



## Reasonable Adjustments to National PA Exam

### Introduction

We will consider making reasonable adjustments for any candidate with a disability, for example a visual impairment or dyslexia within the scope of the [Equality Act 2010](#), but we won't be able to change the standard of the exam.

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 Exam Regulations, the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) may consider a reasonable adjustment to the examination.

Adjustments will vary depending on the candidate's disability, and the individual requirements of the examination, but will be to the purpose that no candidate is disadvantaged in their examinations by virtue of their disability or other special need.

In considering requests for adjustments, the FPA also has a responsibility to ensure that the integrity of the examination is preserved; that special arrangements made for any candidate do not give that candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.

### Procedures

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 FPA of this at the time of application (or at least two weeks before the exam), by emailing the [fpa@rcplondon.ac.uk](mailto:fpa@rcplondon.ac.uk).

Candidates are advised that failure to contact the FPA within in the above timeframe may mean that there will be insufficient time for some or all of any permitted arrangements to be put in place.

In all cases the candidate will be required to submit full written details of any reasonable adjustments they wish to request to the FPA. This must include comprehensive supporting evidence by an appropriate authority (ie. the candidate's consultant, specialist or GP). In cases of dyslexia or any other learning difficulty, the FPA will require a Psychological Assessment Report made by a qualified educational psychologist, which must have been conducted after the candidate was sixteen years of age.



## Consideration of Arrangements

Where the FPA has an established precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need the case will be considered by the OSCE lead.

Where there is no precedent for a requested adjustment, or for a particular disability or special need, the case may require further consideration.

Where the FPA 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 must be considered by the chair of the examination sub-committee.

## Written Knowledge Exam

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

- enlargement of examination scripts or materials
- the use of a scribe or an amanuensis
- additional time allowed for completing written examination papers

This is not an exclusive list but indicative of the most common adjustments made for PA National written examinations.

## OSCE stations

All OSCE stations are timed to allow a structure to exam and this is justified because the provision of clinical care is often constrained by time. Accurately completing the task in the exam setting is regarded as completely central to the assessment which is a competency based exam that will ultimately qualify PA to the profession. It is anticipated that requests to provide additional time for OSCE station(s) will not be approved.

Small quantities of written materials (eg blood test results) will sometimes be utilised in OSCEs but in order to maintain clinical validity the format (font size etc) cannot be adapted in the same way as in a written exam.

Examples of the sort of adjustments that are likely to be approved for OSCEs include;

- use of appropriate aids eg amplifying stethoscope
- adaptation of technique without penalty (providing that technique still allows competent completion of the task)

A decorative graphic consisting of two curved, overlapping bars. The top bar is dark grey and the bottom bar is teal, both curving from left to right.

## Process

Candidates will be notified in writing of any adjustments that have been permitted for their examinations. Any adjustments made for the examination must maintain the integrity and validity of the assessment.

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

## Appeals

Where a candidate does not believe the adjustments they have been granted are reasonable, they may ask for their case to be reviewed by the FPA Examination Sub-Committee, whose decision will be final.