



**FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

FPH Examinations Reasonable Adjustment Policy

July 2025

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Please note that this policy is distinct from the Withdrawal and Extenuating Circumstances Policies. These policies relate to withdrawing from the exam due to unforeseen circumstances and 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 disadvantaged.

This policy is to provide guidance for candidates on how to apply for a reasonable adjustment, examples of the adjustments that can be provided and the documentation that is required. This document also sets out the deadlines for submitting relevant documentation and the deadlines for returning the necessary declaration form or making an appeal to the decision that has been granted.

Please refer to [this document](#) for a summary of the reasonable adjustment process.

Reasonable adjustments for examination candidates

Under the UK Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland Disability Discrimination Act 1995, education and training providers and other related services have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities so they are not placed at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled students. As such, a flexible policy of exceptional arrangements will be adhered to in order to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged because of their disability.

Candidates should note that the purpose of any support implemented is to support the trainee to 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.

The Assistant Academic Registrar¹ 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.

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.

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.

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, Training Programme Director (TPD) and the Assistant Academic Registrar.

Examples of reasonable adjustments that can be made for each exam

The lists below offer examples of the types of adjustment that can be made; however, for both exams, any other circumstances will also be considered.

Diplomate Exam

- Additional time – to accommodate this, candidates will have an earlier start time for the morning papers and a later finish time for the afternoon papers. Please refer to the [additional time guidance here](#).
- Rest breaks – additional time can be granted for rest breaks, or the exam can be paused for a specific amount of time. If additional time is granted, candidates will need to sit back away from their screen for the duration of the rest break at specified times during the exam.
- Use of voice-activated software – speech to text software (dictation software) can be arranged with the test centre provider. Please ensure that it is clear on your request for an adjustment if you require an alternative form of software such as text to audio. As the Diplomate Exam is now in a test centre format, the software will be on the test centre device. It is not possible to bring your own device due to exam security.
- Additional time for bathroom breaks.
- Use of non-technology headset/earplugs.
- Adjustments to figures/graphs for colour-blind candidates.
- Coloured overlays for the screen. These must be supplied by the candidate.
- Use of the 'sticker system' for neurodivergent candidates so that examiners are aware of this when marking the candidate's script. The candidate will not be penalised for spelling errors that are a result of neurodiversity or as a result of the voice-activated software.

Final Membership Exam

Examples include:

- Additional time. Candidates will be asked to book either one or two spaces on the exam booking form depending on their preference below.
 - 'Front loaded extra time' with the additional time given at the beginning of the exam.
 - For example, candidates with 25% extra time will start their exam 12 minutes earlier than other candidates. They will 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 adjustment, candidates will also have 'rest' stations where they will not have any materials and will just 'rest' for approximately 16 minutes. The candidate will need to wait on the exam circuit during the lunch break so will need to bring appropriate reading material and a pre-packed lunch as they will not have access to their phone or be able to leave the circuit for the duration of the exam. As 'split time' adjustment candidates will move to station rooms out of the normal order of rotation, a dedicated member of the Exams Team will ensure they are at the appropriate room at the right time.
- Adjustments to font size/figures/graphs for colour-blind or visually impaired candidates.
- Additional time for bathroom breaks – as the timing of the rotations cannot be amended, candidates who wish to have additional time for bathroom breaks can be offered additional time for one station in advance of the exam starting. This will enable the candidate time to take a bathroom break during one of the preparation stations.

Requests that fall outside of the adjustment policy

The following are not considered as an adjustment but still need to be requested via the Exams Coordinator so that arrangements can be made, and the invigilator is aware that this has been approved.

- Use of medication/diabetic equipment (other than tablets in a blister pack).
- Tinted glasses.
- A standing desk.
- Access to your own keyboard and mouse. Please indicate this at the time of applying and also specify what connection you require to use your equipment.

How to submit a request for reasonable adjustments

Please also [refer to this document for a summary of the adjustment process](#). Please note that candidates must indicate that they wish to apply for an adjustment within the application form submitted for **both** exams even if they have previously received an adjustment for a previous sitting OR if they are applying for the Final Membership Exam after previously receiving an adjustment for the Diplomat Exam.

There is a field to complete to confirm this within the application form on the portal.

Timing and deadlines

To request reasonable adjustments the following conditions must be met:

- The request for reasonable adjustments must be made with the application for each exam (DFPH and MFPH). Evidence must be submitted for the first instance of the request for each exam.
- Please see section below for long-standing conditions and future exam attempts.
- The request for exceptional arrangements, accompanied by the appropriate documentation, must be received by the Faculty as early as possible but at the latest by the 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).

Exceptional circumstances leading to a change in the ability to perform the exam

Late applications for adjustments for the DFPH (Diplomate) Exam will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances where a candidate experiences an unforeseen unexpected 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 or type or sit for long periods of time. 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 MFPH 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.

Assessments taking place after the time of application

As above, late applications for adjustments can only be considered in very exceptional circumstances. If a candidate has an assessment or appointment they feel would provide evidence of their needs, for example, a neurodiversity assessment, after the application deadline but before 8 working days before the exam, the candidate can apply to withdraw and sit at a later sitting when their new adjustment request paperwork can be fully considered. If the candidate chooses to do this, they will be required to submit an application form to withdraw along with a supporting letter from their employer or TPD to confirm that a potential need for an adjustment has been identified and the candidate is currently seeking an assessment or supporting evidence from a suitable professional. This will be subject to a 25% fee to cover administration costs.

Please note that the same policy will apply in instances where candidates have submitted a request for adjustments relating to one described area of need but wish to add a separate request for a new area of need not previously outlined in their application (that would meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland Disability Discrimination Act 1995) at a later date.

Supporting evidence submission is not accepted

If the candidate submits a letter of support from their GP or relevant professional, but this is not accepted by the review team as sufficient evidence to support the request made, it will be possible

for the candidate to either continue with the current booking without an adjustment or withdraw to a future sitting. The fee will be held without incurring a penalty for one instance. If the candidate applies for an adjustment again at a future sitting without seeking further supporting evidence and this is then rejected again, they will have the choice to sit the exam without an adjustment or withdraw from the exam but will be subject to the usual fee of 50%.

Long-standing conditions and future exam attempts

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 seven years.

After a reasonable adjustment has been approved, evidence does not need to be resubmitted for future attempts unless the details of the request or nature of the request has changed, the previously approved adjustment related to a temporary condition or the previous adjustment was approved more than seven years ago.

For example, if a candidate submits a request for 25% extra time due to dyslexia for the Diplome Exam, they will not need to resubmit their evidence for future attempts at the Diplome exam unless they would like to change their request and receive additional adjustments. To change the request, please provide the rationale and updated evidence. Depending on the nature of the request and information provided, FPH may be required to ask for a suitable supporting updated assessment or report.

If the candidate goes on to sit the Final Membership Exam, evidence does not need to be resubmitted unless the nature of the condition has changed/is no longer relevant, the candidate would like to change their request, or the request specifically related to the requirements of the Diplome Exam.

Candidates should, however, ensure that they tick the box for reasonable adjustment request on their application form.

Documentation *

To apply for an adjustment, candidates should supply:

1. A suitable assessment or report supporting identification of needs, conducted by a suitable professional such as a chartered or educational psychologist, or a specialist teacher assessor with a current practising certificate (PATOSS), a disability advisor, occupational health service or a GP/Consultant or medical specialist. This must be dated within 3 years unless in relation to long-term conditions or neurodiversity.

This must include a statement confirming that the candidate's needs warrant special examination arrangements. The reports should include clearly identifiable recommendations relevant to the format and delivery of the exams, for example including reference to recommendations relating to written tasks, spoken or oral tasks and needs relating to facilities and environment relevant to examination arrangements.

In cases of neurodiversity, the exams coordinator will require a suitable assessment report or report supporting identification of needs, conducted post-16 years of age, by a chartered or educational psychologist or a specialist teacher assessor with a current practising certificate (PATOSS).

All evidence must be submitted electronically.

To summarise, supporting evidence should:

- identify the individual's needs
- confirm how they meet the legal definition of a disability
OR - if there is a short-term need, outline the impact of the need on the individual and the likely period of time.
- Outline how the individual would be impacted by their needs and the recommended mitigations to support their needs as reasonable adjustments.

In exceptional circumstances, 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. Candidates who are not in a UK training scheme can supply such information from their current employer.

Please note that for adjustments requested in relation to pregnancy, candidates should not feel forced to disclose pregnancy to TPDs/Head of School (HoS) before they are ready to do so. It is recommended that a TPD letter is provided so as to ensure that TPDs/HoS can support the candidate in their workplace environment too. Supporting evidence is required in all instances in the form of a MatB1 form or a letter from a midwife, a GP or hospital.

3. A summary of the adjustments requested from the candidate. This can be provided within the application form submitted via the online Members portal or as a separate letter. Where additional time or rest breaks are requested, candidates should specify the specific amount of extra time required.

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 reasonable adjustments being in place.

Please note that it may not be possible to accommodate every request in full. Examples of factors that are taken into account to determine whether the request is reasonable include:

- How practicable the changes are to make.
- The cost of making the changes.
- The organisation's available resource to carry out the requested adjustment.
- Whether the request creates an unfair advantage if there is not a clear justifiable reason for the request.
- Whether the request compromises the integrity of the assessment.

In cases where all or part of an adjustment request is declined, an explanation will be provided as to why it was not considered reasonable.

Once a decision has been made by the Assistant Academic Registrar, the Education Office will 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 thirteen (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 their fee will be held for a future attempt.

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, the exams coordinator will contact the Chair of Examiners to make arrangements so that the banked paper is retained.

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 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 within FPH's processes with no further appeal available through FPH.

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.

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

Along with extra time and other adjustments that may be sanctioned by the Faculty, neurodivergent candidates or candidates 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 neurodiversity or as a result of the voice-activated software. The 'sticker' system is simply a flag to bring to the attention of the marker that the candidate may have needs that may affect their sentence structure and wording etc. This may be relevant to candidates with neurodiverse conditions such as dyslexia.

Candidates will therefore not be penalised unduly for errors that have nothing to do with the understanding of the subject. Neurodivergent candidates or those 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.

Spell check for the Diplomate Exam

Spellcheck and auto correct is not currently available on the TestReach platform.

Please note that candidates can choose to apply to use the 'sticker' system as part of a reasonable adjustment request. The 'sticker' system is simply to bring to the attention of the marker that the candidate has a neurodivergent condition 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. Neurodivergent candidates or candidates 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.

Spellcheck functionality can be requested as a reasonable adjustment if this is a recommendation in a professional report. Please note that as spell check is not available in the platform, this will be provided outside of the TestReach system in the form of Microsoft Word to use alongside TestReach. Candidates can practise using this with the TestReach Functionality Test in advance of the exam. We are aware that copying and pasting paragraphs between Microsoft Word and the TestReach platform can sometimes result in some residual formatting issues. Examiners will be alerted to this via an additional sticker system and candidates will not be penalised for any formatting issues. Candidates using this solution will receive additional time to allow for this process.

Candidates can request to use assistive technology in the form of dictation (voice to text) software if they feel this would be more beneficial. Please contact the Exams Team for more details.

Summary of timeframes outlined in this policy

Submitting a request for adjustments	As early as possible, all necessary supporting documentation to be supplied with the application form. Please note that for the Diplomate Exam, there are two deadlines for submitting applications for adjustments. Submitting paperwork for the earlier deadline will result in an earlier decision and offer letter.
Late applications for the DFPH Exam will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances	Late applications due to exceptional circumstances will only be considered up to six weeks before the exam sitting date. After this point, we would advise the candidate to withdraw and apply for the next 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. As above, if it is not possible to accommodate a reasonable adjustment at this stage, we would advise the candidate to withdraw and apply for the next available sitting.
Finalisation of adjustments	Candidates will be sent a letter confirming the adjustment that FPH is able to offer at least three weeks prior to the examination.
Agreement of adjustments	Candidates are required to sign a document confirming that notification of the adjustments has been received and accepted thirteen working days 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.
Appeal against adjustment decision	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 five working days of the notification of the provision awarded. A response will be given in five working days.

** Documentation will be stored securely, redacted by the Exams Team and password protected before being shared with the Assistant Academic Registrar and Disability Adviser. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, documentation will not be stored for longer than is necessary and will be deleted after the candidate has passed both exams or within 7 years (whichever is sooner).*

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