

Appendix C – Reasonable adjustment policy for RCPCH examinations



REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY FOR RCPCH EXAMINATIONS

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
0.1	July 2017	Examinations Manager	New Policy
1.0	August 2017	Examinations Manager	Published Policy
1.1	August 2022	Head of Clinical Assessments	Published Policy
1.2	March 2025	Overseas Clinical Exams Manager	Published Policy

Approval: Examinations Board March 2025

Review date: every year thereafter during the relevant Examinations Board

Name	Date	Version	Comments
Examinations Executive Committee	July 2017	1.0	
Examinations Board	July 2022	1.1	
Examinations Board	March 2025	1.2	

Relevant Policies, Templates and Forms:

The following policies, procedures and guidance should be used or referred to when necessary, alongside this policy. All policies and templates are available on the RCPCH website once finalised and approved.

Name	Version	Date
MRCPCH and DCH: Regulations and Rules	2.1	August 2019

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Equality in RCPCH examinations
3. Procedure

Annex 1 Frequently asked questions about reasonable adjustments

Annex 2 MRCPCH/DCH - Request for reasonable adjustment form

1. Introduction

The RCPCH is committed to providing supportive and fair opportunity to all examination candidates. The purpose of this policy is to provide:

- A framework to help examination candidates in determining the specific support they require for their theory/clinical examination
- A framework to help college staff to support examination candidates who require reasonable adjustments to their examinations
- A framework that outlines the rights of candidates who request reasonable adjustment to their examinations and the process to be followed when submitting a request.

Examination candidates are entitled to request a reasonable adjustment to their examination and the RCPCH Examinations Team will consider all requests providing the appropriate supporting evidence is submitted within the required time frames.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to examinations to meet the needs of individuals who have a disability or impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to undertake an examination as defined by the Equality Act 2010. In addition to this we understand that those who are pregnant or have a short-term health condition may also need to make a request for reasonable adjustments.

Adjustments will not entail the lowering of standards of examinations, nor will they exempt candidates from demonstrating that they are fit to undertake examinations independently.

The RCPCH are committed to ensuring that this guidance be applied consistently to all candidates who apply to undertake their examinations within the UK and overseas regardless of their training status. It is our aim that this guidance is helpful to candidates who wish to apply for an adjustment, their clinical and educational supervisors and to College examiners/assessors.

Examples of reasonable adjustments to examinations may include but are not limited to:

- extra time
- scribes/readers
- private areas
- rest breaks

The RCPCH acknowledges that requests for adjustment may vary / be unique and as such separate to some of the more established examination adjustments listed above. It is possible that an adjustment may not be determined as reasonable taking into consideration the following:

- if it has an impact on any aspects related to the integrity of the examination
- if it involves immoderate/excessive costs

In addition the GMC provides guidance on reasonable adjustments (For further details click [here](#)). It states there that:

“Colleges are required to consider providing reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.” This means taking reasonable steps to do the following:

- Avoid substantial disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice puts people with disability at a substantial disadvantage.
- Avoid substantial disadvantage, where a physical feature puts people with disability at a substantial disadvantage; this includes removing the physical feature in question, altering it or providing a reasonable means of avoiding it.
- Provide an auxiliary aid where, without one, a person with disability would be put at a substantial disadvantage.”

The GMC also provides supplementary guidance on **‘Reasonable adjustments and competence standards,’** and states *“The legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustment does not mean lowering the competence standards required of individuals with disabilities.”*

A **competence standard** is defined in the *Equality Act* as “an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.”

2. Equality in RCPCH examinations

The College’s duty to make reasonable adjustments is outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The duty is to take reasonable steps in order to remove unnecessary barriers that examination candidates with disabilities or impairments may face in the lead up to or during their examinations.

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Further information can be found at the website of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission* [here](#) and at the GOV.UK website [here](#).

“Britain” in the above context, means England, Wales and Scotland. Under the Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

For Northern Ireland, The Equality Act 2010 does not apply to Northern Ireland (see the General Medical Councils' website link [here](#))

The Northern Irish legislation is, however, very similar to the British legislation. In Northern Ireland, the statutory duties of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988 require designated public authorities to have *due regard to the need* to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories and to have *regard to the desirability* of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

The nine potential categories in the Northern Ireland Act are:

- persons of different religious beliefs
- political opinion
- racial group
- age
- marital status
- sexual orientation
- men and women
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependents and persons without.

3. Procedure

Theory Exams (FOP/TAS/AKP)

Reasonable adjustment requests must be made on the application form when booking your exam. Candidates must provide details of the adjustment they are requesting and supporting evidence must be provided at the time of application. Candidates will be contacted with the outcome of their reasonable adjustment request.

If you have any questions about reasonable adjustments for a Theory exam, please email theoryexams@rcpch.ac.uk

Clinical Exams (MRCPCH/DCH)

Reasonable adjustment requests must be made on the application form when booking your exam. Candidates must provide details of the adjustment they are requesting and supporting evidence must be provided at the time of application. Candidates will be contacted with the outcome of their reasonable adjustment request.

In addition to this, candidates must complete the form in Annex 4 of this document ('MRCPCH/DCH Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form') if they are seeking a reasonable adjustment for the MRCPCH clinical or DCH exams. This form must be emailed to clinicalexams@rcpch.ac.uk

If you have any questions about reasonable adjustments for a Clinical exam, please email clinicalexams@rcpch.ac.uk

For both Theory and Clinical exams, requests for adjustments must be completed and submitted **no later than 7 weeks prior to the examination date**.

Late submission may mean the College is unable to accommodate the reasonable adjustment request made due to the lack of time to prepare and implement it.

Suitable professionals who may provide supporting evidence for requested adjustments may include but are not limited to:

- The candidate's GP or other related medical professional
- The candidate's Educational Supervisor
- The candidate's Head of School or recognised deanery representative
- The candidate's employer

Please note that candidates will need to request a reasonable adjustment for every exam they apply to. **Previous adjustments will not automatically be applied to future attempts.** Candidates can use the same supporting documentation in each case.

The RCPCH examinations team will review the evidence provided, make a decision on whether the adjustment can be reasonably accommodated and then contact candidates with the outcome of their request.

Right to Appeal

Should any candidate wish to appeal a decision, they must notify the relevant team within four weeks of the date on which the decision to refuse adjustment was sent to the candidate.

Theory Exams: theoryexams@rcpch.ac.uk

Clinical Exams: clinicalexams@rcpch.ac.uk

Any notification of intention to appeal after this will be accepted only at the discretion of the Examinations Manager.

Should a candidate wish to appeal they must give reasons why they disagree/reasons why they think the decision is wrong and provide appropriate supporting evidence, where appropriate.

Prior to the Appeals Panel meeting to review appeals the Examination Manager will;

- Notify the Chair (The Vice President of Training and Assessment) and have obtained availability for membership of the panel. The Chair should ensure that those selected for the appeals Panel have no current or previous connection to the candidate
- Have agreed a date for the panel to meet

- Forward to the members of the Appeals Panel any and all relevant information including email and written correspondence in order that they can familiarise themselves with the case

If reasonably practicable, the Appeals Panel will convene within 8 weeks of an appeal being made and will consider the candidate's appeal.

Should any member of the Appeals Panel discuss the case, or seek clarification on specific points, with the Head of Clinical Assessment, Head of Theory and Standards and Officer for Examinations this should be documented. This should include the nature of the discussion, the specific points discussed, and an outline of any additional information given. Any and all related written or email correspondence should also be documented.

The Appeals Panel can accept the appeal in whole or part or to uphold the original decision.

The panel will finalise its decision within 5 working days of the meeting and communicate a formal outcome in writing. Once this has been done there is no further right to appeal.

Constitution of Appeals Panel

Vice President of Training and Assessment (CHAIR)

One RCPCH senior fellow not previously involved

Lay representation

Director of Education and Training

Other members may be co-opted at the discretion of the Chair

Annex 1: Frequently Asked Questions about Reasonable Adjustments

1. Who will be informed of my disability/impairment?

Your request for reasonable adjustments will be reviewed by a small number of individuals within the RCPCH Education and Training Division who may seek the advice of a disability advisor.

In complex cases it is possible that the Officer for Examinations and a small advisory group may be involved in the decision-making. We (the RCPCH Examinations Team) will keep the information you give us confidential and store it in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 or subsequent equivalent legislation.

If you are granted reasonable adjustments, limited information will be shared with the relevant test/host centre staff in order to accommodate the adjustment. For the DCH clinical examination the same would apply for limited information to be shared with the online platform provider (currently PRP/Osler).

With respect to the MRCPCH/DCH Clinical examination it is up to the candidate whether they would like the relevant host centre staff, senior examiner and the individual examiners and role players to know the underlying reason for your reasonable adjustments. You will be asked to indicate this on the application form you complete to request reasonable adjustments.

2. When should I (the candidate) inform the RCPCH?

You will be expected to inform the RCPCH of your disability/impairment at the time of applying to sit your theory and clinical examinations although we recommend that you contact us directly if you have a specific query.

The late submission of the reasonable adjustment application form and online examination application may limit our ability to provide you with reasonable adjustments. Applications for additional time made on the day of the examination will not be considered.

If you are diagnosed with a disability/impairment in the period of time between applying for and sitting the examination, you will need to inform the RCPCH Examination Team as soon as it is practical to do so. Applications that are received less than **7 weeks** before the proposed assessment date will not normally be accepted, and you may need to defer your examination date if you wish to apply for reasonable adjustments to be made.

3. Who is an acceptable person to provide supporting evidence of my (the candidate's) needs?

The person providing the supporting evidence needs to be familiar with your underlying disability/impairment and how this might impact on your examination performance. For physical disabilities this may be a report from your GP or audiologist or similar.

In order to avoid any conflict of interest supporting evidence should not be provided by a close colleague or friend.

If you are seeking reasonable adjustments for a specific learning difficulty (SpLD), we ask that you provide a report from an approved assessor. This assessment must be undertaken, and provided, in English and be obtained when you were 16 or older.

Approved assessors include:

- Specialist teachers who hold a practising certificate in assessing specific learning difficulties from their relevant professional body, such as Dyslexia Action or PATOSS. You can find out whether a proposed assessor has the appropriate qualification by checking the SASC (SpLD Assessment Standards Committee) website <http://www.sasc.org.uk/>
- A practising chartered or educational psychologist who is registered with the Healthcare Professionals Council.
If you (the candidate) speak English as an additional language then the assessor needs to include within their report details of their experience in assessing individuals with this characteristic. They also need to make it clear that any recommendations relate to an underlying disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) rather than the fact that for you English is a second or additional language.

4. Who will fund a disability assessment?

It is your responsibility to obtain any necessary assessment evidence and provide it to the RCPCH Examination Team so that we can make an accurate assessment of your needs. You may wish to contact your deanery/employer to enquire if there is any support available in obtaining an assessment.

5. What reasonable adjustments can the RCPCH Examination Team provide?

We (the RCPCH Examination Team) can provide a range of reasonable adjustments for candidates with underlying disabilities/impairments. We are committed to ensuring that individuals can demonstrate their competence to the best of their abilities.

Examples of examination adjustments can include:

- Extra time
- Additional time for rest breaks
- Adapted chair/desk
- Informing the examiner that a candidate may not be able to undertake specific physical movements due to a physical disability
- A scribe
- A reader
- Coloured overlays
- Appropriate lighting levels
- Any possible screen adjustment

- Seating in specific venue so that invigilator/examiner instructions can be heard, or instructions written down
- Location of examination – e.g. separate examination rooms
- Access to toilet facilities as needed
- Access to medication/food/drink
- Examinations to be taken at a specified location

To see all MRCPCH and DCH examination rules and regulations, go to
www.rcpch.ac.uk/exam-rules

RCPCH Examinations Team

March 2025

Annex 2: MRCPCH Clinical/DCH Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form

Candidates should complete this form if they are seeking a reasonable adjustment in a component of the MRCPCH/DCH on the grounds of a disability/impairment (whether temporary or permanent) and return the completed form with supporting evidence from suitable professionals.

Any request for adjustments must be completed and submitted at the time of applying to sit the examination.

Completed forms must be submitted no later than 7 weeks prior to the examination date.

Late submission may mean the College is unable to accommodate the reasonable adjustment request made due to the lack of time to prepare and implement it. This form only needs to be completed for MRCPCH Clinical and DCH exam attempts, for Theory exams it is sufficient to detail reasonable adjustment requests on the application form only.

Completed forms should be emailed to: clinicalexams@rcpch.ac.uk

Personal information on this form will be used by RCPCH only for the purpose of providing reasonable adjustments for RCPCH examinations. There may be limited circumstances where we would share your information with a third party. Please see the confidentiality section of this form for further information. The personal information on this form will only be retained until such time as you have completed all parts of the MRCPCH. Once you have completed the MRCPCH all personal information related to your request for adjustment will be confidentially destroyed / deleted.

You have a right to access your personal data and rectify any inaccuracies. If you would like to exercise these rights or have any concerns about the way your personal data are being handled, please send an email to the relevant email address listed above

MRCPCH Clinical/DCH Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form

Name of candidate:	
RCPCH number:	
Date of exam:	
<p>Nature of condition and your reasonable adjustment request for this exam</p> <p>Please describe here the condition that you wish the RCPCH to take into account in deciding what reasonable adjustment would be appropriate for the examination. Candidates are asked to explain how their ability to perform the examination is affected by their condition. Any documentary evidence provided by a disability assessor/suitable professional (e.g. a medical disability certificate) should be submitted with this form. Candidates with a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia, will be required to attach a report from a disability assessor/educational/chartered psychologist or a specialist teacher with a practising certificate (PATOSS), reporting on an assessment undertaken in English after the age of 16.</p>	

Reasonable adjustments granted for previous examinations

Please outline any reasonable adjustments that have been granted for examinations you (the candidate) have taken in the past (e.g. during Medical School/Foundation Training). Candidates should include as much detail as possible, for example if they were granted additional time, how much additional time was granted, when the adjustment/s were granted and for what type of examination etc.

Consent:

It is possible that the RCPCH Examinations Team may need to obtain further information regarding a candidate's disability/impairment before being able to decide whether or not reasonable adjustments can be made. The College would therefore like your (the candidate's) consent to contact:

- The disability assessor or other suitable medical professional who provided the documentary evidence provided to support your (the candidate's) application if further clarification is needed.

By signing this form candidates are giving RCPCH consent to contact the above individuals for the purposes specified.

We (the RCPCH Examination Team) will inform you (the candidate) if we are intending to approach any individual who may be able to provide further useful guidance in order to provide you with the necessary support for your examination.

Confidentiality:

The information provided in this form, and any additional supporting information that you (the candidate) provide, will be held by the RCPCH Examinations Team in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 or any equivalent subsequent legislation. It will only be shared with members of a small advisory group if further discussion is required.

If you are granted reasonable adjustments, limited information will be shared with the relevant test/host centre staff in order to accommodate the adjustment. If submitting an RA request for the DCH Clinical exam limited information will also be shared with the online platform provider (currently PRP/Osler). It is up to you (the candidate) if you would like the reason for the adjustment (i.e. the underlying disability/impairment) to be communicated to the host examiner, senior examiner, examiners and role players. Please indicate your (the candidate's) choices below.

- I (the candidate) **give / do not give** (*delete as appropriate*) my consent for the RCPCH to contact my (the candidate's) disability assessor/suitable professional for the purposes stated above.
- I (the candidate) **would like / would not like** (*delete as appropriate*) the relevant MRCPCH or DCH Clinical Examinations Board to be made aware of the underlying disability/impairment that has given rise to my request for reasonable adjustments.
- (In relation to the MRCPCH/DCH Clinical Exams) I (the candidate) **would like / would not like** (*delete as appropriate*) the host examiner, senior examiner, examiners, role players to be made aware of the underlying disability/impairment that has given rise to my request for reasonable adjustments.

Signed by candidate	
Date	