

Extenuating Circumstances Guidance for the Situational Judgement Test (SJT) for selection to UKFP 2020

What are extenuating circumstances?

Extenuating circumstances are considered to be events which are severe, exceptional, unplanned and unavoidable which occur close to the date of the SJT, and 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 injury.

What to do if an applicant has extenuating circumstances

Applicants should notify the named lead at their medical school or Eligibility Office if they are unable to attend the SJT. Applicants declare themselves fit and well by entering the venue on the date of the SJT. Claims of extenuating circumstances cannot be made retrospectively after taking the SJT. An applicant's SJT score will not be changed in any circumstance as the result of a claim of extenuating circumstances.

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 UKFP 2020 SJT Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form 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 medical school¹ or the Eligibility Office².

There are only two national SJT dates for applications to UKFP 2020:

- Friday 6 December 2019 10am; or
- Monday 6 January 2020 10am.

There is a third date only for applicants with extenuating circumstances on 6 January 2020:

- Monday 13 January 2020 10am

Applicants can only make one claim of extenuating circumstances. 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. If an applicant is deemed by the medical school or by the Eligibility Office to have extenuating circumstances, they will be permitted to take the SJT on the next SJT date.

¹ For applicants who qualified or are expecting to qualify from a UK medical school between 1 August 2018 and 7 August 2020

² For applicants who qualified from a medical school outside of the UK, or from a UK medical school prior to 1 August 2018

Any applicant unable to undertake the SJT on either their first SJT date (6 December or 6 January) or on their contingency SJT date (6 January or 13 January) will be withdrawn from the UKFP 2020 application process.

In the event of being taken unwell during the SJT

Applicants declare themselves fit to sit by starting the SJT test paper. If an applicant is taken suddenly and severely unwell after the start of the SJT, the Lead Invigilator may permit the applicant to leave the test hall and submit a claim of extenuating circumstances to take the SJT on the next date as a first sit. It is the responsibility of the applicant to let the invigilator know if they are taken suddenly unwell during the SJT. The applicant must disclose if they wish to continue the test or claim extenuating circumstances if approached by an invigilator about their wellbeing during the SJT. An extenuating circumstances request form must be submitted, along with supporting medical evidence. NB If an applicant has been granted extenuating circumstances once, a second claim will not be considered.

An applicant who is taken severely or suddenly unwell but stays in the test hall to continue with the SJT will not be given any additional time and will not be able to claim extenuating circumstances. Claims of extenuating circumstance cannot be made retrospectively after taking the SJT. An applicant's SJT score will not be changed in any circumstance as the result of a claim of extenuating circumstances.

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

The following list illustrates examples of extenuating circumstances that 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.

- **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 health 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, the applicant must provide 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 arriving up to 30 minutes late will be permitted entry to the SJT, but no extra time will be given. Applicants arriving more than 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.**
- **Visa issue or permit to travel to the UK.**
- **Accommodation issues** - 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 (e.g. a hotel).
- **Care responsibilities** - Alternative care arrangements may need to be made by the applicant.
- **'Exam stress'** - Feeling 'below par' leading up to and during the SJT will not be considered.
- **Financial difficulties.**
- **Late declaration of a disability** - The timeline for providing evidence of a disability requiring reasonable adjustments is clearly stated in the Applicant's Handbook. Appropriate reasonable adjustments may be made by the SJT centre for an applicant with an acute temporary physical health condition, e.g. an amanuensis.
- **Religious observance** - The dates of the SJT are selected to avoid religious holidays. Applicants may request an alternative start time on the grounds of religious observance as a reasonable adjustment.
- **Feeling unwell during the SJT and not disclosing it** – It is the responsibility of the applicant to keep invigilators informed if they feel too unwell during the test to continue. Applicants declare themselves "fit to sit" by starting the SJT and must report if they are taken suddenly unwell and cannot continue the test. Applicants who make a claim about feeling unwell following the SJT will not be granted extenuating circumstances.
- **Transcribing** – Applicants are given clear guidelines that they should complete their answers on the answer sheet within the given time (2 hours 20 minutes). If answers are marked onto the question paper and the applicant runs out of time transcribing them onto the answer sheet, they will not be permitted to have these copied across following the SJT or to take the SJT on another date.

3. Standard of evidence

Claims of extenuating circumstances, and accompanying evidence, must be submitted to the named 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 named 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 submitted by applicants would normally be expected to meet the following standards:

- Evidence must be written by independent, appropriately qualified professionals. Medical evidence must be written by an independent recognised healthcare professional, who is not related to the applicant by birth or marriage, is not in a personal relationship with the applicant and does not live at the same address as the applicant.
- Evidence must be on headed paper, and 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/>)
- 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 inadmissible 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 or the Eligibility Office is final.

4. Confidentiality of Evidence

By submitting a claim of extenuating circumstances, the applicant agrees to personal data being held for the purposes of processing the claim, in accordance with the 2018 Data Protection Act.

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 medical school or Eligibility Office reserve 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 medical school or Eligibility Office cannot respond to an applicant's circumstances if they remain unaware of relevant information.

CONFIDENTIAL
UKFP 2020 SJT EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES CLAIM FORM

This form should be completed to make the medical school or Eligibility Office aware of any extenuating circumstances which seriously affect your ability to undertake the SJT on the date for which you are registered. Please read the guidance notes fully.

This form must be completed and returned to the named 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.

Name	
Oriel PIN	
Medical school	
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 medical school or Eligibility Office reserves the right to verify the validity of supporting evidence by contacting the third party directly, and 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 extenuating circumstances, 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:** _____