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Join or support the RSB Plant Health Professional Register mentoring cohort 2027

The Royal Society of Biology has developed a training and mentoring scheme to support candidates seeking Plant Health Professional Registration. Expressions of interest are now open for the 2027 programme. Find out how to join the cohort as a mentee or become a mentor below.

What is the Plant Health Professional Register?

The Plant Health Professional Register (PHPR) provides independent recognition and validation of your plant health and biosecurity competencies, professional standing and achievements. It is suitable for everyone working with plants across diverse sectors, including: botanic gardens, arboreta, living collections, horticulture, forestry, community tree nurseries, plant and crop science, land management and the wider natural environment.

Plant health registration is based on a competency framework that aligns with the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain as well as industry-led standards and assurance schemes. There are three levels within the register – Associate, Registered and Senior Plant Health Professional – providing a clear pathway for competency development and career progression.

Plant Health Professional Registration offers a range of benefits to both you and your employer:

Benefits to you

- Hold a recognised award that demonstrates your professional competencies, on-the-job experience and commitment to good biosecurity practice.
- Receive a certificate and eligibility to use the prestigious post-nominal letters, PHP after your name.
- Appear on the public Plant Health Professionals Register Directory, boosting your career opportunities by highlighting your experience to potential employers.
- Access to the RSB's continuing professional development (CPD) scheme and discounts on RSB training courses.
- Gain advance access to free plant health events and talks, join the Plant Health Professional Network group on LinkedIn and become part of a growing community to share knowledge, expertise and up-to-date information.

Benefits to employers

- Show that you employ dedicated, experienced and competent plant health professionals whose expertise has been assessed against recognised professional standards.

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- Demonstrate your institution's commitment to delivering the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain, industry best practices, regulatory compliance and relevant codes of conduct.
- Enhance your institutional credibility and provide robust quality assurance for your living collection curation, plant health monitoring and management.
- Show your commitment to staff training and development, helping you build and retain a skilled plant health workforce.

About the training and mentoring scheme

The Royal Society of Biology has developed an on-demand training course mapped to the PHPR competency framework, a virtual workshop series and a mentoring scheme to help early-career professionals explore the competencies and how they apply specifically to their area of work.

The mentoring workshops bring together a cohort of Register applicants with mentors who are on the PHP Register or working at a senior level in plant health, to provide guidance and context. The mentoring arrangement supports early career individuals in their professional development, while building leadership and mentoring capacity in mid- to senior-level colleagues. Successful programmes are already in place at Fera Science and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

At the end of the training and mentoring programme, you will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to apply for the PHP Register.

Join the cohort: Become a mentee

Person specification

- Around one to two years' experience working in plant health and biosecurity
- Aged over 18
- Resident in the UK for the duration of the programme
- Able to commit the required time to the programme*****

How the mentee journey works

The cohort will first become members of the RSB, which provides them with a range of benefits, including free access to the online Plant Health Professional Register Training course and CPD recording system. Applicants will work through the online training, which comprises 12 bespoke short videos alongside associated reading materials, covering the competencies required to become a Plant Health Professional (PHP).

The cohort will attend a 45-minute online workshop every 2 weeks to review their training, check-in on their progress and ask any questions they may have to existing PHPs. They will draft sections of their PHPR application in between workshops, reviewing and editing it with the feedback from mentors, before submitting it for assessment.

The mentee takes responsibility for arranging communications with their mentor and should aim for an even distribution of work across the duration of the programme.

***Mentee time commitment (~30 hours total)**

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Activity	Time commitment
Set up membership and read guidance document	60 min
Watch introductory video	15 min
Watch on-demand training videos	12 x 15 min
Follow-up learning	12 x 45 min
Workshops	5 x 45 min
Draft PHPR application	12 x 60 min
Review and edit PHPR application	60 min
Submit a PHPR application by August 2027	N/A
Total	**~30 hours**

Workshop dates:

1. Wednesday 27 January 2027
2. Wednesday 10 February 2027
3. Wednesday 24 February 2027
4. Wednesday 10 March 2027
5. Wednesday 24 March 2027

Support the cohort: Become a mentor

Person specification

- Over two years' experience working in plant health and biosecurity
- Aged over 18
- Resident in the UK for the duration of the programme
- (Desirable) Member of the Plant Health Professional Register
- Interested in supporting others' career development
- Able to commit time to the programme†

Mentors not already on the PHP Register are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the competency framework, for example through the online Plant Health Professional Register Training course.

Mentors will be matched with no more than three mentees and should support them in reviewing their register applications. The mentee takes responsibility for arranging

communications with their mentor, but a mentor should be reasonably available to provide support or feedback.

As a mentor, you should aim to:

- Assist with confidence building to help with the mentee's career development.
- Share guidance, ideas and experiences of working in plant health.
- Give honest and constructive feedback.

RSB staff are available to assist with mentee queries as required.

†Mentor time commitment (6 – 7 hours total)

- Attendance at virtual workshops: 5 x 45 minutes
- Feedback on mentees' applications as required: As a guide, 12 competencies x 15 minutes

How to express interest in the mentoring scheme

Please email registers@rsb.org.uk with a copy of your CV or a summary of your work experience, and the role you are interested in (mentee or mentor) **by 10 December 2026.**

For any questions, please email the Registers team.

Funding Opportunity: Plant Health Professional Development Award

(Please note that applying for funding is a separate process from expressing your interest in the mentoring scheme.)

Membership of the RSB and registration on the PHPR starts from £105 per year. Visit the RSB website for more details on the different membership grades and benefits of each.

Those working in a plant health-related career and interested in applying to join the Plant Health Professional Register may apply for a Plant Health Professional Development Award. Recipients of the award will receive free membership to the RSB for one year, and a free application to the Plant Health Professional Register which includes registration for the first year. Please ensure that you have read the award guidance before applying. **The deadline for award applications is 1 December 2026.**