



# Faculty of Public Health

of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom

Working to improve the public's health

## **FPH EXAMINATIONS POLICY FOR CANDIDATES REQUIRING ADJUSTMENTS**

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.

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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<sup>1</sup> 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.

Candidates should note that FPH does not have a duty to make reasonable adjustments (or exceptional arrangements) in relation to the application of a competence standard, for example by lowering a pass mark. 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 included or attached to, and submitted with, the application form.
- 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 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 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 will not be possible to accept any requests, irrespective of their magnitude, within three weeks of the exam.
- The candidate should supply:
  1. All written assessments relating to the situation from medical consultants, general practitioners, occupational physicians and other relevant professionals 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 (Part A examination), or a practical exam (Part B examination) or to both types of examination. If this is not specified or is not sufficiently clear, the FPH may request further reports, as necessary. 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.

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, three weeks before the examination date. All adjustments should be finalised three weeks prior to the examination. If agreement about the level of adjustments cannot be reached by the three week 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 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 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 within **TWO** weeks 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 10 working days. The outcome of this appeal is final.

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.

Any candidate, whether or not disabled, is welcome to bring a back support in the form of a roll or pillow to be used in connection with standard seating arrangements.

### **Dyslexic candidates sitting the Part A Examination**

Along with extra time and other adjustments that may be sanctioned by the Faculty, dyslexic candidates sitting the Part A Examination will be provided with a coloured sticker they can at their option attach to their examination scripts. This is in order to ensure that during anonymous marking a dyslexic candidate is not penalised for spelling errors that are a result of their dyslexia. 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. Dyslexic candidates will not be penalised unduly for errors that have nothing to do with the understanding of the subject. Dyslexic candidates are under no obligation to use the sticker system and may choose not to. Other candidates (for example, those with dyspraxia) may request to use the sticker system as part of their request for exceptional arrangements. This adjustment will be considered by the Assistant Academic Registrar, as part of any request for exceptional arrangements and in accordance with the conditions above.

February 2008

*Revised November 2014*