

GUIDANCE FOR MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Extenuating Circumstances for the Situational Judgement Test (SJT) for selection to FP 2013

Extenuating circumstances are considered to be events which are severe and exceptional, unforeseen, unavoidable and occur close to the date of the SJT, which seriously affect the ability of an applicant to undertake the SJT on the date for which they are registered. Such events include bereavement, serious short term illness or accident.

Applicants declare themselves fit and well by entering the venue on the date of the SJT*. Claims of extenuating circumstance cannot be made retrospectively.

The 'burden of proof' to support a claim of extenuating circumstances lies with the applicant at all times. Applicants are required to submit their claim of extenuating circumstances using the specified form and with appropriate supporting independent evidence at the earliest opportunity and normally no later than one working day after the date of the SJT for which they are registered. The claim must be submitted to the SJT Lead at the medical school¹ or the Eligibility Office².

Applicants must be aware that there are only two national SJT dates only for applications to FP 2013:

- Friday 7 December 2012, 2pm
- Monday 7 January 2013, 10am

If an applicant is deemed by the medical school dean or by the Eligibility Office to have extenuating circumstances, they will be permitted to take the SJT on the subsequent SJT date. An applicant with extenuating circumstances on Friday 7 December 2012 will be permitted to take the SJT on Monday 7 January 2013, 10am. An applicant with extenuating circumstances on Monday 7 January 2013 will be permitted to take the SJT on a third contingency date on Monday 14 January 2013, 10am.

An applicant's SJT score will not be changed in any circumstance as the result of a claim of extenuating circumstances. Any applicant unable to undertake the SJT within the national testing window will be withdrawn from the FP 2013 application process.

***In the event of being taken unwell during the SJT**

An applicant's SJT score will not be adjusted in any circumstance if an applicant is taken unwell during the SJT. They will be given the choice to stay and complete the SJT with no additional time or for their part-completed answer sheet to be scored. In an extreme situation, and with supporting medical evidence, the applicant may be permitted to take the SJT on the next date as a first sit.

¹ For applicants who qualified or are expecting to qualify from a UK medical school between August 2011 and August 2013.

² For applicants who qualified from a medical school outside of the UK, or from a UK medical school prior to 6 August 2011.

1. The following would normally be considered to be acceptable extenuating circumstances

The following list illustrates examples of extenuating circumstances which seriously affect the ability of an applicant to undertake the SJT on the date for which they are registered. This list is given without prejudice and for general guidance; it is not exhaustive, definitive or prescriptive. Each claim of extenuating circumstances is considered on its own merits and as an individual case, at the discretion of the medical school dean or Eligibility Office.

- **Medical or dental emergency of the applicant** - An original medical certificate or a letter from the health professional who has examined the applicant for this illness/hospitalisation on the day of, or in the days immediately preceding, the SJT. The evidence must confirm the nature and severity of the circumstance, and make clear that the applicant is unfit to undertake the SJT. For a long-term medical condition, the evidence must confirm that there has been a flare up at the time of the SJT.
- **Medical emergency of a close relative, partner, friend or third party for whom the applicant has caring responsibilities** - Where there is a demonstrably close relationship between the applicant and the affected individual, independent evidence must confirm the impact on the applicant's ability to undertake the SJT.
- **Bereavement or funeral of a close relative, partner, friend or third party for whom the applicant has caring responsibilities, close to the date of the SJT** - Where there is a demonstrably close relationship between the applicant and the deceased, a death certificate or a letter confirming the death from an independent person (not a family member) with their contact details provided.
- **Victim of crime on or close to the date of the SJT** - A written statement of events which is supported by written evidence from the police (including a verifiable crime reference number). Where relevant, an original medical certificate or letter from an appropriate professional confirming the impact the reported crime has had on the applicant's ability to undertake the SJT.
- **Severe transport disruption** – Independent evidence of the incident and the scale of impact, plus evidence of intention to travel via this route e.g. a copy of flight tickets.

2. The following would not normally be considered to be acceptable extenuating circumstances:

- **Late arrival at the SJT venue** - Applicants must ensure that they arrive at the SJT venue on time, irrespective of the form of transport used or relied upon. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they know and remember the location, time and duration of the SJT. Applicants arriving up to 30 minutes late will be permitted entry to the SJT, but no extra time will be given. Applicants arriving 30 minutes after the start time of the SJT will be refused entry.
- **Personal disruptions or events which could have been anticipated, such as travel plans, weddings, changing address or employment** - It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they are available for the SJT date for which they are registered.
- **Visa issue or permit to travel to the UK** - It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they are available for the SJT date for which they are registered.
- **Accommodation issues** - It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they have access to suitable accommodation. Applicants who do not have access to accommodation during a period of assessment are advised to travel to the SJT centre in advance or book temporary local accommodation.
- **Care responsibilities** – It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that alternative care arrangements are made.
- **Exam stress** - Feeling 'below par' leading up to and during the SJT will not be considered.
- **Financial difficulties** – It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they are available for the SJT date to which they are registered.
- **Late declaration of a disability** – The timeline for providing evidence of a disability requiring reasonable adjustments is clearly stated in the FP/AFP 2013 Applicant's Handbook. Appropriate reasonable adjustments may be made by the SJT centre for an applicant with an acute temporary physical disability, e.g. an amanuensis.
- **Religious observance** – The dates of the SJT have been selected to avoid religious holidays. Applicants may request an alternative start time on the grounds of religious observance as a reasonable adjustment.

3. Standard of evidence

The 'burden of proof' to support a claim of extenuating circumstances lies with the applicant at all times.

Claims of extenuating circumstances, and accompanying evidence, must be submitted to the SJT Lead at the medical school or Eligibility Office at the earliest opportunity and normally no later than one working day after the date of the SJT.

The SJT Lead at the medical school or Eligibility Office reserves the right to take such steps as deemed necessary to verify the evidence submitted without prior notification.

Evidence presented by applicants would normally be expected to meet the following standards:

- Evidence must be written by independent, appropriately qualified professionals.
- Evidence must be on headed paper, signed and dated by the author, and provide the GMC reference number (or equivalent) of the practitioner, where relevant. Evidence presented by email may be acceptable if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation.
- Full contact details of the author must be provided, including name, telephone number, email address and postal address.
- Evidence must be dated at the time of the reported extenuating circumstance and may not be retrospective.
- Evidence must be in English. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide supporting documentation and any translation should be undertaken by an accredited translator (e.g. be a member of the Association of Translation Companies - <http://www.atc.org.uk/index.html>).
- Evidence must be original. Copies of supporting evidence will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

and

- Evidence must be unaltered by the applicant. Documentation that has been amended for any reason will be deemed in-admissible by the medical school or Eligibility Office. If there is evidence that an applicant has fraudulently presented documentation, this may jeopardise their application to the Foundation Programme.
- Character witnesses are not acceptable.
- The medical school or Eligibility Office should only uphold an applicant's claim of extenuating circumstances when, in their opinion, all of the above clauses are fully satisfied.
- The decision of the medical school dean or the Eligibility Office is final.

4. Confidentiality of Evidence

By submitting a claim of extenuating circumstances, you agree to personal data being held for the purposes of processing your claim, in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 1998](#).

Confidential information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Any applicant wishing to restrict the sharing of such information should make his or her wishes known in writing. Normally such wishes will be respected unless to do so would be against the best interests of safety or security of any person(s).

The SJT Lead at the medical school or Eligibility Office reserves the right to contact a third party directly to verify the evidence provided. The UKFPO reserves the right to request access to the extenuating circumstances claim form and accompanying evidence.

Applicants should be aware that the SJT Lead at the medical school or Eligibility Office cannot respond to an applicant's circumstances if they remain unaware of relevant information.

CONFIDENTIAL
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES CLAIM FORM

This form should be completed if you want to make the medical school or Eligibility Office aware of any extenuating circumstances which you believe seriously affects your ability to undertake the SJT on the date for which you are registered. Please note that only the most serious extenuating circumstances are likely to result in permission to take the SJT on a subsequent date. Retrospective claims of extenuating circumstances will not be considered, except in extreme circumstances. Please read the guidance notes fully.

This form must be completed and returned to the SJT Lead at the medical school or Eligibility Office at the earliest opportunity, and normally no later than one working day after the date of the SJT for which you are registered.

Applicant name	
FPAS reference number	
Applicant's medical school	
Applicant e-mail address	
Date registered to take SJT	
Date claim submitted	

Details of extenuating circumstances

List below the documentation which you have attached in support of your statement.

The SJT Lead at the medical school or Eligibility Office reserves the right to verify the validity of supporting evidence by contacting the third party directly. The medical school or Eligibility Office reserves the right to reject claims where evidence is not provided. If there is evidence that you have fraudulently presented documentation, this may jeopardise your application to the Foundation Programme.

I confirm that the information I have given is true, and that I have read and understood the guidelines on extenuating circumstances

SIGNED _____ **DATE** _____

Data protection

For the purpose of processing my request for reasonable adjustments, I consent to the use of my name and other relevant details as set out above. I understand that this information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent unless authorised by law.

SIGNED _____ **DATE** _____