



ROYAL
COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS
OF IRELAND

Reasonable Adjustment for Examinations Policy

March 2022

This policy was developed in July-December 2021 and undergoes a review every three years from the date of approval. The policy is approved by the RCPI Examinations Committee.

Policy Title	Reasonable Adjustment for Examinations
Approvers	Examinations Committee
Author(s)	Examinations & Health and Wellbeing Department
Applies to	Examinations Candidates
Policy Number	PTE OXX

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1. Purpose

- a. The purpose of this document is to outline the process RCPI follows when an examination candidate indicates a disability at time of application for an examination that either runs by RCPI or stipulated as part of RCPIs approved training programme.
- b. This policy aims to support the rights of a candidate with a disability to participate in examinations that are accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination and harassment, and outline the processes involved in seeking reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

2. Scope

- a. This policy applies to all areas of disability including physical and psychological such as learning disability or a mental health condition.
- b. This policy is in line with the term “Disability” which is covered under the equality legislation (Employment Equality Act 1998-2015).
- c. This policy applies to all doctors who at the time of application to RCPIs examinations, disclose potential disability.
- d. This policy may also apply to trainees who are already on a training programme who disclose potential disability whilst in training and need reasonable adjustment support for an examination which is not run by RCPI, e.g. FRCPath examinations. RCPI is not responsible for the reasonable adjustment decisions made by third parties such as the FRCPath, but will advocate on behalf of a trainee with a disability.

3. Policy Overview

- a. This procedure aims, as far as possible, to:
 - i. eliminate Disability Discrimination
 - ii. ensure that examination candidates with disabilities have the same rights as other trainees
 - iii. promote recognition and acceptance of these rights within the RCPI community
 - iv. identify and support the Reasonable Adjustment needs of candidates with a disability through effective, open communication with all stakeholders

4. Commitment

- a. RCPI is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for examination candidates.
- b. RCPI acknowledges that it has a responsibility to conduct its operations in ways that do not disadvantage people with a disability as described under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. To achieve this commitment, RCPI will:
 - i. promote and foster an environment which encourages positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards candidates with disabilities
 - ii. ensure that requests for Reasonable Adjustments for candidates with disabilities are considered fairly, completed as soon as practicable and are appropriately monitored and reviewed
 - iii. enable all candidates to have equal opportunity when being considered for Reasonable Adjustment for examinations.

5. Disclosure of a Disability

- a. RCPI acknowledges that information provided about a person's disability or health status is personal and private and will respect the confidentiality of all such information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- b. At registration and annual declaration with the Medical Council, all doctors must disclose any a physical or mental disability (including addiction to drugs or alcohol) which may impair ability to practice medicine or a particular aspect thereof. RCPI Trainees, as set out in the Trainees' training agreement, are required to fulfil their obligation as set out by the Medical Council disclosure protocol.
- c. If a candidate chooses to not disclose a disability, RCPI Health and Wellbeing will not be able to provide additional support as per policy.
- d. If an applicant discloses disability at time of application, this information does not form part of the decision of the eligibility criteria to sit the examination.
- e. The provision of reasonable accommodations in examinations will be made known to the relevant administrative and examination staff. This may include external examinations providers. Candidates with disabilities are, where possible, marked anonymously. Use of alternative examination arrangements may affect the anonymity of the candidate.
- f. Any candidate who wishes to receive adapted examination arrangements as a reasonable adjustment for a disability should inform the Examinations Department of this, in writing, at the time of application for the examination. Failure to make such a request before the closing date for applications to the examination may result in RCPI staff being unable to put appropriate arrangements in place in time for the examination.

6. Reasonable Adjustment

- a. The principle of Reasonable Adjustment allows that wherever it is possible, and necessary and reasonable to do so, RCPI must consider a candidate's disability and advocate for the appropriate adjustments to an examination to enable a candidate to perform effectively and to the required standard. An adjustment is reasonable if it successfully balances the interests of all parties affected.
- b. Reasonable Adjustments for candidates are measures recommended by the RCPI to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of examinations, including the following:
 - i. application process
 - ii. physical access to building and facilities on RCPI campus
 - iii. access to information
 - iv. sitting the examination
- c. Adjustments may include but are not limited to:
 - i. provision of appropriate considerations or assistance to ensure there is no barrier in the application process
 - ii. provision of mentoring
 - iii. providing essential information in suitable formats
 - iv. the length of time it would take to complete an examination
 - v. the format of the examination delivery
 - vi. adjusted marking scheme
- d. Due to the nature of clinical exams, it may not be possible to provide certain adjustments (such as extra time) without disrupting the entire exam. RCPI will endeavour to provide a suitable alternative arrangement in such cases.
- e. The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, does not require that organisational changes be made if this will cause major difficulties or unreasonable costs to a person or to the organisation. Before claiming that adjustments are unjustified, RCPI must:
 - i. thoroughly consider how an adjustment might be made
 - ii. discuss this directly with the candidate involved
 - iii. consult relevant sources of advice

7. Exemptions Under the Legislation

- a. The following are identified under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 as exemptions to the requirement for the provision of all necessary measures and Reasonable Adjustments for persons with a disability:
 - i. where provision of adjustments or measures would place a disproportionate burden
 - ii. where, even with the provision of all appropriate adjustments, the candidate is unable to fulfil the inherent requirements of the examinations
 - iii. where a candidate with a disability has an infectious disease or other condition that requires isolation in order to protect their health and welfare or the health and welfare of others, and where RCPI is unable to provide Reasonable Adjustments that will enable the candidate to receive relevant services and facilities so that they may continue with their examination
 - iv. where, even with the provision of all appropriate adjustments, it is not possible to meet occupational health and safety requirements

8. Accessing Assistance

- a. A candidate who believes that they may require assistance should in the first instance (as soon as reasonably possible) contact the RCPI Examination Department
- b. A candidate must provide reasonable notice of the need for adjustment and the necessary documentary evidence to support this request. Notice must be provided by the closing date for applications for the exam for which adjustments are sought. Candidates are expected to have the required evidence available at the time of application.
- c. Evidence may be provided by appropriately qualified health professionals. Any expenses related to seeking relevant assessment and documentation will be paid by the candidate
- d. If necessary, RCPI will arrange for professional advice to assist in assessing the candidate's needs. This advice will specify:
 - i. the nature of the disability or disabilities
 - ii. the functional limitations placed on the candidate by this disability
- e. In assessing the Reasonable Adjustment required, the Inherent Requirements of the examination is considered.
- f. The Examinations Manager will review each request for assistance, and will consult with the Health and Wellbeing Manager and relevant Exam Board Chair or Director where appropriate.
- g. A candidate must request assistance for each examination that they apply to sit. A candidate who has received assistance for an initial examination will not generally be required to submit any documentation.

9. Processing a Request

Informing RCPI

If a candidate or an applicant wishes to inform the RCPI of a disability requiring reasonable adjustment, he/she are required to submit all relevant and recent (within the last 12 months) supporting documentation written by the appropriate health professional (e.g., treating physician, Occupational Medicine physician, psychiatrist, education psychologist). The supporting documentation should include the nature of the adjustment requested, e.g. "needing additional examination time".

Please note:

Supporting documentation such as an educational assessment is valid for four years with the following exceptions:

1. A candidate has been first diagnosed with a learning difficulty as an adult
2. There is no valid reason for requesting a second opinion

The information must be submitted to the RCPI Examinations Department by email to exams@rcpi.ie.

Stage One - Initial verification

1. Once all information is received, the request will be reviewed by the Examinations Manager.
2. The Examinations Manager will consider if further independent assessment is required and will inform the person in writing.
3. The Examinations Manager will determine what, if any, adjustments are appropriate.

Stage Two – Establish a review panel

If the Examinations Manager is unable to make a determination, a review panel will be established to consider the request for reasonable adjustment in detail and produce recommendations. This panel will consist of:

- (i) Examination Manager
- (ii) Examination Board Chair/Director
- (iii) The disability officer or an RCPI staff member from the Senior Management Group

The panel will review the request and make the final decision regarding reasonable adjustments.

Stage Three - Outcome

The candidate will be advised by RCPI of the outcomes of their request for assistance and adjustment within two weeks of the request being received. Once notified of the available adapted arrangements, the candidate will be required to notify the Examinations Department of their acceptance of these arrangements within two weeks. Failure to confirm acceptance will be taken as rejection of the offer, and the offered accommodations will be withdrawn.

Stage Four – Review [If Invoked]

A candidate will have the right to request a review of the decision by the relevant Dean/Director in the following circumstances:

- The candidate's request for reasonable accommodation is denied;
- The candidate believes that their request for reasonable accommodation was not dealt with in a fair, timely, and confidential manner; or
- The candidate believes that the accommodation offered is inappropriate

Such requests for review must be submitted in writing to the Examinations Department indicating the reason for review, within one week of the notification of denial. The Dean/Director will review all materials provided by the candidate and by the Examinations Department, and will notify the candidate of their decision, in writing, within two weeks of the date of the request for review. The Dean/Director's decision will be final.

Nothing in this policy shall be taken to preclude a candidate from later filing an appeal under RCPI's Examinations Appeals Policy.

10. Review

This Policy shall be subject to review every three years from the date of approval of this document by the Executive Board

Approved By:	Date
Examinations Committee	25 March 2022
Review	
Review by Examinations Committee	

RCPI is GDPR compliant. Should you have any queries on GDPR please contact dataprotectionofficer@rcpi.ie.