

Membership Examinations

Extenuating Circumstances Policy



FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

FPH Membership Examinations - Extenuating Circumstances Policy

This policy and form should be used to inform the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) of any adverse circumstances that occurred **on the day** of The Faculty of Public Health Diplomate (DFPH) and Final Membership Examination (MFPH) and that have adversely affected your examination performance. If there are circumstances occurring in the days or morning prior to entering the exam venue, please submit a [Withdrawal Form](#).

‘On the day’ refers to the timing of the issue in question, please see details below about the deadline for submitting this form.

Introduction:

The Faculty makes every effort to ensure that candidates have as smooth an experience as possible when sitting examinations. However, we recognise that issues can arise at very short notice—either personal circumstances that affect a candidate’s ability to sit an examination, or unexpected procedural problems. The Faculty will always seek to mitigate the impact of such circumstances on candidates, and this policy provides a framework through which candidates can report exceptional circumstances and access the possible options for redress.

Please note that should a significant event take place that affects all candidates at the exam sitting or all candidates in one particular centre, FPH will be in touch to acknowledge this and clarify next steps. Candidates are not expected to submit an extenuating circumstances application individually.

Definition:

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances that occur after you have entered the exam venue and are unexpected, unavoidable, and beyond a candidate’s control. Circumstances such as minor illnesses, transport difficulties or personal commitments will not usually be accepted under this policy.

Timing:

Please use this form for any extenuating circumstances **occurring after entering the exam centre**. If a candidate becomes unwell or experiences an exceptional circumstance on the day before the exam or the morning of the exam, before arriving at the venue, they should submit a [Withdrawal Form](#) and supporting evidence within one week of the exam they were due to sit. Whenever possible, candidates should inform the Exams Team so that the exam centre personnel do not expect you to be present at the exam.

Evidence:

Please note that evidence of extenuating circumstances will always be required. Self-certification is not sufficient, regardless of the illness or circumstance. Please see more details on page 4.

Infectious illness:

If a candidate is suffering with an infectious illness, they should submit an application to withdraw from the exam and, for the safety of themselves and other candidates, not sit the exam or attend any exam venue.

Timing of decision outcome:

Procedural irregularities (issues that significantly affected the expected delivery of the exam) will be dealt with by the FPH Exams Team and the outcome will be given as soon as the issue has been investigated. All other extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Exam Board, and the outcome will be given with the results letter.

Application guidance:

There are three potential scenarios for applying extenuating circumstances – please see the appropriate procedure below depending on the timing of the circumstance and issue.

Scenario 1: illness or extenuating circumstance occurring after arrival at the exam venue

If a candidate falls ill or experiences another exceptional circumstance during the exam day, they may choose to end the exam and apply for Extenuating Circumstances.

Types of circumstances that the Faculty may consider:

- A severely debilitating illness/accident that strikes on the day of the examination.
- The death or critical illness of a dependent or close relative that becomes apparent after arriving at the examination venue.
- A serious deterioration of a long-standing illness on the day of the examination.
- Victim of crime or other exceptional circumstance occurring after arriving at the examination venue.

Candidates who are 'fit to sit' on entering the examination but become unwell during the exam (or experience another extenuating circumstance) should speak immediately to the invigilator and a member of the examinations team who will include this in a report for the exam board.

If the candidate leaves/decides to end the exam in these circumstances, and subsequently submits an application for extenuating circumstances, their answer script/mark sheet shall become null and void irrespective of whether the extenuating circumstances application is successful. By a candidate declaring that they were not 'fit to sit', or that their performance was impaired, FPH cannot treat the attempt as valid. If the candidate sits the examination, the candidate deems themselves 'fit to sit' and the mark awarded is deemed an accurate reflection of their performances.

If the candidate wishes to continue the examination and subsequently submits an application for extenuating circumstances, a successful application will result in their attempt being discounted whatever the outcome. Examiners cannot accurately or numerically determine the

effects of any procedural irregularity or extenuating circumstance on a candidate's performance.

The outcome for a successful application for extenuating circumstances will be to discount the attempt and offer a partial refund. Please note that it is only possible to refund up to 75% of the exam fee due to administrative costs.

If the application is not successful, the script will not be marked as by submitting extenuating circumstances, the candidate has declared that they were not 'fit to sit', or that their performance was impaired and therefore the attempt is not valid. A refund will not be issued if the extenuating circumstances application is not approved.

Scenario 2 (DFPH Exam only): extenuating circumstances applying to one day of the exam for candidates who are due to sit Paper I and Paper II.

Please note that two days and all papers constitute one single assessment. If a candidate sits one paper (Paper I or Paper II) but does not sit the other paper, then their entire attempt will usually become null and void (please see next paragraph).

The Faculty accepts that there may, rarely, be occasions when a candidate experiences an exceptional circumstance such that they are unable to sit papers on one of the days but are fit and able to sit the other.

If this situation occurs, candidates may submit an application for extenuating circumstances, and if successful, may bank the single paper if they have successfully passed it.

For example, a candidate may be fit to sit Paper I but experience an extenuating circumstance on Day 2. On rare occasions, it may also be the case that a candidate is not able to sit Paper I but is able to sit Paper II.

It should be understood that such applications will need to be based on genuinely exceptional events, as the full exam (Paper I and Paper II) is still considered to be one assessment.

As such, candidates who are unexpectedly absent from Day 1 (Paper I) of the exam and who do not notify FPH by email to educ@fph.org.uk before 5pm on the next working day to explain the exceptional circumstances for Day 1, will not be permitted to sit Day 2 (Paper II).

Scenario 3: substantial and exceptional procedural irregularities

We acknowledge that there may be occasions where there are substantial procedural irregularities at the test centre, which significantly affect the expected delivery of the exam. For example, this may include power or internet outage for a significant amount of time during the exam. A delay to the start of an examination paper of up to 30 minutes will not normally be considered a substantial procedural issue unless the candidate lost time from their overall exam duration as a result.

In these circumstances, candidates should notify FPH as soon as possible so that the issue can be investigated and submit this application form within one week of the exam.

FPH will investigate the issue and ask the test centre provider/exam platform provider for a full report. If there is sufficient evidence of the issue reported and this is considered by FPH to have been so significant that it may have adversely and significantly impacted the candidate's performance, this will lead to a successful application for extenuating circumstances. In the event that the candidate has not passed the exam overall, the outcome of a successful

application for Scenario 3 will be that candidates will be eligible for a free resit or a full refund. After candidates have received their results, they can also choose to discount the attempt from their exam attempts allowance if they wish to. If the candidate has banked a paper at the same sitting, discounting the attempt will mean that the banked paper does not stand.

If the candidate has passed the examination, no further action will be taken.

Discounted attempts will be taken into consideration if it is necessary to extend the validity of a paper that was banked at a previous sitting.

The outcome of applications for procedural irregularities will be at the discretion of the Faculty.

Submission of supporting evidence

Please see the table below with example circumstances and appropriate supporting evidence.

Circumstance*	Evidence
Illness	Medical certificate from an appropriate medical practitioner confirming the illness and dates concerned. Please note that invigilators may be able to confirm observations, but evidence is required from a medical professional to determine if a candidate was 'fit to sit'.
Bereavement	Death certificate. Statement of the relationship between the person and the candidate.
Victim of crime	Police report including a crime reference number.
Illness of another person	A statement of the relationship between the person and the candidate. Confirmation of the illness and the dates concerned.
Major transport difficulty	Insurance reference number (if you were involved in a road traffic incident). And/or corroboration from police or other public authority.
*occurring after arriving at the exam venue (or occurring between the two exam days if the candidate is sitting both papers: Paper I and Paper II – applies to the Diplomate Exam only)	

Wherever possible, FPH should be notified of adverse circumstances at the time of them occurring. FPH acknowledges however that it may take time to collate the supporting evidence. Please submit the Extenuating Circumstances application form within one week of the exam. Supporting evidence can follow separately, up to four weeks after the exam.

For procedural irregularities, prompt notification of the issue will aid investigation and support the Faculty in applying appropriate remedies.

For non-procedural issues:

- Evidence is required from an expert/person in authority in the form of an official document that is both independent and verifiable. This should include both the date that the document was written and a signature or evidence that it comes from the person making the statement.
- Evidence should relate to facts, not personal opinions.
- Please note that **evidence will always be required**, and self-certification is not sufficient, regardless of the illness.

Requests to adjust marks based on extenuating circumstances

Please note that extenuating circumstances cannot be considered when marking as examiners cannot accurately or numerically determine the effects of any procedural irregularity or extenuating circumstance on a candidate's performance. However, for all candidates, the final mark for every candidate sitting the examination is individually discussed and agreed at the Examinations Board meeting. For candidates with extenuating circumstances, if they have not passed the exam then the exam board will be informed of the extenuating circumstances/complaint as part of these discussions.

Membership Examinations of the Faculty Of Public Health Application for Extenuating Circumstances

1. Candidate information

Title: Dr Mr Mrs Ms Prof Other

First name:

Last name:

Examination: Diplomate Final Membership Examination sitting:

Address:

Email:

2. Details of extenuating circumstances

3. Type of documentary evidence attached

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please return this form by email to educ@fph.org.uk to arrive no later than **seven** working days after the examination date. Forms that arrive later will be accepted only at the discretion of the Chair of Examiners. Receipt of forms will be acknowledged by email (please provide) within three working days.

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