

Equity, Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy

1. What does this policy document cover?

- 1.1 This policy describes LCME's approach to equity, and arrangements for requesting reasonable adjustments or special considerations.

2. Who is the document for?

- 2.1 This policy applies to candidate(s), parents of children under 18 years of age acting on their behalf, and bookers.

3. Statement of Principle

- 3.1 LCME values the diversity of its candidates from around the world. LCME aims to create a welcoming, inclusive and enriching environment for our candidates to reach their full potential.
- 3.2 We are committed to providing an environment where all our stakeholders - candidates, parents acting on behalf of candidates, staff, examiners, bookers, area representatives, centre managers, and centres - are treated with respect regardless of their disability status, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

4. Eligibility for examination

- 4.1 The statement of principle informs LCME's approach to equity. Entry to LCME exams is available, and assessment is carried out, on an equal and fair basis to all candidates, regardless of origin, status or background.
- 4.2 Candidates of any age may enter for examination, and there are no prerequisite qualifications required.

5. Equity of Access to Examinations

- 5.1 Criteria by which candidates are accepted for examination, and assessed, will be:
- Fair
 - Consistently applied
 - Open
 - Congruent with the University of West London's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement and Policy

- 5.2 In no circumstances will any candidate be accepted for, or rejected from, examination, either wholly or partly on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, class, or employment status.
- 5.3 In carrying out assessment and awarding marks, the sole point of reference for examiners is the degree of mastery demonstrated by the candidate in relation to the tasks set for the examination. Any evidence that assessment has been affected by factors other than the mastery of skills, constitutes grounds for appeal (see LCME Procedural Appeals Policy) and will be treated with the utmost seriousness.
- 5.4 Candidates will need to be aware that all examinations are conducted using **English** as the language of communication. Documents, publications and syllabuses produced by LCME will use inclusive language and avoid stereotyping.

6. Reasonable Adjustments

- 6.1 LCME encourages and supports candidates with learning needs and disabilities to enter for examinations.
- 6.2 The terms learning needs and disabilities used throughout this policy are as defined under the UK's Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as ***'A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'***. The definition of long-term provided by the Equality Act 2010 is if the effect of impairment has lasted or is likely to at least **12 months or more**.
- 6.3 We recognise that candidates with learning needs and disabilities as defined by the Equality Act 2010 may require reasonable adjustments to be put in place in order to ensure that they have equitable access to assessment.
- 6.4 Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to enable a candidate with learning needs or a disability to undertake their assessment so that they are not disadvantaged due to their disability. Reasonable adjustments cannot be made to the levels of attainment required for a qualification nor affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes or give the candidate in question an unfair assessment advantage.

7. How do I make a reasonable adjustment request?

- 7.1 Requests for reasonable adjustments should be made by completing the Reasonable Adjustment Form via the dedicated portal on LCME's website, a **minimum of 6 weeks** prior to the date of examination, to give LCME time to review the request and consider what reasonable adjustment could be put in place: lcme.uwl.ac.uk/contact/
- 7.2 Submitting a request for reasonable adjustment does not guarantee such reasonable adjustments can always be made. Reasonable adjustment requests will be accepted in most

cases, provided the measure requested is effective in *alleviating the disadvantage* and is *reasonable in all the circumstances*, including being the most *proportionate way* to provide the support.

- 7.3 Reasonable adjustments must be made within the deadline and approved by LCME and set in place prior to the assessment. Applications made outside of the submission deadlines will be considered; however, it may not be possible to accommodate the request. Where a late adjustment cannot be reasonably applied, the candidate(s) will either be required to withdraw from the examination and book another at a later date, or the candidate can choose to continue with the assessment without the adjustment being applied.

8. What information do I need to provide?

- 8.1 A Reasonable Adjustment Form must be completed and submitted for **each exam** entry of the same candidate in order for appropriate provision to be put in place.
- 8.2 The type of information and documentation required depends on the type of adjustment the candidate requires. The request must include the candidate's full legal name, a diagnosis of the difficulties given on the application, explanation of the candidate's requirements, along with details of the specific alteration to standard examination procedure that is being applied for, the name of the assessor and their qualifications.

For example:

- **Visual impairment:** A written statement from a qualified optometrist or signed medical practitioner's report.
- **Dyslexia:** A signed statement from a fully qualified and chartered educational psychologist, someone with a special needs teacher qualification or a school SENCO/specialist teacher.
- **Medical and physical difficulties:** A signed medical practitioner's report or doctor's note.
- **Psychological, neurological, dyspraxia or other learning difficulties:** A signed statement from a fully qualified and chartered educational psychologist, someone with a special needs teacher qualification or a school SENCO/specialist teacher.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1 Candidates' disability information will be treated with the strictest confidence and disclosed to individuals on a need-to-know basis. Where reasonable adjustments are made, LCME will for example, need to disclose the disability and/or reasonable adjustment to Centre managers and examiners to enable them to implement the reasonable adjustment.

10. Special Considerations

- 10.1 Special considerations are granted for a temporary illness, injury, bereavement or some other event outside of a candidate's control which adversely affects their ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment ("Special Consideration").

10.2 **Examples of eligibility events for Special Considerations:**

- Temporary illness, accident or injury prior to or at the time of assessment
- Bereavement or terminal illness of a family member of the candidate, close friend or pet shortly before or at the time of assessment
- Serious domestic crisis leading to anxiety
- Serious disturbance during an assessment, such as a fire drill or power failure
- Accidental events at the time of an assessment such as defective or failure of equipment
- Failure by an LCME Centre to implement a previously approved access arrangement for specific assessment

10.3 **Non-eligible events**

The following are examples of events which will not be eligible for Special Consideration:

- Very minor disturbances during an examination which did not materially impact on candidates ability to demonstrate the requirements of the examination.
- A permanent disability or difficult which is known at the time of entry to the examination. In these circumstances, candidates should apply for reasonable adjustments.
- A recorded digital examination submission that has not followed LCME's guidance.

10.4 **Decision to award Special Consideration**

LCME's decision on Special Consideration will be taken on a case-by-case basis having regard to all the circumstances of the case, evidence submitted or lack of substantive evidence, and to the qualification's objective.

10.5 **Examples of applicable Special Consideration**

Possible Special Consideration could include:

- A free or discounted examination re-entry on a different date for face-to-face examinations (where examination has not taken place)
- A free or discounted re-mark for recorded digital examinations and face-to-face examination (where examination has taken place)
- A free or discounted re-submission for recorded digital examinations
- A refund of examination fee in exceptional circumstances

The most common applicable special condition applied is for the candidate to transfer to an alternative date/session or to an online assessment on payment of the £20 transfer fee. Only in exceptional circumstances would the examination fee be refunded at the discretion of the Head of Examinations.

11. **How do I apply for Special Consideration?**

- 11.1 Applications for Special Consideration should be made by completing the Special Consideration Form via the dedicated portal on LCME's website **within 10 working days of**

the original examination date. lcme.uwl.ac.uk/contact/ Applications by any other methods will not be considered for example email applications to LCME Centres.

- 11.2 Separate applications must be made for each candidate, except where a group of candidates have been affected by a similar circumstance, in which case the Booker may apply for Special Consideration on behalf of all candidates affected.
- 11.3 Applications must be supported by appropriate evidence, such as a doctor's certificate in the case of illness, or a written statement where a candidate's performance was affected by an event outside their control.
- 11.4 Applications for Special Consideration will not be considered once a qualification certificate has been issued unless there has been a compelling case put forward as part of the Appeals process.
- 11.5 Applications should include:
- Venue name
 - Candidate Name
 - Qualification title and level
 - Date of the examination
 - A written statement of the illness or circumstances affecting the candidate's performance and supporting evidence – further details below.
- 11.6 Candidates should be aware that centre managers are under no obligation to re-timetable examinations as a result of illness, bereavement etc., and on no account should examiners be approached directly about such matters.

12. Making a request for special consideration on medical grounds

- 12.1 A written statement of the circumstances should be accompanied by a signed doctor's letter or other medical evidence indicating the reason and making it clear that the candidate was incapacitated on the day of the scheduled examination. The candidate will then be permitted to re- enter for the same examination on payment of half the current fee.
- 12.2 Special consideration requests must be made within the deadline and approved by LCME. Candidates who are unwell on the day of the exam but elect to take it nonetheless, cannot be granted special consideration in terms of assessment. Candidates who fail to complete an examination will not normally be given the opportunity to complete it at a later stage. Components of an examination which are not attempted will be awarded 0, and an aegrotat award will not be made.

13. Making a request for special consideration on non-medical grounds

- 13.1 A written statement of the circumstances indicating the reason, and enclosing documentary evidence such as a statement from the booker or parent of candidates under 18. On

consideration of their case, the candidate may be permitted to re-enter for the same examination on payment of half the current fee, or in exceptional circumstances for no fee at the discretion of the Head of Examinations.

- 13.2 Special consideration requests must be made within the deadline and approved by LCME. Candidates who are suffering from emotional stress on the day of the exam but elect to take it nonetheless, cannot be granted special consideration in terms of assessment. Candidates who fail to complete an examination will not normally be given the opportunity to complete it at a later stage. Components of an examination which are not attempted will be awarded 0, and an aegrotat award will not be made.

14. Communication of decisions

- 14.1 LCME will acknowledge receipt of your request within **5 working days** and aims to communicate its decision as to whether to award a reasonable adjustment or special considerations request within **15 working days**.
- 14.2 If you disagree with the decision, we have made you may appeal within **15 working days** of the date of issue of the decision letter by following the procedure in our Procedural Appeals Policy.

15. Personal Data

- 15.1 Information will be collected only regarding aspects of the candidate which have a specific bearing on eligibility for examination, or which are required for certification, or which are required for compliance with criteria laid down by the regulatory authorities. This information will be kept confidential according to our Privacy Policy: <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/privacy-and-data-protection> and retained as per our Retention Policy: <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-regulations/data-retention-policy#>
- 15.2 All medical evidence submitted to LCME will be securely deleted 6 months after the end of the relevant exam session.

Glossary of Terms

Area Representatives	means an individual contracted by LCME to promote LCME exams and source candidates, teachers, and centres in their allocated area to undertake and hold examinations.
Booker	means a third party (i.e. parent, teacher, centre managers) who makes an examination booking on behalf of a candidate.
Candidate	means an individual who is registered with LCME to undertake an LCME examination.
Centres	mean an LCME approved premise which can hold LCME examinations.
Centre Manager	means either a public or private centre.
Disability	has the meaning given to it in the Equality Act 2010.
Examiners	means a person contracted by the University of West London to deliver and assess examinations offered by London College of Music Examinations.
LCME	means London College of Music Examinations.
Private Centres	are typically schools who organise examination arrangements for their students to undertake LCME exams. LCME Examiners are invited to attend the school's premises to conduct the examinations.
Procedural Appeals Policy	means the policy which deals with appealing outcomes of LCME decisions except academic judgment on grades and results.
Public Centres	are contracted by LCME to source candidates to undertake LCME examinations and examination venues for LCME to hold examinations.

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Appendix 1: Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

What follows is not a comprehensive list of available adjustments, as these will emerge through dialogue between LCME and the applicant. However, they are included as indications of the kinds of routine reasonable adjustments that have proven supportive to LCME candidates over time.

Written materials (all subjects)

LCME can make written materials used in exams, such as music theory papers, sight-reading tests and unseen texts, available in a variety of formats, for example:

- Photo-enlarged print
- Using different colours of print and/or background
- Reverse black-white printing
- Braille
- Modified stave notation

Teachers, parents/carers or candidates should advise LCME of the preferred format at the time of making the request, enclosing a specimen if possible.

Candidates may answer questions in written exams using a laptop computer (for music exams, the use of music notation software, as well as word-processing software, will be necessary). The centre manager will make arrangements for the candidate's responses to be delivered to LCME securely.

For the performance component of music, drama and communication or spoken English exams, candidates may use their own specially prepared copies of the music/text, including Braille versions, provided the original published editions are also available in the examination room. Questions in discussion components of exams will be asked with reference to the scores used by the candidate. Candidates playing by ear will still be expected to demonstrate a working knowledge of the symbols used in stave notation, appropriate to the grade.

Additional support (all subjects)

Candidates can request that an additional person be present in the exam room with them to provide support as necessary. This could be, for example, to provide practical help with moving around the exam room, to aid communication, or for emotional support. It also includes the option for candidates to bring an amanuensis or interpreter to translate the examiner's requests and instructions and convey the candidate's responses.

The additional person present in the exam room may not take any active part in the examination process, and their presence may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

For written examinations, candidates who require to speak their responses to an amanuensis may do so in a separate room with a separate invigilator. The amanuensis may not be the candidate's teacher or a relative. All graphic responses and symbols should be described clearly to the amanuensis, rather than referred to by their name. The amanuensis is required to remain strictly neutral, and the invigilator is required to ensure this.

Interacting with examiners (all subjects)

Candidates can expect examiners to be clear in their verbal directions, and to be prepared to assist them in navigating the exam room if requested. As part of the reasonable adjustment request process, examiners will be briefed on the candidate's stated needs in relation to communication style. They will be prepared to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate, or if the candidate does not respond initially to the instruction, or to slow down their delivery, rephrase questions etc. as necessary.

The examiner can also be forewarned about the need to speak clearly and distinctly at an appropriate volume, to look directly at the candidate when speaking in order to facilitate lip-reading, and to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate. Instructions from the examiner can also be written rather than spoken.

In the exam room (all subjects)

Where possible, special arrangements may be made for adapted lighting in the examination room for both practical and written exams. It is also possible to arrange for written exam candidates to take their examination in a room separately from other candidates.

Extra time (all subjects)

Where candidates request additional time to complete an assessment as part of an application for a reasonable adjustment this will not exceed 25% of the allocated exam time.

Exam format (music)

In music examinations, candidates who are unable to offer any of Components 1, 3, 4 or 5 may use the Recital option or elect to take Leisure Play examinations, where these components are not required. If candidates select to enter for graded exams, no components can be substituted or omitted with the exception of alternative sight-reading and adapted aural tests as below.

Adapted sight-reading and aural tests (music)

In music exams, candidates may elect for the sightreading test to be replaced by a memory test. In this, the examiner will play a short extract of music three times, which the candidate is required to respond by playing back on their instrument, or singing. This can be requested through the enquiries portal at lcme.uwl.ac.uk/contact/ Specimen tests are available from the LCME office.

For candidates who play by ear, elements of the aural tests which involve the candidate reading from printed music may be adapted accordingly. Aural tests can also be pre-recorded using certain instrumental or synthesised timbres and/or at a higher volume and/or at alternative pitches.