



FPH Online Examinations

Interim regulations and information for candidates 2020-21

September 2020

1. Application of these regulations

These regulations (the MFPH Online Examination Regulations 2020) apply from 1 September 2020, to the Membership of the Faculty of Public Health Examinations and cover the delivery of both the Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination (DFPH) and Final Membership Examination (MFPH), unless stated otherwise, via online platforms.

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the standard [FPH Exam Regulations](#) but in the event of any inconsistency these regulations supersede the standard regulations.

The delivery of the online examinations for both the MFPH and the DFPH will replicate the face to face delivery of exams as closely as possible.

Candidates should refer to the FPH website for the most up to date information regarding the exam: www.fph.org.uk. All queries should be sent to educ@fph.org.uk.

2. Online examinations

In June 2020 the Faculty of Public Health agreed to migrate its two current membership examinations, the Diplomate and Final Membership exams, to an online format. This decision will be reviewed by the FPH periodically to ensure that standards are maintained.

3. Venues for online exams

The Faculty exams are to be conducted as online proctored exams to be taken in the candidate's chosen location (normally home or workplace) that they feel is suitable for exam conditions. Exam sittings at recognised test centres may also be offered. If a candidate is sitting the exam at a place of their choosing (i.e. a home or work environment) it is their responsibility to ensure that their location is quiet, undisturbed and appropriate for taking a professional examination.

4. Prior to the exam

Candidates will be sent details on how to log into the exam and all candidates are required to log onto the exam platform to check they have a laptop or PC with the appropriate specifications to take the exam and to familiarise themselves with the online exam environment, navigation, functions etc. Any queries with the system should be raised with the FPH office in good time before the exam.

DFPH exam

Approximately two weeks before the exam candidates will be sent a booking email from TestReach. Candidates must enrol in their exam papers before the deadline specified in that email to be able to sit the exam. Candidates will lose their exam fee if they do not enrol in their exam papers before the specified deadline.

5. Admission to online exams

Proof of identity is required before a candidate will be allowed in to the exam. Candidates are required to show one of the documents listed below as proof of identity at the examination. The document must be original, valid and bear a photograph:

- Passport

- UK Immigration and Nationality Department identification document
- Home Office travel document
- UK driving licence
- EU identity card
- National Identity Card (or Hong Kong Identity Card for Hong Kong candidates)

If the name on the identification document is different from that on the confirmation from FPH offering a place in the examination, original evidence must be provided in good time, that the candidate is the person named in that letter. FPH will accept:

- Marriage/ Civil Partnership certificate or
- A declaration from the awarding body which granted the primary medical qualification, stating that both names relate to the candidate.
- Registered deed poll

If candidates cannot provide one of the documents listed above, or if the proof of identity document does not bear a photograph, they will not be allowed to take the examination. The examination fee will not be refundable under these circumstances.

If you are unable to provide the appropriate ID for your exam please contact the appropriate exams co-ordinator in advance of the exam date.

6 Candidate responsibilities: IT systems, data connectivity, undisturbed location

For any remote/online examination taking place in a candidate's chosen location, it will be the candidate's explicit responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate IT facilities and data connectivity in accordance with the specifications for the relevant examination. Candidates must test their IT systems by checking the websites of the exam providers in good time prior to an examination. Any issues with this should be raised with the Faculty before the day of the exam, so the problem can be investigated.

Candidates need to take all reasonable steps to ensure that they can be seen and heard by the examiner/invigilator for the exam. Failure by the candidate to ensure this will mean the exam attempt is voided and no refund of the application fee will be given.

Also, when choosing an appropriate location in which to sit the examination it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure the location is quiet and undisturbed.

FPH accepts no liability whatsoever in connection with a disrupted or curtailed assessment due to a candidate's inadequate IT equipment/data connectivity.

7. Permitted devices for taking the exam

Candidates are responsible for ensuring they have an appropriate device on which to take to the examination remotely. This will be an appropriately enabled laptop or PC with a keyboard. Mobile devices such as phones, iPads or other tablet or any device with a touchscreen keyboard enabled are not acceptable devices and candidates will not be permitted to take the DFPH or the MFPH exam on such a device. Please note that laptops

with a touchscreen function can be used as long as the touchscreen element can be switched off and a keyboard is used (either on the device or connected via USB or wireless connection).

8. Joining the online examination

DFPH exam

All candidates must be logged in, have their ID ready to present and be ready to commence the assessment 15 minutes before the start of the examination. In the event that a candidate logs in to the exam later than the allocated start time, it will still be possible to start the exam up to a maximum of 30 minutes after the exam has begun. If a candidate logs in to the exam after this initial 30 minutes has passed, they will not be permitted to sit the exam and refunds will not be provided.

MFPH exam

All candidates must be logged in to the video conference platform and have their ID ready for registration at least 15 minutes before the candidate briefing is due to start.

Candidates who fail to login at least 15 minutes before the briefing is scheduled to start will not be permitted to sit the exam and a refund will not be provided.

Following the briefing the candidates will need to login into the exam platform.

Candidates who fail to login at least 15 minutes before the exam is scheduled to start will not be permitted to sit the exam and a refund will not be provided.

9. Exam environment

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they have an environment that complies with the requirements for taking an online examination.

Please note that candidates for both exams should not use PCs with two screens as the platforms have not been developed to deliver to this specification.

If you wish to use a separate screen with your device, please ensure that only one screen is switched on. Please refer to the [FAQs on the website](#) for more details.

For both exams, additional reference materials or study aids are not permitted and should not be present on the candidate's desk (including, but not restricted to, pre-written notes, text books or printed materials.)

DFPH exam

Candidates are not permitted to have any other electronic devices (including, but not restricted to, phones, tablets, smart watches, recording devices, headphones, earpieces etc.).

Candidates are permitted to use a basic timer. This device should not have any other functionality. It is not possible to use a phone or another device as a timer. Invigilators will check this on beginning the exam.

The candidates should not have any notes or any materials to take notes for the DFPH Exam. However, candidates will be allowed to use a single-sided A3 or A4 whiteboard to make notes during the exam. Please ensure that you have a working erasable pen (with eraser). Leaving the room to access another pen/eraser will not be permitted.

Candidates are not permitted to speak aloud during the exam unless this has been requested and approved due to a request for an adjustment.

Candidates are allowed to bring a snack and water for the exam. Please note that food/water must be in clear packaging otherwise the invigilator will ask them to remove it from the room.

In the event of a disruption such as a second person entering the room the candidate should quickly ask them to leave. Failure to do so may be grounds for a misconduct issue see Section 14.

Smart watches should be kept in a separate room. Phones should be left out of reach and turned off before the exam has begun. They should only be used to show the invigilator the environment if required or if there is a problem in connecting to the exam or re-joining the exam in the event that connection is lost completely. In all other circumstances they should be used in the event of emergencies only. Failure to do so may be grounds for a misconduct issue (see Section 14).

Candidates will be asked to scan the room in which they are taking the exam with their webcam to confirm there are no prohibited materials or devices in the room. If the candidate is unable to scan the room, the invigilator may ask the candidate to use the camera on their phone or a mirror. If the candidate is unable to do this the invigilator will record this in their report. Candidates may also be asked to demonstrate that they have no hidden devices on their person, for example by rolling up sleeves to show any watches.

The whole desk area surrounding the PC/laptop must be clear of materials (in all directions). The only device candidates are permitted to use are their own **simple, non-scientific, non-programmable calculator**. Invigilators will verify that the calculator matches this specification upon registration to the exam. There will also be a simple (non-scientific) calculator provided on the online platform. Please ensure that your calculator is working before the exam. You will not be permitted to leave the room to access additional equipment during the exam.

MFPH exam

Headphones or headsets are permitted so that candidates can ensure that they are able to clearly hear examiners/role player.

Candidates are also permitted to use a basic timer. This device should not have any other functionality. It is not possible to use a phone or another device as a timer.

Materials for making notes, for example pens and blank sheets of paper, are allowed for this exam. Notes should be destroyed while observed by the invigilator at the end of the exam.

Candidates are allowed to bring a snack and water for the exam. Please note that food/water must be in clear packaging otherwise the invigilator will ask them to remove it from the room.

In the event of a disruption such as a second person entering the room the candidate should quickly ask them to leave. Failure to do so may be grounds for a misconduct issue see Section 14.

Phones should be placed out of reach and used only to make contact with FPH before the exam has begun and in emergencies only. Smart watches should be kept in a separate room. Failure to adhere to these rules may be grounds for a misconduct issue, see Section 14.

The whole desk area surrounding the PC/laptop must be clear except for materials listed above.

10. Invigilation of remote examinations

All FPH online exams will be remotely invigilated as such candidates should try to ensure that they sit with a wall behind them to both facilitate the remote invigilation process and ensure security of the exam. It is important to ensure that your image is clear and is not obscured by either too much or too little light in the room.

DFPH Exam

All candidates will be connected to a live invigilator at all times, and candidates will be monitored through their webcam and microphone, which must be in good working order. Speakers are also required so that the invigilator is able to communicate with candidates. By agreeing to these regulations candidates are giving agreement to be filmed (see Section 13).

MFPH Exam

All candidates will be connected to a live invigilator during their time in the preparation station and will be monitored through their webcam and microphone, which must be in good working order. Speakers or headphones are also required so that the invigilator is able to communicate with candidates. By agreeing to these regulations, candidates are giving agreement to be filmed, see Section 13.

11. Bathroom breaks

DFPH Exam

Candidates will be permitted to take one bathroom break of a maximum of 5 mins for each paper that they are taking of the exam. They should notify the invigilator who will record this for the invigilator report. The invigilator may ask to do another check to ensure that prohibited material have not been brought into the room. Please note that the clock will not be stopped for bathroom breaks so candidates will lose this time from their exam.

If a candidate is taking the exam over a 3 hour period, typically because of a reasonable adjustment request, they will be allowed 2 bathroom breaks, of a maximum of 5 mins each. Please note that the clock will not be stopped for bathroom breaks so candidates will lose this time from their exam.

MFPH Exam

Candidates will be permitted a bathroom break of a maximum of 5 mins between the briefing and the start of the exam.

During the exam a candidate will be permitted to take a bathroom break however this is strongly discouraged. They should notify the invigilator who will record this for the

invigilator report. Please note no additional time will be provided for candidates who take bathroom breaks.

12. Loss of connectivity during the exam

In the event of an examiner/invigilator losing connection or not being able to view/hear a candidate properly, they will notify the candidate, where possible, and this will be captured on the examiner/invigilator's report.

DFPH Exam

If a candidate's internet connection drops completely, the exam platform will try to resume a connection for 10 minutes. The test will resume as normal if resolved in this time. If the connection is not resumed in 10 minutes, the candidate should contact the software provider immediately. Failure to contact the software provider within 15 minutes of the loss of connection will mean that the candidate is not allowed to re-join the exam.

If the candidate's connection drops completely for more than 10 minutes again, they will not be allowed re-join the exam. If the candidate believes that loss of connectivity was beyond their control, they should submit an Extenuating Circumstance application, see Section 16.

Candidates should report any incidents and issues to their TestReach invigilator during the exam. Once the exam is complete, candidates must inform FPH of any significant issues/incidents they experienced as this may not be done by TestReach.

MFPH Exam

If a candidate's internet connection fails for less than 4 minutes during a preparation station, they should inform the invigilator and the examiner in the relevant station. The invigilator for the preparation station will record this as part of their report. If a candidate's internet connection fails for less than 4 minutes during an examination station, the examiner will record this as part of their report.

No additional time will be granted for the candidate in these circumstances.

If a candidate's internet connection fails for more than 4 minutes, during a preparation station or examination station, then the candidate will not be permitted to complete the exam and the attempt will be voided.

Please note that any candidate that has been granted a reasonable adjustment of extra time, will receive the proportional equivalence in terms of the time they will be permitted to be disconnected from the exam.

If the examiner or role-players connection fails for less than 4 minutes during an examination station then the examiner will include this as part of their report.

No additional time will be granted for the candidate in these circumstances.

If the examiners or role-players internet connection fails for more than 4 minutes, during an examination station, then the candidate will not be permitted to complete the exam and the attempt will be voided. The candidate will then receive a place at the next available sitting without charge.

If in any one station the candidate, examiner and/or role player experience a combined loss of internet connection of more than 4 minutes in total, then the exam attempt will be voided. In this instance, if the candidate believes that the loss of their internet connection was beyond their control they should submit an Extenuating Circumstance application, see Section 16.

If a candidate experiences an internet connection failure for any period of time for 2 or more stations, preparation or examination, then the exam attempt may be voided. This includes internet connection failures on the part of the candidate, examiner or role-player or any combination of these. In this instance, if the candidate believes that this was beyond their control they should submit an Extenuating Circumstance application, see Section 16.

13. Recording of Exams

Candidates should not record their exam attempts for any purposes for either DFPH or the MFPH exam. This will be deemed misconduct and any candidate suspected of this during a sitting will be expelled from the examination and their attempt voided.

DFPH Exam

It is important to note that remote examination attempts will be recorded for later review should there be any concerns about a candidate's conduct. By agreeing to these regulations, candidates are consenting to be filmed for the exam.

These recordings will be retained and deleted 60 days after the date of the exam sitting in accordance with current data protection laws.

The candidate will not be able to request a copy of the recording so that we can ensure exam question security.

MFPH Exam

Please note that this exam maybe recorded by the Faculty for internal training purposes. By agreeing to these regulations candidates are consenting to be filmed for the exam.

These recordings will be retained in accordance with current data protection laws, with candidates' identities being anonymised if used for training purposes. If not retained, the recordings will be deleted within 60 days of the exam. The candidate will not be able to request a copy of the recording in order for the Faculty to ensure exam question security.

14. Misconduct

The invigilator may stop any candidate suspected of misconduct and issue a warning during the examination, and if necessary expel the candidate from the examination. Failing to follow instructions of examiners and invigilators may be grounds for a misconduct issue.

Examples of moderate offences include:

- A second person accidentally entering the room.
- Leaning out of view of the camera.

Examples of serious offences include:

- Answering a ringing phone (unless you are making contact with TestReach/the FPH Exam team due to a complete loss of connection). Please ensure that phones should be switched to silent mode before the exam begins to avoid risk of disturbance;
- Possession of or consulting any prohibited items in the examination environment, such as textbooks and websites;
- Helping or receiving help from another candidate; and
- Writing down or attempting to capture any details of the exam questions for use outside of the exam.

The DFPH exam will be invigilated by remote online invigilators. A full list of the infringement levels that will be followed by invigilators can be found at the end of this document (please see Appendix I).

Candidates committing these offences or any other activity that may be deemed to constitute professional or academic misconduct will be reported to examination officers and the FPH Education and Training Department. All incidences will be investigated in accordance with the FPH Examinations Misconduct Policy and Procedure, and if found to have engaged in misconduct candidates may have their examination result declared invalid and their name reported to their professional regulatory authority, and (if on a UK training scheme) to that training scheme as well.

15. Completing the exam

If a candidate fails to complete and submit their assessment for either exam this would still count as an attempt and no refund will be issued.

DFPH Exam

When the time limit for the exam has expired candidates will be prevented from amending their answers. Candidates choosing to complete the exam before the allotted time and submitting their answers early will be logged out of that particular exam and will not be able to log back to amend their answers.

MFPH Exam

All candidates will need to remain at their last station and visible to the invigilator until instructed that they may log out of the platform.

Once the candidate has completed the final examination station for their exam they will need to log out of the platform and the exam will then be completed. If the candidate deliberately logs out before completing their final examination station they will be deemed to have finished the exam and will not be allowed to log back in.

16. Extenuating circumstances

Candidates who are 'fit to sit' on logging into the exam but become unwell during the exam (or experience another extenuating circumstance) should inform their online invigilator/examiner as soon as possible, during the exam or the Faculty following the exam. This will then be included in a report for the Exam Board.

Please note that if the candidate wishes to continue the examination and subsequently submits an application for [extenuating circumstances](#), a successful application will normally result in their attempt being discounted whatever the outcome of their result.

Please note that this policy will only be deviated from in exceptional circumstances. Instances of exceptional circumstances will be managed on a case by case basis.

Examples of such incidents can be found in the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

Fire alarms or other emergencies

If a fire alarm sounds before the exam has begun, please contact FPH once safely outside the building. Depending on timing, it may be possible to allow late entry into the exam.

If the fire alarm sounds during the exam please alert your invigilator immediately, if possible, and contact FPH as soon as you are safely outside the building. It will normally not be possible to allow candidates to re-join the exam. This is due to both the security of the exam and the time lost during the exam.

Loss of connectivity

If internet connectivity is lost during the exam and this was beyond the candidates control this could be considered an extenuating circumstance. The candidate would need to submit an Extenuating Circumstance form and provide a statement explaining the steps they took to re-establish connection with the exam and any additional evidence to support their claim. Applications would then be assessed on a case by case basis.

If the candidate can demonstrate that loss of connection was demonstrably out of their control then FPH may allow them to sit the examination at the next possible opportunity at no charge and the exam attempt may also be discounted.

17. Amendment of these regulations

These interim regulations may be amended from time to time, and candidates will be made aware of changes prior to sitting any examination.

Appendix I: Infringement levels for the Diplomate Examination (DFPH)

Minor infringements

A Minor Infringement is one that is deemed a low-level exception. Minor Infringements may not compromise the test and can be rectified immediately, however, all minor infringements are logged.

- Leaning out of view of the camera.
- Commencing hand movements that could be interpreted as sign language.
- Glancing at other areas of the room that the supervisor cannot see (in this instance prior to raising an infringement the invigilator will query the candidate and ask the candidate to pan the room and in particular that area to check).
- Behaving in an unsuitable manner to the supervisor.

Major Infringements

A Major Infringement is one that is deemed as misconduct. Candidates would be asked to stop the behaviour immediately and this will be recorded for FPH to review and if necessary take action on completion of the exam.

- Accessing a scientific or programmable calculator.
- Failing to show the invigilator that the whiteboard has been cleared at the end of the exam.
- Reading the questions aloud or talking during the exam other than to the invigilator.
- Leaving the desk to visit the bathroom without alerting the invigilator.
- Absence from exam for longer than five minutes when leaving the exam to visit the bathroom.
- Writing on paper (or any other material other than an A3 or A4 whiteboard that has been declared at the start of the exam).
- Referring to any material or information outside of the TestReach exam canvas. This includes textbooks, study aids, notes/paper.
- Accessing (or trying to access) another site / document when online.
- Attempting to capture exam content – taking a screenshot, taking a photo of the screen with another device, copying questions down, reading aloud, recording these on another device.
- Not agreeing or responding to the validation questions asked by the invigilator.

- Repetition of minor infringements
- Blocking the computer camera

A Blocker Infringement is one that is deemed a high level exception. One that compromises the test and **causes the test to be terminated**. Invigilators will contact FPH to confirm that this action will be taken before terminating the exam.

- Refusing to remove items/objects that are not permitted or deemed interactive such as smart watches and other electronic devices at the request of the invigilator.
- Communication with a third party – indisputable dialogue that confirms that the candidate is being passed information or is attempting to record or pass on information.
- Using a mobile phone or an electronic device (other than to turn off a ringing mobile or using it to reconnect with TestReach if the connection is lost).

Document created: November 2020

Document amended: November 2021