

SENr

The Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register

Guide to SENr Registration

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
1.1	Background to the Register.....	3
1.2	What is Sport and Exercise Nutrition?.....	5
1.3	Why Sport and Exercise Nutrition is important	5
1.4	Challenges in Sport and Exercise Nutrition in the UK.....	6
1.5	Problems for public confidence in nutrition advice.....	6
1.6	Scope of Practice.....	7
1.7	Purpose of this guide	7
2.0	Registration Overview	9
2.1	Routes to Registration (Graduate and Practitioner Registration)	9
2.2	Supporting Requirements	11
3.0	Graduate Registration	12
3.1	Overview.....	12
3.2	Graduate Application Process.....	13
4.0	Practitioner Registration	15
4.1	Overview.....	15
4.1	Basic Application Requirements.....	16
4.2	Portfolio Requirements	17
4.3	Assessment	18
4.4	Application Outcome.....	19
4.5	Appeals.....	20
4.6	Re-registration	21
5.0	Academic Associate Registration	22
5.1	Requirements	22
5.2	Review.....	22
6.0	Statutory Requirements	24
6.1	Access to and administration of records.....	24
6.2	British Dietetic Association (BDA) membership.....	24
6.3	SENr Fees	25
7.0	References	26

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Register

The Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register (SENr) is a voluntary register. It is designed to accredit suitably qualified and experienced individuals who have the competency to work autonomously as a Sport and Exercise Nutritionist with clients from performance oriented athletes through to the exercising public.

The Register has been established to:

- Protect the public: namely the sport and performance focused exercising community;
- Set, protect and promote standards of services and education;
- Support the professional development of registrants; and
- Develop the profession and its knowledge base.

Therefore, it aims to:

- Identify professional standards and competencies for Sport and Exercise Nutritionists. ***NB: Registrants must agree to abide by a code of professional conduct.¹***
- Enable individuals to identify the gaps in their knowledge and skills that they need to fill in order to work at the highest levels in the field of Sport and Exercise Nutrition.
- Guide the development of curriculum that would provide the core knowledge competencies in Sport and Exercise Nutrition.

¹ SENr Code of Professional Conduct. May 2016

- Enable Registered Sport and Exercise Nutritionists to develop their careers in an appropriate and structured manner.
- Promote recognition of Sport and Exercise Nutrition as a specialism.
- Promote recognition of Sport and Exercise Nutritionists as professionals.

The format of the Register is designed to enable employers, clients and members of the public to identify and contact registrants. SENr shall provide a web accessed resource with brief information that identifies each registrant and provides such contact details as the registrant permits.

The register is a joint initiative of three professions: dietitians, nutritionists, and sport and exercise scientists. Working under a common competency framework, a new 'profession' has emerged, that of the 'sport and exercise nutritionist'. This professional community is strengthened due to the knowledge skills and attributes that each individual registrant brings.

Work on the development of the SENr has taken place over a considerable period of time and has been led by the SENr Board which is made up of representatives from the professions involved.

The register is currently administered by The British Dietetic Association, on behalf of the SENr Board.

SENr has representation from many industry experts on its Board including lead performance nutritionists from all four UK Institutes of Sport, from UK Anti-Doping and from academia and professional practice.

1.2 What is Sport and Exercise Nutrition?

Sport and Exercise Nutrition applies knowledge of the science of nutrition in order to promote exercise and sport performance. It is the science of the effects of diet and dietary components on the performance of the athlete, and of how exercise affects the metabolism of nutrients in the body and the body's requirements for nutrients. Sport and Exercise Nutrition requires an understanding of the physiological, biochemical and nutritional responses to the physical activity and exercise involved in all forms of sport, and of the special circumstances that occur during training and competition in sports.

1.3 Why Sport and Exercise Nutrition is important

Diet and nutrition significantly affect sport performance. What an athlete drinks and eats before, during, and after training and competition affects health, body mass and body composition, as well as performance in, and, recovery from, the effects of exercise. An optimum diet can help to maximise sport performance.

An increased level of participation in physical activity, exercise and sport would help to improve the health and well-being of our sedentary general population. Increased physical activity can help to reduce obesity, the risk of heart disease, some cancers, and osteoporosis, and can play a role in promoting mental health. Sound knowledge of sport and exercise nutrition can ensure a healthy balance between exercise and diet of individuals and groups of individuals at all levels of fitness. Due consideration must be given to the special needs imposed by participation in different forms of sport or exercise chosen and to the circumstances and characteristics of the individual. While the evidence clearly shows that good diet and nutrition are vital for good health in all individuals, a growing variety of 'health' foods, ergogenic aids, supplements, herbal remedies and functional foods are on sale. There is thus a growing need for sound advice on Sport and Exercise Nutrition, across a wide-spectrum from amateur to elite and professional levels within sports.

Sound knowledge of sport and exercise nutrition is also important for the families of athletes, for coaches, and for others working with athletes such as teachers, managers, and administrators of events and clubs.

1.4 Challenges in Sport and Exercise Nutrition in the UK

Sports Nutrition has lacked a single voice to speak for, oversee and support professional development and care in Sports Nutrition, owing to a shortage of suitably qualified experienced Accredited Sports Dietitians and a lack of clear career paths for other professionals. Few degree courses have a vocational focus. Prior to the emergence of this Register, there was no framework to control the quality of professional education in Sports Nutrition. Sports Nutrition requires a coherent national framework and standards, like sport psychology and sports science and the Register sets out to facilitate this.

The special needs of the sports sector create special challenges for partners to collaborate to extend their separate voluntary registers. Self-sustaining voluntary regulation cannot occur without support from (future) employers of sports nutritionists. Employers and athletes need to be confident that eligibility for registration means timely, safe and up-to-date advice in sports nutrition, high standards among practitioners, with sanctions if necessary.

Increasing the numbers of suitably qualified Sport and Exercise Nutritionists would dispel public confusion about sources of credible information, advice and support needed to make and sustain changes towards healthier eating and physically active lifestyles.

1.5 Problems for public confidence in nutrition advice

The mass media are an important source of information on nutrition for many in the general population and therefore have enormous potential to influence dietary behaviour. Commercial interests, especially the increasing proliferation of new 'diets' and dietary therapies have led to 'misleading and conflicting messages about the benefits' of certain foods' and 'the public is now confused by the inconsistency of the messages. There is also evidence of cynicism and distrust of expertise, an important factor in the establishment of the Food Standards Agency, to protect consumers. Statutory or credible voluntary registration and accreditation schemes for professionals are an important way to protect the clients and the public.

1.6 Scope of Practice

The scope of practice of Sport and Exercise Nutrition includes promoting excellence in sport performance as well as promoting participation in physical activity, sport and exercise for health.

Application of Sport and Exercise Nutrition in professional practice involves the translation of knowledge about nutrition and sport, as well as exercise and physical activity, into practical advice for individuals and groups of individuals. Application of Sport and Exercise Nutrition requires integration of scientific knowledge with understanding of the social and psychological aspects of motivation and human behaviour. Professional Sport and Exercise Nutritionists require proficiency in communication and education about their subject in order to be able to give and formulate advice that is appropriate and relevant to an individual or group.

1.7 Purpose of this guide

This document provides guidance on the requirements for registration with SENr. It is intended to comprehensively explain the process, describing in detail the steps an applicant will need to follow in order to apply for registration under the various categories:

- Graduate
- Practitioner
- Academic Associate

Thus, the target audiences for this guide are:

- Students or new graduates seeking to join the Graduate Register.
- Individuals currently registered on the Graduate Register who aspire to achieve practitioner registration within the three year timeframe allowed.
- Those working within the field of sport and exercise nutrition who aspire to achieve the professional recognition that SENr brings.
- Academics and researchers working within the field of sport and exercise nutrition who wish to demonstrate their affiliation with SENr through Academic Associate registration.
- Other stakeholders with an interest in understanding the rigours of the SENr process (including employers, athletes etc).

All registrants must conduct themselves in accordance with the SENr Code of Conduct, which provides a set of principles that apply to all Sport and Exercise Nutritionists, with protecting the health and wellbeing of service users being the premise of the Code. The Code covers four behaviour areas: conduct, performance, ethics and professional practice.

2.0 Registration Overview

There are three separate categories of registration for SENr. These are outlined in *Figure 1*:

Figure 1: SENr Registration Categories

Category	Summary	Submission requirements	Period of registration
Graduate	Having achieved relevant undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. Limited practitioner experience.	Certificates / transcripts from UG and PG qualifications. 1 x Professional / University reference	3 years
Practitioner	Holds relevant qualifications (as above). Significant (2-3 yrs +) working in a sport and exercise nutrition role. <i>NB. SENr recognises that many work in part time roles so it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all essential competencies can be met.</i>	Certificates / transcripts from UG and PG qualifications. 2 x professional references Portfolio of evidence	Re-registration every 5 years.
Academic Associate	Holds a PhD in a sport and exercise nutrition related field. Senior academic or researcher. Nominated by at least one SENr Practitioner registrant.	Letter / email of support from SENr Practitioner Registrant. Letter of application with demonstrable support of SENr and profession. Curriculum Vitae.	Lifetime

Each category will be expanded upon in further detail later within the document.

2.1 Routes to Registration (Graduate and Practitioner Registration)

In order to be eligible to apply for Graduate or Practitioner registration with SENr, applicants must hold appropriate undergraduate and postgraduate level qualifications.

There are a number of approaches to meeting the qualification requirements. Examples of different approaches include:

- A pre-registration dietetics degree with an MSc/Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate in Sport and Exercise Nutrition. *This reduced postgraduate requirement is in recognition of the clinical placement training undertaken during the dietetic pre-registration degree programme.*
- An undergraduate degree in nutrition, sport and exercise science or biological sciences with an MSc/ Postgraduate Diploma in Sport and Exercise Nutrition.

Individuals holding a relevant undergraduate degree plus a PhD in a relevant (sports nutrition related) subject, would need to supplement qualifications with at least three core postgraduate level taught modules:

- Sport and Exercise Nutrition
- Exercise physiology / biochemistry
- Measurement and evaluation (nutritional assessment)

For all routes to registration, applicants must be able to demonstrate significant experience of critical appraisal of published research literature.

NB: Alternative routes and accreditation of prior learning / experience will be considered on an individual basis by at least two members of the SENr Board. In the case of applicants who have graduated from SENr Accredited postgraduate programmes, the postgraduate qualification ONLY will be required for consideration by the Registration Panel. This is due to the fact that SENr accreditation denotes confidence in the University programme's recruitment and application processes and the rigour of the final award achieved.

2.2 Supporting Requirements

At the current time, mutual recognition will apply to applicants who practise as Sport and Exercise Nutritionists in member or candidate states of the European Union (until such time as laws change). Satisfactory demonstration of qualifications and competence may be required in order to meet the full requirements of registration in the UK.

Applicants for Registration must agree to abide by the SENr Code of Professional Conduct, pay an annual registration fee and become a member of The British Dietetic Association (BDA). Registered Dietitians will be required to take out full BDA membership, whilst others will be eligible for Associate Membership.

All registered Sport and Exercise Nutritionists must hold appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance, which is provided as a benefit of membership of the BDA.

Successful applicants may identify themselves as SENr registrants under the relevant category, as follows:

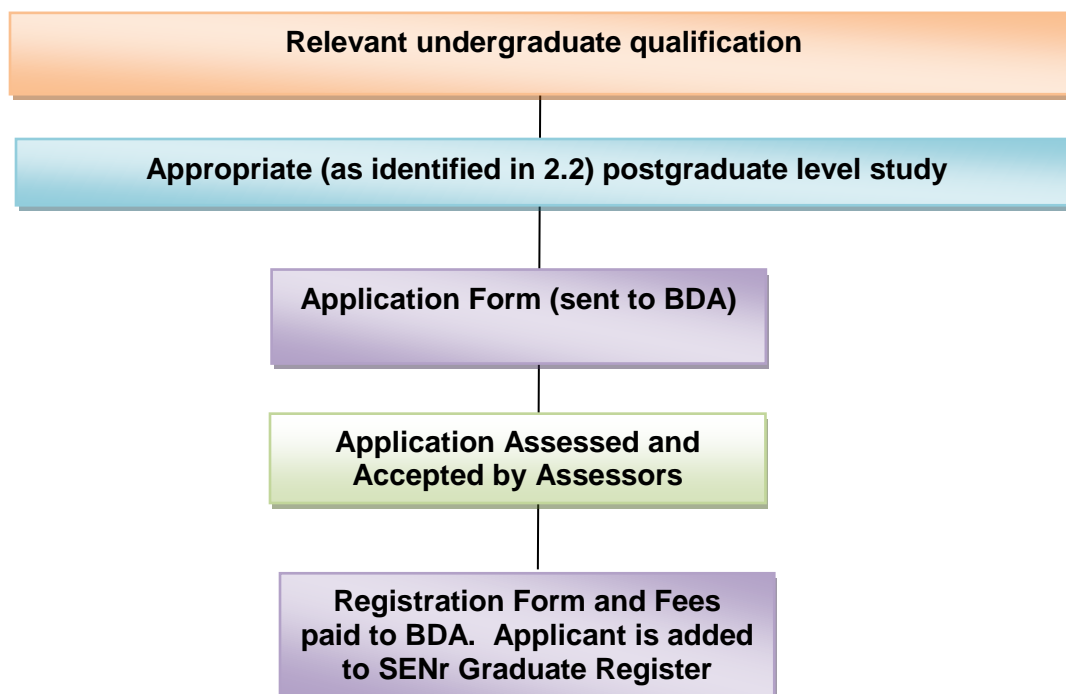
- SENr Registrant (Graduate)
- SENr Registrant (Practitioner)
- SENr Registrant (Academic Associate)

3.0 Graduate Registration

3.1 Overview

Applications are invited from individuals who can demonstrate all the competencies for Graduate registration as set out in **Section A** of the 'SENr Competency Framework for Graduate and Practitioner Registration'². Figure 2 illustrates this process.

Figure 2: The Graduate Registration Process



Those new to the field or recently graduated can apply for **Graduate** Registration. This enables people who have the appropriate knowledge base but not yet the experience, to join the Register. It encourages safe and ethical practice in registrants from the point of graduation and during their initial engagement in sport and exercise nutrition at different levels of practice.

² SENr Competency Framework for Graduate Registration (2013)

In order to join the register as a graduate registrant, applicants need to demonstrate achievement of all the knowledge criteria (*SENr Competency Framework, Section A*).

3.2 Graduate Application Process

An application for assessment can be made at any time throughout the year. Each applicant for registration shall include:

- A completed application form;
- An up-to-date CV;
- A completed professional / educational reference form;
- Scans of relevant qualification certificates, and where possible, transcripts.
- Certified translations of transcripts of courses of study and qualification certificates in languages other than English.
- Applicants who qualified in countries outside the European Union may be required to submit an assessment of equivalence to an award from the United Kingdom by National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC).

NB. Applicants are advised to scan and email documentation where possible.

Acknowledgement of receipt of application will normally be issued, via email, within five working days. At the same time, any outstanding information will be sought.

Applicants will be informed by e-mail of the outcome of their application, normally within four weeks of receipt. There are two possible outcomes, as follows:

- a. Applicants who fail to demonstrate that they have acceptable relevant qualifications will be not be eligible to join the SENr Graduate Register.
- b. Applicants who demonstrate that they have acceptable relevant qualifications will be eligible to join the Graduate Register.

The successful applicant will then be invited to register by paying the graduate registration fee and BDA membership fee. Once all fees have been received the successful applicant will be sent a registration certificate, a logo for use on correspondence, websites and marketing materials and their details will be added to the Graduate Register.

The maximum period of graduate registration will be 3 years; after which time the registrant will be required to demonstrate the requirements for practitioner registration or as a minimum, demonstrate ongoing commitment to maintaining knowledge of current evidence base through their continuing professional development (CPD) activity.

4.0 Practitioner Registration

4.1 Overview

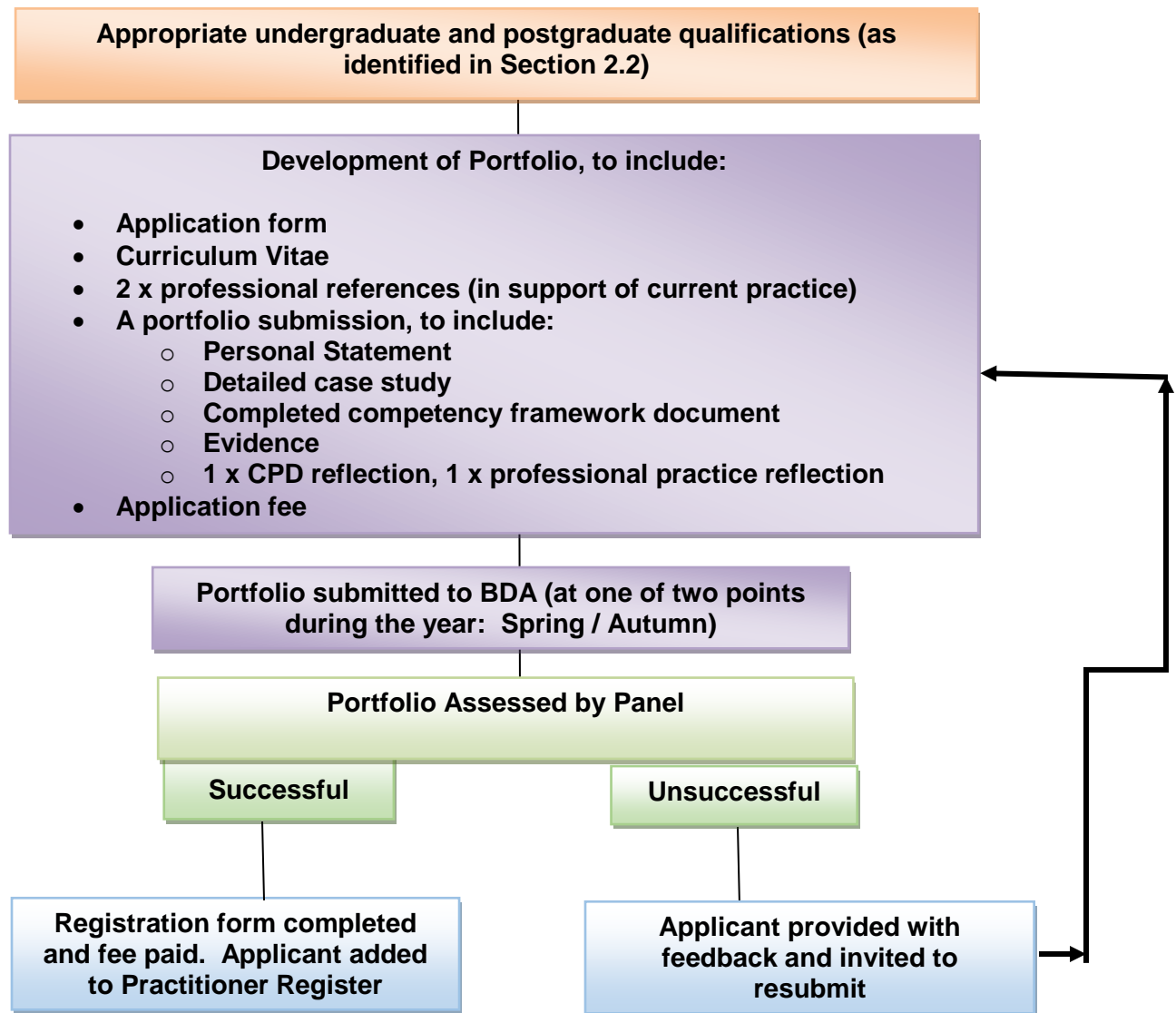
Practitioner Registration is awarded to applicants who can demonstrate appropriate qualifications and proficiency gained after relevant professional experience.

Applications are invited from individuals who can demonstrate all the essential competencies for Practitioner registration as set out in **Sections A-F** of the 'SEnr Competency Framework for Graduate and Practitioner Registration'³. Figure 3 illustrates this process.

The competencies expected of the registrant in Sports and Exercise Nutrition are outlined in the document, 'SEnr Competency Framework for Graduate and Practitioner Registration'. All potential applicants are strongly advised to undertake a self-assessment against the competency framework prior to submitting an application. The purpose of this self-assessment is to ensure that only suitably qualified and experienced applicants proceed to development of a portfolio of evidence.

³ *SEnr Competency Framework for Graduate Registration (2013)*

Figure 3: The Practitioner Registration Process



4.1 Basic Application Requirements

An application for Practitioner Registration can be made at two points during the year, spring and autumn (exact dates can be found on the SENr website). Alongside the portfolio of evidence (discussed under section 4.2) the application must include:

- A completed application form and checklist;

- An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae;
- Two completed reference forms supporting the applicant's current practice;
- Photocopies of formal certification of relevant qualifications. *NB. Transcripts may be requested as part of the assessment process;*
- Certified translations of transcripts of courses of study and qualification certificates in languages other than English (as appropriate);
- Applicants who qualified in countries outside of the European Union will, in the first instance, be required to submit a full transcript of modules undertaken as part of their qualification. If a clear comparison with UK qualification standards cannot be made by our expert assessors, applicants may subsequently be required to submit an assessment of equivalence to an award from the United Kingdom by National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC);
- An application fee. Current fees can be found on the SENr website.

4.2 Portfolio Requirements

The portfolio of evidence for Practitioner Registration must include the following:

- a. A personal statement providing a brief overview of your practice;
- b. One detailed case study with reflective commentary of your work;
- c. A completed competency mapping document. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to meet **every essential** competency in sections A-F. Competencies in Section A will be met through the completion of relevant qualifications, whilst competency Sections B-F will be demonstrated through professional practice.

Where a competency is not met through the applicant's current practice, evidence of understanding of the competency and acknowledgement of how it would be met in alternative circumstances must be shown.

It is expected that many of the competencies will be evidenced through the case study. However, for competencies that cannot be demonstrated in this way, alternative evidence must be submitted either via written explanation or supplementary evidence. All competencies must be referenced (using the competency mapping document).

Whilst it is accepted that applicants will come to the process with varying degrees of academic writing experience, it is expected that all applicants will be able to articulate to an acceptable level their ability to meet the SENr competency requirements.

- d) Two reflective statements, one based on a CPD / educational event and one based on a professional practice activity.

The completed portfolio should be submitted electronically.

Detailed guidelines on the submission of a portfolio of evidence are provided in **Appendix 2** and should be referred to during the preparation of the portfolio. The portfolio of evidence should clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to meet the professional competencies outlined in the Competency Framework. **A portfolio of evidence will only be accepted if it meets the prescribed format.**

4.3 Assessment

Portfolios are considered by a Registration Panel which is managed by the BDA's Specialist Nutrition Group. The panel is made up of a minimum of three assessors who

are senior members of the sport and exercise nutrition profession from the areas of practice and academia.

The panel meets twice per year to consider all applications received within the six month period prior to the meeting. Applications are judged against the competency framework and the applicant's ability to demonstrate adequate experience and evidence against each criteria.


4.4 Application Outcome

The outcome of an application for practitioner registration shall be one of the following:

- a. Admission as practitioner registrant. The successful applicant is invited to join the Register;
- b. Detailed feedback is provided and the application is invited to resubmit once essential requirements have been met / evidenced. Each applicant is entitled to resubmit once, free of charge (covered by initial application fee). *NB. Applicants should note that requests from the panel for further clarifications / additional information are commonplace.*
- c. Rejection for any applicant who fails to meet basic criteria for admission, which may include being unfit to practice, inadequate qualifications or a false declaration.

If the panel deems that the applicant requires additional sector experience, it maintains the right to impose a delayed resubmission date until such time as the applicant has obtained further practice exposure or sought mentorship support.

If the panel deems that a serious breach of confidentiality has occurred or identifies activity falling outside the SENr Code of Conduct has been undertaken, this information

and ONLY this information will be reported back to the applicant. No further application feedback will be provided until such time as the applicant resubmits having addressed the serious issues noted 

Individuals shall be informed of the outcome of the application by email. The successful applicant will then be invited to join the Register by paying the registration fee and BDA membership fee. Once all fees have been received the successful applicant will be sent a registration certificate and logo (for correspondence and marketing purposes) and their details will be added to the Register. Registration fees must be received within 4 weeks of notification of a successful portfolio application outcome.

4.5 Appeals

A protocol has been developed to cover the procedures for appeals against a portfolio assessment decision.

Applicants have 28 days to appeal against an assessment decision starting from the date of the application rejection email.

If an applicant wishes to appeal against that decision, the BDA requires them to send a “notice of appeal”. This can be in the form of a letter or email but it must include the following:

- Applicant’s name and address;
- A statement that makes it clear why the appeal is being brought;
- The decision against which the appeal is being made;
- a “concise statement of the grounds of the appeal” (which is explained further below);

It is the applicant’s responsibility to explain why they believe that the panel’s decision is wrong. Therefore, the appeal must include a “concise statement of the grounds of appeal” which sets out the case.

The statement should explain why the applicant believes that any reasons given by the

panel, or any concerns set out by the panel, are incorrect. Where the panel has said that the applicant does not meet any specific standards, an explanation for disagreement with the statement should be made. The applicant must attach any documents upon which the appeal may rely.

When the notice of appeal has been received, a notice of acknowledgment will be sent.

- Appeals will be considered by the SENr Board.
- The Chair of SENr Board will write to the applicant to inform of the decision of the SENr. This will be the final decision.

Appeals will only be considered on issues of content (where information is either incomplete or has been misinterpreted). Appeals on the grounds of process will not be considered.

4.6 Re-registration

SENr registration is for a period of five years. As such the process of re-registration is for use by applicants who are already SENr Practitioners and must be undertaken every five years.

Applicants for re-registration should demonstrate continuing professional development (CPD), evidencing that they have:

- a. Continued to work in the field of sport and exercise nutrition;
- b. Maintained and advanced their level of knowledge in all appropriate areas; and
- c. Applied current principles in their advice to athletes/clients.

For re-registration, applicants must produce a written reflection referencing between three and five CPD activities over the past 5 years. Applicants should submit a brief list of relevant CPD activity undertaken in this five year period.

5.0 Academic Associate Registration

Academic Associate registration has been established to acknowledge those with significant sport and exercise nutrition academic and research interests but for whom the practitioner registration route is not feasible because they do not practice in the applied context and cannot meet Practitioner Registrant competences. It aims to recognise the contribution that academics and researchers make to the developing evidence-base in Sport and Exercise Nutrition, but is not a route to practice. Those academics and researchers who feel they can comprehensively evidence the competency requirements of Practitioner Registrant status are advised to register through that route.

5.1 Requirements

SENr Academic Associates will hold a relevant PhD and have a recognised profile and standing within the SEN academic / research community.

Applicants are invited to submit the following documentation:

- a CV to outline background and professional qualifications
- a personal statement on how they support SENr initiatives
- a written recommendation a current SENr Register Practitioner

5.2 Review

Upon receipt, the application will be sent to one of three Deputy Chairs of the SENr Board to review. It will then be sent to the Chair of SENr Board for final verification and sign off. If there is difference of opinion between the Chair and the Deputy Chair, the application will be sent to an alternative Deputy Chair for consideration.

The process is not subject to appeal as the Board's decision is final and there is no payment required for submission of application. Conflicts of interest will be taken into consideration when appointing reviewers.

6.0 Statutory Requirements

6.1 Access to and administration of records

Protocols govern sharing and access to information by staff, agents and service providers to records, in order to secure efficient customer care, fair, robust and high quality of administration.

All correspondence and documents not already in the public domain in respect of an application are treated as strictly confidential to the applicant and members of the BDA and SENr staff, panel and Board.

Documents pertaining to an application shall be kept electronically whilst the individual remains on the Register. Portfolio submissions are normally kept for a minimum of five years.

We request that all applicants retain a copy of their application, including the portfolio submission.

6.2 British Dietetic Association (BDA) membership

All registrants are required to be British Dietetic Association (BDA) members.

Those who are Registered Dietitians will be required to join the BDA as full members. SENr Registration will be taken as an additional and separate fee.

All other registrants (non-dietitians) will join the BDA as Associate Members (SEnr) and pay one combined fee. Registration can be completed online at <https://www.bda.uk.com/account/register/>

6.3 SENr Fees

The fees for registration with SENr are as follows:

- a. **Application fee:** *This fee **ONLY** applies to those submitting a portfolio of evidence for Practitioner Registration.* The fee is charged to cover the cost of review by the Registration Panel.

- b. **Registration / Annual Fee:** This is payable once the application has been approved and the applicant is granted permission to join the SENr. This fee is due on an annual basis.

The current BDA/SEnr fees can be found here: <http://www.senr.org.uk/registration/>

The BDA retains the right to review all fees on an annual basis.

7.0 References

British Dietetic Association (BDA): [SENr Code of Professional Conduct](#). BDA. 2016

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