecurity Continuum	Assessors will need to see an explanation of your understanding of surveillance and inspection regimes and the use of different surveillance, detection and identification approaches in relation to your role
4. Demonstrate communication of risks and plant health policy	Assessors will need to see examples of how you communicate your specialist practical knowledge to support Plant Health Services in the UK

<p>5. Understand the National Legal Plant Health framework-roles and responsibilities</p> <p>a) <i>within</i> your organisation</p> <p>b) <i>outside</i> your organisation with stakeholders and officials</p> <p>c) Plant Health and Plant Health (Forestry) Orders and associated powers.</p>	<p>Assessors need to see that you understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties that support the National Legal Plant Health framework and examples of how you utilise this knowledge</p>
<p>6. Understand risk based decision making and identify which pests and pathogens are high risk within your area of work</p>	<p>Assessors will need to see examples of your knowledge of the risks posed by pests and the reasons why they are a risk</p>
<p>7. a) Understand the <i>range</i> of notifiable pests and pathogens that threaten the UK</p> <p>b) sampling strategies</p>	<p>Assessors will need to see examples of your knowledge of the breadth of species that are of concern to UK plant health and how and why sampling strategies contribute to UK plant health</p>
<p>8. Understand how trade in commodities provides pathways of introduction that impact on biosecurity and measures taken to reduce risk and prevent introduction</p>	<p>Assessors will need to see examples of your understanding of how trade affects introduction and spread of pests and the measures that can be taken to reduce this risk</p>
<p>9. Demonstrate knowledge of good biosecurity practice within work area</p>	<p>Assessors will need to see examples of how you implement biosecurity practices in your work area</p>
<p>10. Contingency planning and outbreak management</p>	<p>Assessors will need to see examples of your knowledge of contingency planning in your work area and how this is implemented</p>

<p>11. Understand the impact of control strategies and measures on:</p> <p>a) economic losses</p> <p>b) social and environmental impact</p> <p>c) health and safety</p>	<p>Assessors will need to see examples of your knowledge of control strategies and measures in relation to your work area</p>
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OVERVIEW FOR ALL LEVELS	OVERVIEW FOR ALL LEVELS
<p>This is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with and supports 'Protecting Plant Health – A Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain'. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307355/pb14168-plant-health-strategy.pdf</p> <p>You would recognise that plants and trees are an essential economic, environmental and social asset making a vital contribution to our food and timber supply, rural economy and provide important ecosystem services.</p> <p>For all colleagues, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will help in protecting agriculture, forestry and the natural environment both nationally and internationally whilst recognising the need and importance of international trade in plants and plant products. You would understand that threats to plant biosecurity have increased with the globalisation of trade and travel</p>	<p>Assessors will be looking for evidence for the following areas in tree health and plant biosecurity:</p> <p>Understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What plant biosecurity is, principles of good practice and why it is important • The range of plant pests and diseases that can cause damage, how they may be introduced and/or spread • The value of the accurate identification of both hosts and pests and the approaches used to achieve this • Impacts of pests and diseases on agriculture, forestry and horticulture throughout the entire supply chain and the impact on landscape, amenity and the wider environment • principles of protecting plant health through risk based decision making and the appropriate use of international Phytosanitary legislation • factors that can influence risk such as globalisation of trade and predicted climate change • responsibility for reducing risk sits with those who benefit from the reduction of those risks (where appropriate)

<p>and that predicted climate change effects may influence the impact of damaging pests not yet present in the UK but also ones that are present and have associated management practices. The level of your involvement and influence will range from local, regional, national to international and short term to long-term with increasing responsibility and competency level from associate, to registered to senior plant health professional.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity of organisations affected by plant health • impact of pests and diseases on health and safety particularly in relation to trees e.g. Oak Processionary Moth or Tree /limb falls due to cankers etc. • principles, implementation and impact of control strategies and measures <p>The level of knowledge and evidence will increase with the competency level from associate, to registered to senior plant health professional.</p>
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Competency	Assessors will be looking for evidence that you know / do / take an active part in:-		
	Associate	Registered	Senior
Competency Cluster 1. Plant Health Regulations			
<p>1. Understand how Plant Health Services operate in the UK and reporting mechanisms for plant health concerns</p>	<p>Be able to describe the different government departments responsible for Plant Health and Forestry in the UK</p>	<p>Describe the flow of information and decisions about plant health in your organisation.</p> <p>Understand the economic significance, diversity of trade and natural environment that could be affected by biosecurity.</p>	<p>Describe how you initiate the flow of information and decision making within your organisation and communicate with counterparts in other UK organisations.</p>
<p>2. Understand the significance of:</p> <p>a) International Plant Health Standards</p> <p>b) International</p>	<p>Be able to explain the basic principles of the standards (a-d) that you use in your role and how it helps protect plant biosecurity (detail is expected for at least one and not all. If your</p>	<p>Provide the detail for a specific area and an appreciation of differing practices.</p> <p>Show an appreciation of the global spread of pests and</p>	<p>Actively contribute to national and international initiatives to improve practices</p> <p>Dissemination of good practice internationally</p>

<p>Plant Protection Convention</p> <p>c) EU Plant Health regime</p> <p>d) Plant Health and Plant Health (Forestry) Orders and associated powers</p> <p>e) Procedures for import of Licensed plant pests, pathogens soil and plants</p>	<p>role does not use them directly, your answer should address at least one based on your reading).</p> <p>If relevant to your role:-</p> <p>a) Explain how UK regulations fit in with other international phytosanitary agreements and requirements</p> <p>b) Demonstrate the ability to work safely in quarantine licensed facilities.</p>	<p>pathogens and opportunities for improved biosecurity</p> <p>Demonstrate a working knowledge of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibited, controlled and uncontrolled classifications • Use of phytosanitary certificates and plant passports • Containment and mitigation strategies for working with quarantine licensed organisms 	
<p>3. Understand the plant Biosecurity Continuum</p>	<p>Be able to explain the concept of Pre-border, border and inland surveillance. Be able to give examples of different types of surveillance, inspection or Identification approaches (select at least 1)</p>	<p>Give an appreciation of border activity and opportunities for improved biosecurity Understand different technologies and their benefits/limitations for surveillance, inspection, diagnosis and identification</p>	<p>Demonstrate implementation of new detection methodologies and control strategies and enhanced intelligence with stakeholders</p>
<p>Competency Cluster 2</p>			
<p>Roles and responsibilities in reporting plant health concerns</p>			
<p>4. Demonstrate communication of risks and plant health policy</p>	<p>How do you explain your job to others and its role in UK biosecurity</p>	<p>How do you explain the principles of plant biosecurity to a wider audience</p>	<p>Show how you lead, negotiate and support regional, national and international plant health policy and campaigns to enhance Plant Biosecurity</p>

		How do you make use of existing networks of communication and/or developing new ones	
<p>5. Understand the National Legal Plant Health framework – roles and responsibilities</p> <p>a) Within your organization</p> <p>b) Outside your organization with stakeholders and officials</p> <p>c) Plant Health and Plant Health (Forestry) Orders and associated powers.</p>	<p>Be able to explain who is responsible for surveillance, monitoring, containment/eradication and reporting pests and diseases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within your organization • And reporting to statutory bodies in your organization 	<p>Understand the need to escalate potential plant health concerns.</p> <p>Work with sectors to develop good practice e.g. certification schemes with industry</p> <p>The process for containment/eradication and EU notification of Listed and high risk pests and pathogens.</p> <p>Understand the implications on international trade of submitting quarantine pest/pathogen notifications</p>	<p>Understand how changes in plant health legislation will affect your work</p> <p>Show how you disseminate good practice; understanding and overcoming barriers to plant health regulations amongst stakeholders</p>
<p>Competency Cluster 3</p> <p>Risk based decision making</p>			
<p>6. Understand risk based decision making and identify which pests and pathogens are <i>high risk within your area of work</i></p>	<p>Be able to explain the principles of Risk (Hazard x Likelihood)</p> <p>Describe what is the UK Risk Register and how you can use it.</p>	<p>Understand risk based decision making and knowledge of the principles of risk assessment and the UK Risk Register.</p> <p>Give examples of how you have used the Risk Register for 'horizon scanning' for new and emerging problems relevant to your business</p>	<p>How have you Informed your team of the results of horizon scanning and changes to the Risk Register ensuring they are upskilled as required</p> <p>Show how you:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, manage and review your team's performance in dealing with high risk pests and pathogens and

			<p>contribute to strategy for their control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence policy following identification of new plant health risks • Communicate risks appropriately and follow up action where needed
<p>7. Understand:</p> <p>a) the range of notifiable pests and pathogens that threaten the UK</p> <p>b) Sampling strategies</p>	<p>Be able to give examples of the range of pest and pathogens detrimental to plant health, common symptoms to help recognize them and examples of common hosts they affect</p> <p>Be able to give examples of taking different types of samples and packaging for plant pest and disease diagnosis</p>	<p>Be aware and able to explain that not all organisms are harmful</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of new and emerging problems within and threatening the UK</p> <p>Show how you design and develop sampling strategies on a local basis and review effectiveness</p>	<p>Be able to explain the significance of accurate identification and the consequences of taxonomic revision</p> <p>Show how you design, develop and critically assess sampling strategies and effectiveness on a regional and national basis</p>
<p>Understand how trade in commodities provides pathways of introduction that impact on biosecurity and measures taken to reduce risk and prevent introduction</p>	<p>Demonstrate awareness of the significance of different origins of plants, wood, wood products, bark and other materials capable of harboring pests and pathogens</p>	<p>Explain how pests and pathogens spread naturally such as via air, water, soil and via vectors</p>	<p>Demonstrate an understanding of different pest and pathogen life cycles and survival strategies and the significance on control strategies</p>

Competency Cluster 4			
Contingency planning and outbreak management			
9. Demonstrate knowledge of good biosecurity practice within work area	<p>Be able to define “biosecurity”</p> <p>Give examples of how you carry out biosecurity practices to prevent spread of plant pests and diseases within work area</p>	<p>Understand good biosecurity practice</p> <p>Use and improve biosecurity protocols to deal with pest and disease management within your organization</p>	<p>Show how you develop biosecurity protocols to deal with pest and disease management on a national basis</p> <p>Demonstrate an awareness and adaption of international protocols</p>
10. Contingency planning and outbreak management	<p>Be able to describe what a contingency plan is and why it is needed</p> <p>Give an example of steps you take to prevent the introduction or spread of a pest as part of outbreak management or contingency planning for your work area</p>	<p>Describe the steps you take to prepare in the case of an outbreak (policy, surveillance or lab preparedness as appropriate)</p>	<p>Show how you test new ways to enact speedier, effective methods of outbreak control</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge and adoption of industry best practice as applicable</p> <p>Have processes for and undertake resilience testing of contingency plans</p>
<p>11. Understand the impact of control strategies and measures on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Economic losses b) Social and environmental impact c) Health and safety 	<p>Give examples of how introduction of a pest or disease may impact upon economic, social, environmental and health and safety issues</p> <p>Give examples of who else might be affected across various sectors and the impacts on their work</p>	<p>Understand the impact of an outbreak and management practices at a regional level</p>	<p>Understand the impact of an outbreak and management practices at a national and international level</p>

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Once on the register, individuals are expected to demonstrate 50 CPD points per year and to enter their CPD on the MySociety page. RSB guidelines on CPD points are provided [here](#). The Plant Health Professional Register is intended to complement and not duplicate any work-based CPD programme.

The application process

Applications are made via the MySociety page of the Royal Society of Biology website (www.rsb.org.uk). Persons applying for the Plant Health Professional Register must have membership of the Royal Society of Biology of at least the Affiliate grade. You must first apply for affiliate membership, once you have submitted your membership application you can then apply to join the register. Your affiliate membership application to the Royal Society of Biology will then permit your application to the Plant Health Professionals register on the website in My Society.

There are two routes to applying depending on your circumstances:

1. If applying individually, please apply to join in MySociety at the affiliate level where payment will be requested. You may wish to join the RSB at a higher level (Associate, Member or Fellow) according to your circumstances. Contact the RSB for further information at membership@rsb.org.uk.
2. You may be invited to join affiliate membership if part of a group within your institution. If this is the case, please liaise with your nominated mentor who can organize a group application and payment for membership.

Once your application for affiliate membership has been completed and submitted, you can proceed with your application to the register.

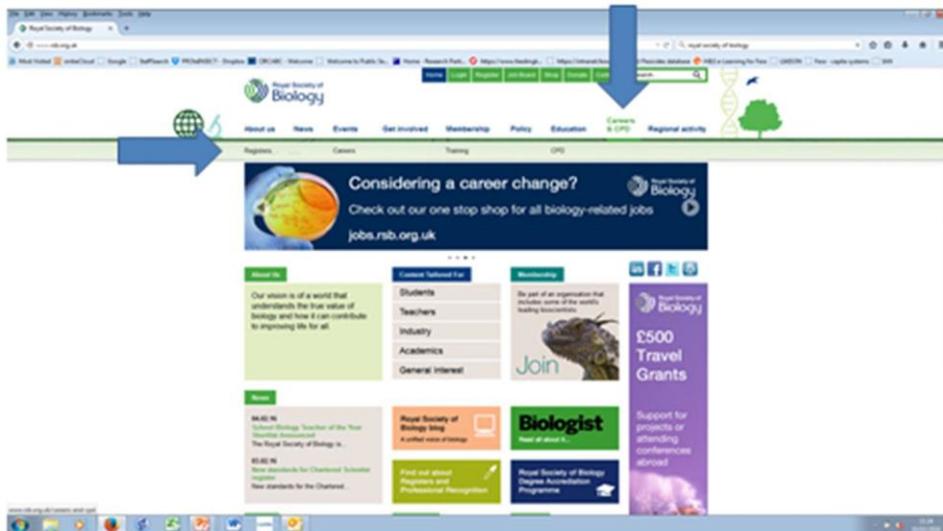
The location of the Plant Health Register application page is shown below.

Either:

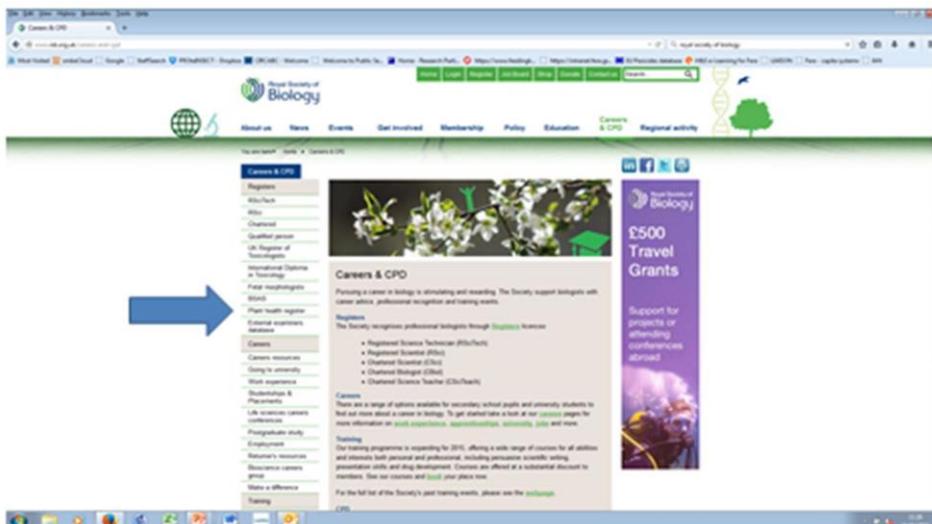
Login directly to the MySociety area



Alternatively go to Careers and CPD and then Register



Go to Plant Health Register



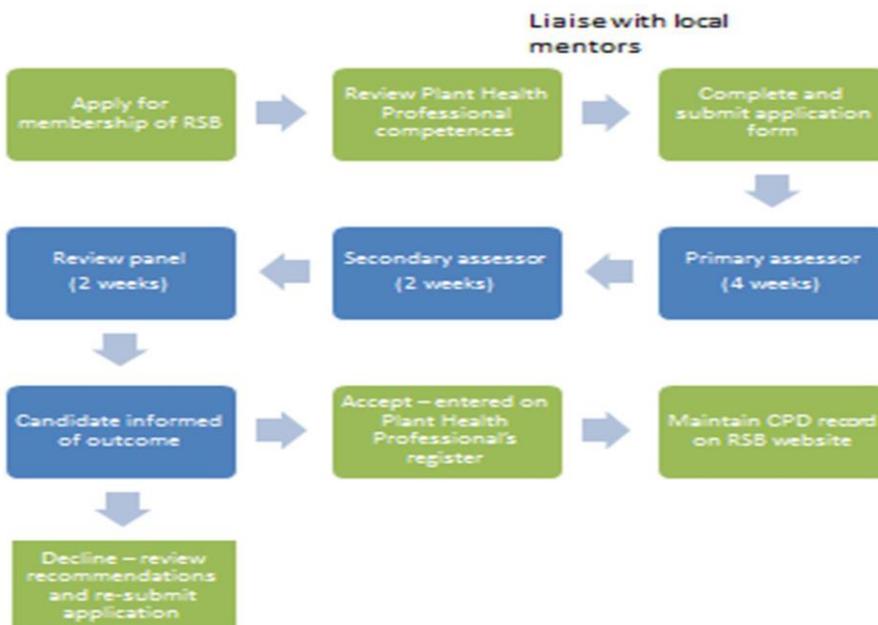
Towards the bottom of the page click on MySociety



Login to the MySociety page, then go to Professional Registers on the drop down menu

Applications to the Plant Health Professionals register should be completed in full in all sections and submitted electronically in MySociety to be considered by assessors.

The diagram below shows an overview of the application and assessment process. The tasks in green boxes are for completion by the applicant. The tasks in blue boxes indicate the assessment procedure.



If you are already on the Plant Health Professionals register but wish to increase your registration level, please contact php@rsb.org.uk.

Appendix: Guidelines for MySociety application of the register

1. Applications are made through MySociety. Check all sections are complete and correct, and submit the application. Ensure payment is made in **MyTransactions** if paying individually.
2. Submitting an application, on submission:
 - a. An automatic confirmation email is sent to say the application is received
 - b. An automated referee request is sent to two referees (if two are included on the form)
3. Applications to join the register are considered quarterly. The deadline for receipt of applications is on 1st April, 1st July, 1st October and 1st January. Applications received after the deadline will be considered at the next meeting
4. Applications are sent to assessors the following week (to allow 1 week grace for any references to be returned)
5. Primary assessors receive application by auto email. Primary assessor has 4 weeks to complete application review using shared review template.
6. Primary assessor sends application to secondary assessor with their review form. Second assessor has 2 weeks to review.
7. Secondary assessor sends the completed review with primary and secondary assessor comments to RSB who follow up on any discrepancies between assessors.
8. Teleconference is organized by RSB to discuss applications
9. Successful applicants are put on register at next election
10. Non-successful applicants are given individual feedback on what they need to go do get on the register
 - a. Resubmission of evidence may be requested – applicant is advised to resubmit this via the RSB who will pass it on to the assessors
11. All successful registrants will receive an automatic welcome email confirming acceptance onto the register and enrollment in the CPD programme.

Checklist for applying: Common Pitfalls

1. Applying without submitting the application – RSB cannot process until the application is fully clicked through to submit. You will receive confirmation via email if your application is successfully submitted.
2. Check junk mail - Ensure all information provided is correct and check your junk folder for the automated emails.
3. Payment – applications can't be registered without payment – ensure that payment has been made. If your organization is being invoiced, payment request can be ignored.
4. Referees – RSB requires at least one reference to process an application. Ask your referees to check their inbox for requests.

MySociety Application Form:

Step by Step Guide

Overview

[Start](#)

Application Plant Health Professionals

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For all colleagues, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will help in protecting agriculture, forestry and the natural environment both nationally and internationally whilst recognising the need and importance of international trade in plants and plant products. You would understand that threats to plant biosecurity have increased with the globalisation of trade and travel and that predicted climate change effects may influence the impact of damaging pests not yet present in the UK as well as those already present, requiring associated management practices. The level of your involvement and influence will range from local, regional, national to international and short term to long-term with increasing responsibility and competency level from associate, to registered to senior plant health professional.

> [Start your application](#)

Level

Select the competency level

[▶ Start Application](#)

Overview

☑ Started

○ Personal Details

○ Address

○ Employment Details

○ Qualifications

○ References

○ Statement on Current Role

○ Career Overview/Prof. Background

○ Competencies (0/11)

○ Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

> Personal Details

Title

Mr, Ms, Mrs, Dr, Professor,...

First Name *

Middle Names

Last Name *

Gender (not set) Male Female Other Prefer not to say

Date of Birth

Nationality

Contact Email * 

Billing Email 

Only use this if billing related emails need to be sent to a different address

Tel Mobile

Tel Home

Tel Work

Website 

LinkedIn 

✓ This is Correct. [Save Changes](#)

Overview

- Started
- Personal Details
- Address
- Employment Details
- Qualifications
- References
- Statement on Current Role
- Career Overview/Prof. Background
- Competencies (0/11)
- Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

> Employment Details

Graduation Date

Start Paid Employment

Enter the date of your FIRST
EVER employment

Current Job Title *

Name Employer

Tel Work

✓ This is Correct

▶ Save Changes

Overview

- Started
- Personal Details
- Address
- Employment Details
- Qualifications**
- References
- Statement on Current Role
- Career Overview/Prof. Background
- Competencies (0/11)
- Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

> Qualifications

No entry

Add Entry Section is Complete

Edit Entry

> Qualifications

Date

Level

Grade

Title

Subject

Issued By

Cancel Save changes

Overview

- ✔ Started
- Personal Details
- Address
- Employment Details
- Qualifications
- **References**
- Statement on Current Role
- Career Overview/Prof. Background
- Competencies (0/11)
- Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

> References

No entry

[Add Entry](#) [Section is Complete](#)

Edit Entry

> References

Title

First Name *

Last Name

Affiliation

Email *

Tel

Relation

Cancel

Save changes

Overview

- Started
- Personal Details
- Address
- Employment Details
- Qualifications
- References
- Statement on Current Role
- Career Overview/Prof. Background
- Competencies (0/11)
- Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

> Statement on Current Role

Statement *

✓ This is Correct

▶ Save Changes

Overview

- Started
- Personal Details
- Address
- Employment Details
- Qualifications
- References
- Statement on Current Role
- Career Overview/Prof. Background
- Competencies (0/11)
- Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

> Career Overview/Prof. Background

No entry

[Add Entry](#) [Section is Complete](#)

Edit Entry

> Career Overview/Prof. Background

From *

Until

Organisation *

Job Title *

Description

[Cancel](#) [Save changes](#)

Overview

- Started
- Personal Details
- Address
- Employment Details
- Qualifications
- References
- Statement on Current Role
- Career Overview/Prof. Background
- Competencies (0/11)
- Submit

Application Plant Health Professionals

Competencies Overview

Please indicate how you meet each of the competencies below by clicking on the links below. You will need to complete a statement in evidence.

Competency document available [here](#).

See our [guidance for applicants](#)

Assessors will be looking for evidence that you know, or do, or take an active part in the following competencies

1. Plant Health Regulations

- 1. Understand how Plant Health Services operate in the UK and reporting mechanisms for plant health concerns

Associate: Be able to describe the different government departments responsible for Plant Health and Forestry in the UK. Registered: Describe the flow of information and decisions about plant health in your organisation. Understand the economic significance, diversity of trade and natural environment that could be affected by biosecurity. Senior: Describe how you initiate the flow of information and decision making within your organisation and communicate with counterparts in other UK organisations.

Save Changes