

# Examinations Policy

## For Candidates Requiring Adjustments



FACULTY OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

Please note that this Policy is distinct from the Withdrawal and Extenuating Circumstances Policy. These policies can be found [here](#).

The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) aims to make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of candidates with permanent or temporary disabilities, to enable candidates to demonstrate their ability, knowledge and expertise, without being substantially disadvantaged.

### Exceptional Arrangements for Examination candidates

As part of the Equal Opportunities Policy of the Faculty of Public Health, special arrangements for examinations will be made to enable disabled candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the subject notwithstanding their disability. A flexible policy of exceptional arrangements will be adhered to in order to ensure that no candidate is substantially disadvantaged because of his or her disability.

The Assistant Academic Registrar<sup>1</sup> may, at his or her discretion, approve exceptional arrangements for the conduct of the examination for candidates with special requirements or circumstances. The Assistant Academic Registrar is responsible for considering requests for adjustments to the FPH examination conditions.

Candidates, who have a disability or any exceptional circumstances which may affect their ability to take the examination, or which may call for extra measures on the part of the Faculty, must state this on their application form. Examples include:

- Long-term conditions (at risk during the examination sitting) e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, heart problems;
- Physical impairment (affecting posture or ability to read/write) e.g. arthritis, visual impairment, spinal injury;
- Sensory-neural or developmental impairment (affecting ability to read/write) e.g. vision loss, dyslexia, dyspraxia (developmental co-ordination disorder);
- Special conditions e.g. hearing impairment or deafness, pregnancy, using a wheelchair.

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1. If the Assistant Academic Registrar is not able to review the request through conflicts of interest or availability, a Director of Training, who has not previously been involved, will carry out the assessment.

# Examinations Policy for Candidates Requiring Adjustments

## Applying for exceptional arrangements

Examples of adjustments that can be made for the exam include the following:

### Diplomate Exam

- Additional time – this will mean an earlier start time for the morning papers and a later finish time for the afternoon papers.
- Rest breaks – additional time can be granted for this.
- Use of voice-activated software – please note that candidates will need to use their own software.
- Additional bathroom breaks.
- Use of a headset/earplugs.
- Adjustments to figures/graphs for colour-blind candidates. The software allows the candidate to increase the size of the text and images.

### Final Membership Exam

- Additional time. The following types of adjustment have been used in the past:
  - ‘Front loaded extra time’ with the additional time given at the beginning of the exam.  
For example, candidates with 25% extra time would start their exam 12 minutes earlier than other candidates. They would then continue preparing for their first station when the non-adjustment candidates start the exam and rotate to the next station at the same time as non-adjustment candidates.
  - ‘Split extra time’. Candidates choosing split extra time will take the exam over a full day and complete three stations in the morning, and three stations in the afternoon. Candidates will then have extra time to prepare for a question. To accommodate this, they will also have ‘rest’ stations where they will not have any materials and will just ‘rest’ for 16 minutes. The candidate will need to wait on the exam circuit during the lunch break so will need to bring appropriate reading material as they will not have access to their phone or be able to leave the circuit.  
As the ‘split’ adjustment candidates will move to station rooms out of the normal order of rotation, a member of the Exams Team will ‘chaperone’ them from room to room.
- Adjustments to font size/figures/graphs for colour-blind or visually impaired candidates.

The following are not considered as an adjustment but would still need to be requested via the Exams Coordinator as is important that the invigilator is aware of this in advance of the exam to avoid any issues on the day.

- Permission to use medication/diabetic equipment.
- Tinted glasses.
- A standing desk.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, FPH will make reasonable adjustments to minimise any potential disadvantage for candidates with long term conditions or disabilities while maintaining the integrity of the examination’s competence standard. FPH is happy to discuss the requirements of candidates and will be flexible with arrangements. However, it should be noted that planning for the examination can take some time and it may not always be possible to accommodate special requirements at short notice. Therefore, it is essential that candidates needing exceptional arrangements notify FPH well in advance of the examination so that the necessary adjustments can be appropriately planned, with discussion where appropriate with the candidate’s trainer, Chair of Examiners, Programme Director and the Assistant Academic Registrar.

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Candidates should note that the purpose of any support implemented is to support the trainee achieve the level of competence required by their curriculum, and not to alter or reduce the standard required. A competence standard is the academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not an applicant has a particular level of competence or ability.

## How to submit a request for exceptional arrangements

To request exceptional arrangements the following conditions must be met:

- The request for exceptional arrangements must be made and evidence submitted with, the application form for each exam (The Faculty of Public Health Diplomate (DFPH) and Final Membership examination (MFPH)). A request must be made for each exam attempt.
- The request for exceptional arrangements, accompanied by the appropriate documentation, must be received by the Faculty as early as possible, with a completed application for the examination ideally three weeks prior to the examination application closing date. If the request and the appropriate accompanying documentation is not received by the closing date for applications, the Faculty will not be in a position to consider making the necessary adjustment (s). Late applications for adjustments for the Diplomate Exam will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances where a candidate experiences a change in their circumstances which may affect their ability to take the exam. An example of this would be a wrist injury that affects a candidate's ability to write. However, it may not be possible to accept any requests within six weeks of the exam sitting date. In these instances, the candidate should discuss their circumstances with Faculty and consider withdrawing from the current sitting.

It is not usually possible to accommodate late requests for adjustments for the Final Membership Exam. If the sitting is not full, it may be possible to make an exception to this rule, please contact the Final Membership Exams Coordinator to discuss the available options.

### To apply for an adjustment the candidate should supply:

1. All written assessments relating to the situation from medical consultants, general practitioners, occupational physicians and other relevant professionals. Assessment reports must be dated within 3 years. This must include a statement confirming that the candidate's difficulties warrant special examination arrangements. The report should confirm whether it relates to requirements for a written exam (DFPH), or a practical exam (MFPH) or to both types of examination. If this is not specified or is not sufficiently clear, the FPH may request further reports, as necessary.

In cases of dyslexia or any other learning difficulty, the exams coordinator will require a Psychological Assessment Report made by a qualified educational psychologist, which must have been conducted after the candidate was sixteen years of age.

FPH reserves the right to request an additional independent assessment. Candidates will be required to sign a form declaring that full disclosure of information has been provided.

2. A letter of support from the Training Programme Director or Faculty Advisor, to state that exceptional arrangements are needed and to give an outline of what kind of arrangements would be helpful to the candidate. Candidates who are not in a UK training scheme can supply such information from their current employer.

The request will be considered by the Assistant Academic Registrar. If a candidate is not able to supply the above documents before the expiry of the application deadline, they may proceed to take the examination, but without special arrangements being in place.

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Once a decision has been made by the Assistant Academic Registrar the Education Office will then confirm the decision in writing. Candidates are required to sign a document confirming that notification of the adjustments has been received and accepted by the candidate, 13 working days before the examination date. All adjustments should be finalised 13 working days prior to the examination. If agreement about the level of adjustments cannot be reached by this deadline the examination attempt may be deferred at the candidate's option, or the candidate may proceed to attempt the examination, with the level of adjustments specified by the FPH in place. Any candidate who opts to defer taking the examination in these circumstances is required to give seven working day's written notice to FPH's Education Office so that FPH does not incur expenditure unnecessarily. Candidates who opt to defer their sitting will be considered to have withdrawn from the exam and are therefore subject to the withdrawals policy.

Should a candidate with a banked paper (a previous pass in either Paper I or Paper II of the Diplomate Examination) wish to defer their sitting as a result of adjustments not being agreed, they will need to apply to the Academic Registrar for permission to retain their banked paper.

It is the candidate's responsibility to inform FPH of any changes in circumstances or additional adjustments required that arise between the notification of proposed adjustments and the actual examination.

Candidates with long-term conditions who wish to apply for the same adjustment at subsequent sittings do not need to re-submit evidence, provided that the previous adjustment was approved by FPH within three years. Candidates should, however, ensure that they clearly mark that they wish to re-apply for an adjustment on their application form.

Please note that if the request for the adjustment has changed a new TPD letter or letter from an employer will be required. A new TPD letter will also be required if the candidate wishes to apply for an adjustment for the Final Membership Exam after previously receiving an adjustment for the Diplomate Exam.

Candidates have the right to appeal against the process by which the original decision about the level of adjustments was made. This can be submitted in writing to the Education Office for the attention of the Academic Registrar within five working days of the date of the notification of the provision awarded. The Academic Registrar will not be involved in the initial decision by the Assistant Academic Registrar, and will make an independent adjudication, which may be to uphold the original decision or else to change it by increasing, altering or reducing the adjustments to be made. A response will be given within five working days. The outcome of this appeal is final. Appeals against the Academic Registrar's decision will be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer.

If no appeal is received by the appeal deadline and the candidate has not notified the Faculty of a wish to defer the examination, the FPH will act on the basis that the decision on the adjustments has been accepted and that the candidate will attend the examination when the proposed adjustments will be implemented. Candidates should make every effort to attend examinations for which adjustments are being provided.

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## Candidates with neurodiverse conditions sitting the FPH Diplomate Examination (DFPH)

Along with extra time and other adjustments that may be sanctioned by the Faculty, candidates with learning disabilities or using voice-activated software may indicate that they wish for examiners to be aware of this when marking their script. This is in order to ensure that during anonymous marking, a candidate is not penalised for spelling errors that are a result of their learning disability or as a result of the voice-activated software. The 'sticker' system is simply to bring to the attention of the marker that it is a dyslexic candidate and that there may be errors in written expression. Candidates will therefore not be penalised unduly for errors that have nothing to do with the understanding of the subject. Candidates with learning disabilities or using voice-activated software are under no obligation to use this 'sticker' system and may choose not to. Other candidates may request to use the sticker system as part of their request for exceptional arrangements. **Please indicate whether you wish to apply the sticker system when you apply for your adjustment.** This adjustment request will then be considered by the Assistant Academic Registrar, as part of any request for exceptional arrangements and in accordance with the conditions above.

**Please note that there is not a spell-check or auto-correct function on the online exam platform.** You may encounter a spell-check function on one question of the TestReach standard tutorial but unfortunately it is not possible to switch this on in the live exam.

## Summary of timeframes outlined in the Adjustment Policy

February 2008 (Revised December 2023)

<b>Submitting a request for adjustments</b>	As early as possible, all necessary supporting documentation to be supplied <b>with the application form</b> , ideally <b>three weeks or more</b> from the examination application closing date.
<b>Late applications for the Diplomate Exam will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances</b>	Late applications due to exceptional circumstances will only be considered up until <b>six weeks</b> before the exam sitting date. After this point, we would advise the candidate to withdraw and apply for the next sitting.
<b>Finalisation of adjustments</b>	Candidates will be sent a letter confirming the adjustment that FPH is able to offer <b>three weeks</b> prior to the examination.
<b>Agreement of adjustments</b>	Candidates are required to sign a document confirming that notification of the adjustments has been received and accepted <b>thirteen working days</b> before the exam. If agreement cannot be reached by this deadline the examination may be deferred. Any candidate who opts to defer the examination in these circumstances is required to give notice of seven working days prior to the exam to FPH's Education Office.
<b>Appeal against adjustment decision</b>	Candidates have the right to appeal against the process by which the original decision about the level of adjustments was made. This can be done in writing to the Education office for the attention of the Academic Registrar <b>within five working days</b> of the notification of the provision awarded. A response will be given in <b>five working days</b> .