

Faculty of Occupational Medicine - Reasonable adjustment policy

1. Introduction

1.1 If any candidate is unable, through disability, specific learning difficulty, long-term medical condition or other special need, to be assessed by the methods set out in the regulations, the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) may make reasonable adjustments to the examination.

The Equality Act 2010 requires the FOM to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with someone who is not disabled.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities.

This may include:

- physical or sensory impairments.
- specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia and dyspraxia) or other cognitive impairments.
- mental health issues.
- hidden impairments (e.g. epilepsy, respiratory problems or heart conditions).
- ongoing or fluctuating medical conditions, including unforeseen medical circumstances.

1.2 Reasonable adjustments primarily enable a candidate with a disability or temporary medical condition to overcome barriers that prevent them from accessing an assessment, so that they can demonstrate their knowledge and skills without affecting the competence standards.

1.3 Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors, including:

- the needs of the candidate.
- the effectiveness of the adjustment.
- the cost of the adjustment.
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.
- the impact on the competence standard being assessed.

1.4 An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the FOM.
- involves unreasonable timeframes.
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

2. Procedures

2.1 Any candidate who has a physical disability, specific learning difficulty, long-term medical condition or any other special need that they believe could affect their performance in an examination may be entitled to reasonable adjustments. All such candidates should inform the FOM of this by indicating in the relevant area of the online examination entry application form and then submitting, via email, a Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form along with any relevant supporting documentation. All documentation relating to a reasonable adjustment request must be received at least 8 weeks before the date of the examination.

2.2 Candidates whose need for special arrangements only occurs after the submission of their application (e.g. due to sudden illness or accident) must contact the FOM as soon as practicable.

2.3 Candidates are advised that failure to contact the FOM as outlined in 2.1 and 2.2 may mean that there will be insufficient time for some, or all, of any permitted arrangements to be put in place.

2.4 In all cases candidates are required to submit full written details of any reasonable adjustments they wish to request to the FOM at the time of their first examination application. This must include comprehensive supporting evidence by an appropriate authority (e.g. the candidate's registered GP). For any subsequent examination application, a Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form must still be submitted, however the required supporting documentation need only refer to any changes in the nature of the disability or need that have arisen since the original request.

For candidates with specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia) a suitable diagnostic assessment report by a chartered or educational psychologist or a specialist teacher assessor with a current practising certificate must be provided. The report must refer to an assessment undertaken in English after the age of 16.

3. Consideration of arrangements

3.1 Where the FOM has an established precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need the case will be considered by the Examinations Team. Where there is no precedent for a requested adjustment, or for a particular disability or special need, the case will require further consideration.

3.2 Where the FOM has no precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need, or where the adjustment requested is more significant than any previously permitted for that disability or special need, then the case may also be considered by the Chief Examiner.

3.3 It is accepted that the following adjustments may be approved if the candidate's circumstances justify such action:

- Enlargement of examination scripts or materials.
- Additional time allowed for completing written examination papers or reading candidate instructions in the clinical examination.
- The use of an appropriate aid during the clinical examination.

This is not an exclusive list, but indicative of the most common adjustments made for FOM examinations.

3.4 Candidates will be notified in writing of any adjustments that have been permitted for their examinations.

3.5 Clinical examinations are regarded as competence tests, assessing skills and behaviours as well as clinical knowledge. As such the method of assessment is a crucial element of these examinations, and any adjustments made for a clinical examination must maintain the integrity and validity of this assessment.

3.6 Any adjustment that would involve a change to the format of any part of any FOM examination shall be considered by the FOM Board. Similarly, the FOM may seek the advice of the FOM Board if a case raises issues of policy.

3.7 In all cases the FOM reserves the right to take independent advice to ensure that any proposed arrangements are appropriate and in accordance with any applicable legislation.

3.8 Details of all requests for adjustments and the adjustments that were approved (if any), shall be regularly reported to the FOM Examinations Committee for the purposes of monitoring and review.

4. Appeals

4.1 Where a candidate does not believe the adjustment(s) they have been granted are reasonable, or their requested adjustments are not granted (either partially, or as a whole), they may ask for their case to be reviewed by the FOM Director of Examinations, whose decision will be final.