



Candidate Feedback Summary (October 2025)

51/107 candidates responded to the survey that was sent out directly after the exam (48% response rate). The survey remained open for two weeks to allow candidates to submit their feedback.

This exam sitting was the second instance that test centres were used to hold the Diplomate exam. These test centres were distributed across eleven locations in the UK and one centre in Hong Kong. The exam was previously (prior to March 2025) conducted with remote invigilation, and the majority of candidates took the exam from home.

Candidate membership status

Out of the 51 responses, 66% of respondents were in a UK Public Health Training Post, 20% were based in the UK but not in a Public Health Training Post, 12% of the respondents were Hong Kong Trainees and 2% of the responses were from candidates based outside the UK and Hong Kong.

62% of the respondents were sitting the FPH Diplomate exam for the first time.

Pre Exam Administration

Guidance and FAQs

The majority of respondents (90%) voted the guidance and FAQs made available in advance to be 'excellent/good'. 10% of the candidates said that this was adequate.

Candidates who rated the guidance as 'adequate' noted that it would be best to have all resources centralised for easy access and that they would prefer the candidate pack to be emailed directly to the candidates. The Exams Team email the link but not the actual pack as we refer to the Candidate Pack in multiple emails and a link makes it more accessible and ensures that all candidates have the correct version if any updates are required.

Exam preparation materials

Respondents noted that past papers available for paper IIA and IIB were outdated and not aligned with the current format. They also requested more specimen questions for paper IIB.

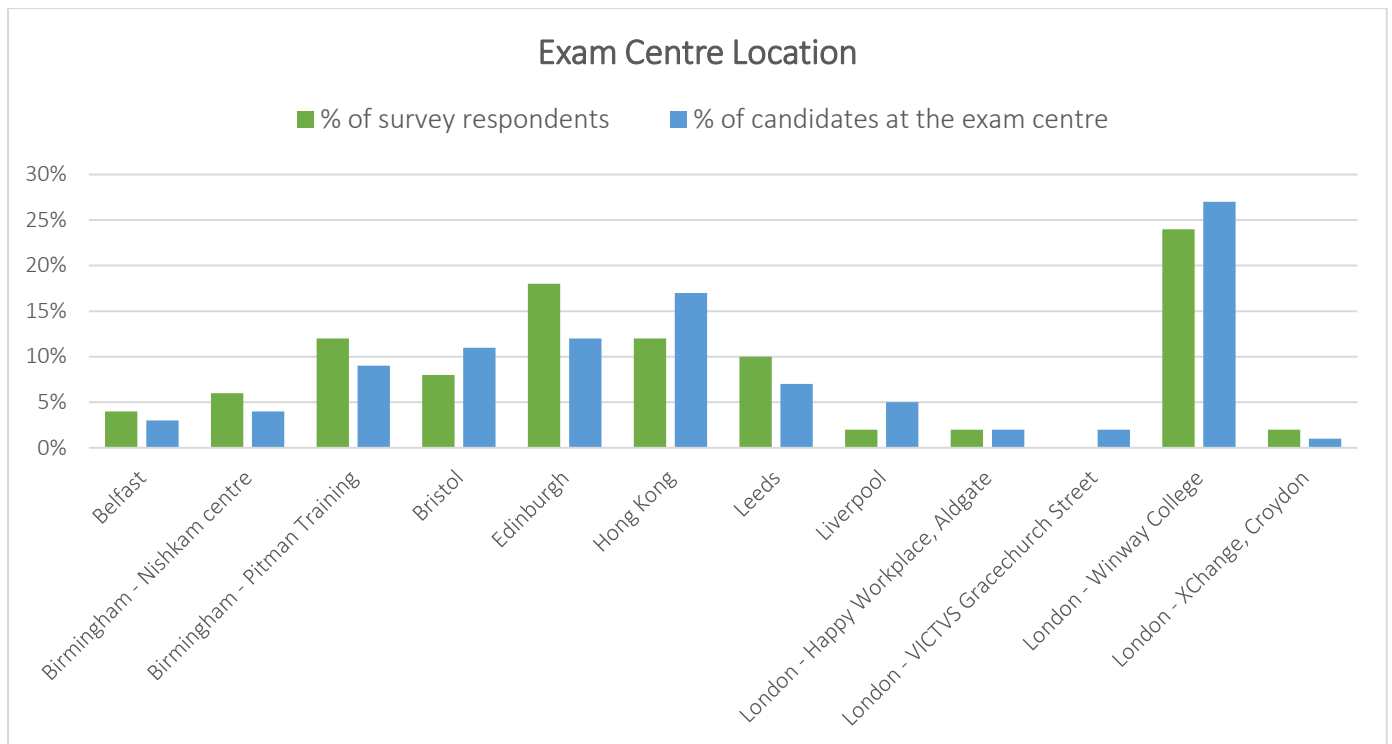
TestReach functionality test

46 respondents accessed the TestReach Functionality test in advance of the exam. 98% of the respondents found the functionality test useful for preparing for the exam.

Application process

98% of respondents found that the application process was clear and easy to follow. The respondent who found the application process difficult referred to the difficulties encountered in the separate application process through HKCCM that Hong Kong College candidates are required to follow.

Exam Centre Related



Ease of access to the exam centre

82% of the respondents commented that it was easy to get to the exam test centre.

For those who said it was difficult to get to the centre, the reasons included: public transport options to reach the centre were limited, time taken to reach the centre by public transport, traffic issues, and the centre was a long way from their place of residence.

Exam venue set up

65% of the respondents noted that signage to the exam centre was clear on arrival. Other respondents did not leave a comment to explain why the signage was not clear.

94% of the respondents noted that the registration and security processes at the test centre were clear and easy to complete. It was noted by one candidate that the centre was not ready to start the exam on time, and they experienced a delay to the start time of their exam consequently.

Exam venue facilities

82% of the respondents rated the exam centre facilities as adequate or good. All the respondents noted that they were able to locate their exam station easily. The responses also mentioned that the equipment provided was mostly easy to use. Some comments noted that equipment could not be adjusted ergonomically, there was typing noise in the exam room and that some of the exam rooms felt cramped for space.

Exam invigilation experience

75% of the respondents noted that exam invigilators were excellent, 14% rated them as 'average' and 12% rated invigilators as 'poor'.

Candidates that rated invigilators as 'excellent' noted that they were extremely quick to respond to the candidates' request, the invigilators were very friendly and made the experience pleasant.

Respondents that rated invigilators as 'average' and 'poor' commented that: there were variations in professionalism and helpfulness, instructions delivered by the invigilators were not clear, and that some of the invigilators were not confident about how to use the exam platform.

Candidates from the London - Winway College, Croydon noted that centre invigilators did not communicate properly during the disruption caused by the fire alarm.

Choice between remote invigilation and test centre exam

76% of candidates said that given the choice, they would prefer to sit the exam at a test centre, 16% of the respondents would prefer remote invigilation and 8% of the respondents felt that they were unable to say.

Candidates that preferred remote invigilation noted that by sitting for the exam from home they would avoid a long travel time to the exam centre, extra costs incurred for hotel accommodation and travel, and they would be able to use their own personal ergonomic set up.

Feedback on having a day in-between exam

When asked if candidates preferred having a day-in-between each exam paper, 76% (38/51) of those who sat both days said that they preferred this and 6% (3/51) of the respondents preferred to sit the exam on two consecutive days. 10 candidates had previously banked a paper so were only sitting one day of the exam.

Feedback on days of the week for the exam

When asked if candidates which day of the week candidates would prefer to have the exam on (given that we have had to change this for the March 26 sitting), 71% (36/51) noted that they preferred to have the exam on Monday and Wednesday; 10% (5/51) noted that Tuesday and Thursday would be better and 19% (10/51) of the respondents did not mind which day the exam was scheduled.

Please note that the March 2026 exam sitting has already been scheduled for Tuesday 24 and Thursday 26 March 2026 due to exam centre availability. We will, however, note this preference for exam sittings going forward.

Exam Paper Feedback

Feedback about questions, images, and figures

Questions:

Positive

- Candidates noted that questions were clear, easy to read and they were able to interpret what was required.
- One candidate noted that the exam questions were easier than previous sitting papers.
- One candidate noted that they found it helpful that the question introduction specified how many parts were to the question.

Negative

- Some candidates noted that some of the questions were vague and open to interpretation.
- Candidates noted that due to time pressure they were unable to complete the paper on time.

- One candidate noted that due to multiple sub-sections to the question they were concerned that they would miss answering some sub-sections.

Images, tables and figures:

Positive

- Most of the candidates noted that resizing and the split-screen functionality generally worked well.

Negative

- Some candidates noted that being unable to copy numbers from the resource table meant that they would need to spend exam time having to repeat the data already available.
- Some candidates found the 'highlight' function challenging to use.

Paper IIA article:

Positive

- One comment stated that article was formatted in a way which was excellent for reading on a screen.
- 88% of the respondents stated that they were able to resize the article and read it easily.
- A few of the comments noted that the highlight function and being able to add notes on the article was very useful.
- Candidates valued the ability to copy and paste information from the article directly onto the exam canvas.

Negative

- A few comments stated that some of the text on the table legends were very small and lacked clarity when reading.
- One respondent noted that they would prefer to work with two screens as that is what they would usually use at work.

Formulae Sheet:

- 25 of the 48 respondents found the formulae sheet to be useful. 17 candidates did not find the formulae sheet useful.
- Some respondents noted that it was useful to have the formulae sheet, but they did not need to use it for the exam questions in the paper.
- A few respondents noted that it will be very useful to have a printed copy of the formulae sheet. They noted that having to go back and forth between tabs was time-consuming.

Best aspect of the exam

- Candidates noted that administrative team was very helpful ahead of the exam.
- Respondents noted that questions being broken into sub-sections helped to manage time better.
- One comment noted that paper IIA was a reasonable test of ability to appraise research material.
- A few comments noted that the best aspects of the exam were being able to sit the exam at a test centre without the concern of having technology issues at home, the chance to collaborate with colleagues in learning and have the support from other registrars.

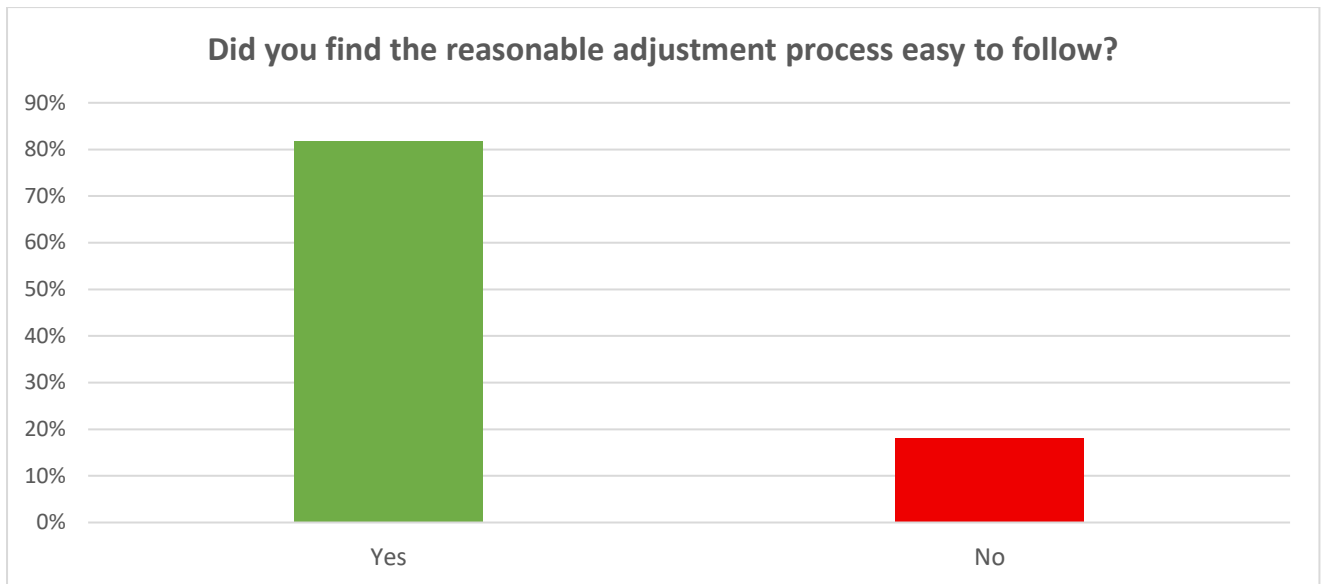
- A few comments also noted that reminder emails sent were helpful.

Part of the exam most in need of improvement

- Many respondents felt that the exam was too time pressured, especially for papers IA, IB and IIB.
- Some respondents noted that questions were ambiguous, not reflective of the syllabus and that paper IIB was especially challenging with few calculations and heavy reliance on detailed knowledge.
- With regards to test centre delivery, the comments noted that there were coordination problems leading to delayed starts, test centre equipment was not suitable for use throughout the whole day. They noted that desks and screens were not adjustable, and the keyboards were noisy which was distracting in an exam setting.
- Some of the respondents commented that there is significant disparity in exam support between registrar candidates and candidates who follow the UKPHR Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment (SRbPA) for the DFPH examination. They noted that registrars receive structured revision sessions, mentorship, and guidance on examiner expectations, including marking criteria and answering strategies and they requested for SRbPA candidates to be given access to these resources and sessions.

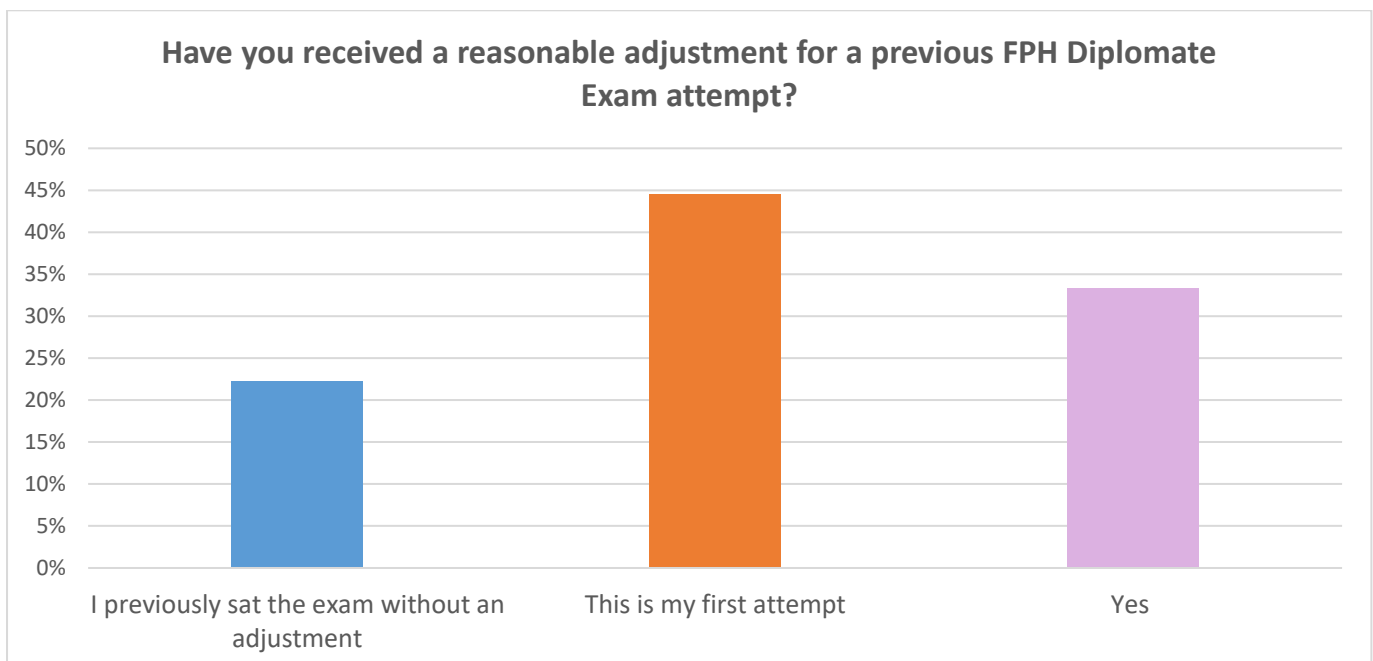
Feedback from those with adjustments (October 2025)

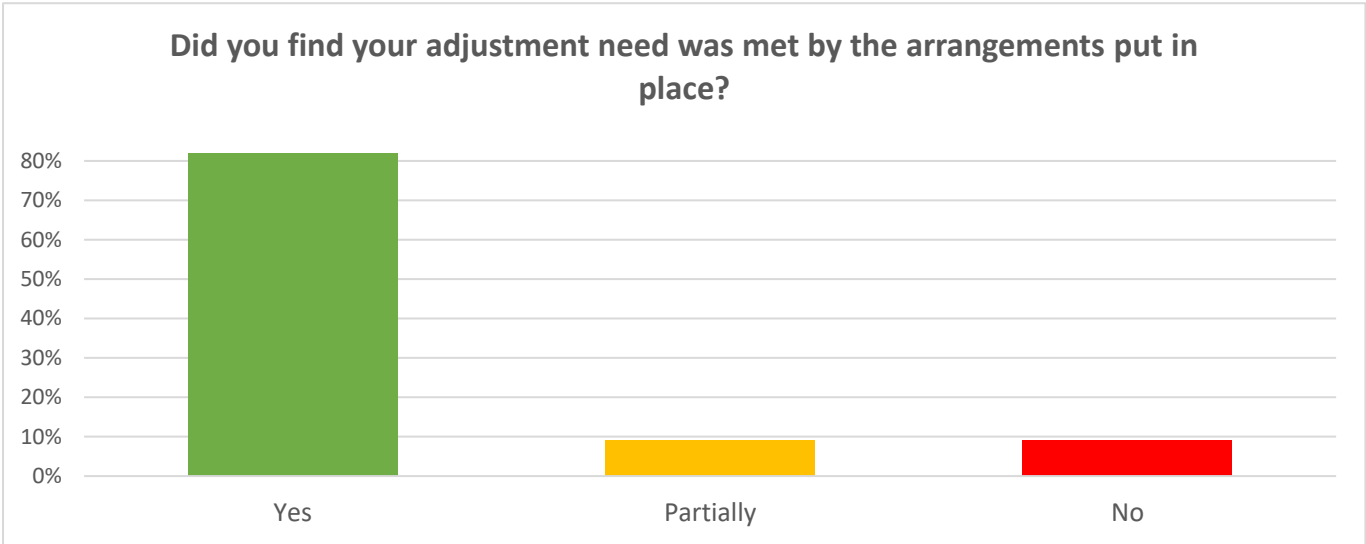
- 11 of the 51 candidates that responded on the survey received a reasonable adjustment (RA).
- 1 of which did not wish to provide further feedback on their RA experience.
- 11 candidates responded to the reasonable adjustment section of the survey from 21 candidates who received a reasonable adjustment (52%).



One candidate commented:

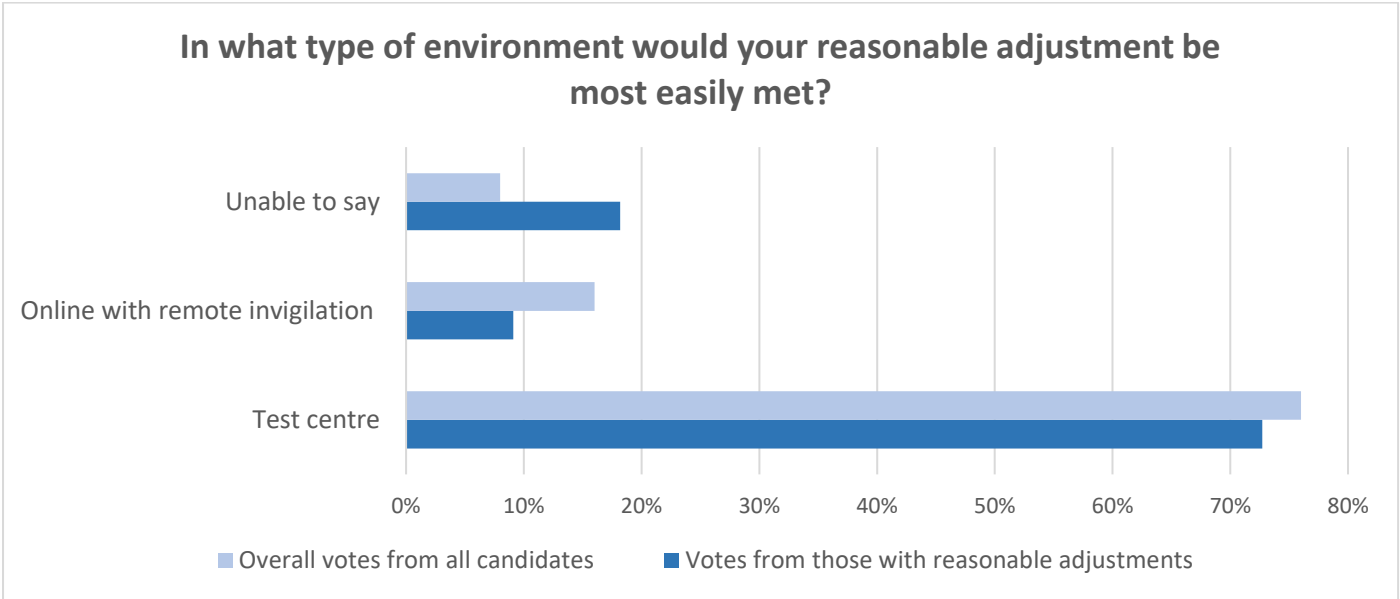
- I find the fact that I have to disclose my needs to my TPD and they have to request on my behalf demeaning and un-necessary.





One candidate commented:

- Yes, they were definitely met. Just want to add that I found it very peculiar that my employer had to verify that I needed reasonable adjustments even though I supplied the dyslexia report. I didn't really understand the need for this. Furthermore, it would have been particularly challenging if my employer wasn't aware that I was taking the exam.



Rest breaks as part of the reasonable adjustment:

5 of the respondents received rest breaks as part of their reasonable adjustment. All the respondents noted that they were able to manage the break effectively.

Two of the respondents commented that:

- These were poorly managed, and this added considerably to my stress levels and actually caused more distraction than alleviating it.

- Yes, though my invigilator on the Wednesday kept talking to me during these breaks which was very unhelpful.

Feedback about shared room:

- Two of the respondents sat the exam in a shared room.
- One candidate commented that the shared room was with others with reasonable adjustments, so it was a smaller room with no major issues. 'I think I would find it very disruptive/distracting if I were to sit the exam with those who don't have reasonable adjustments'.