

# ORE Part 1 - Mitigating Circumstances Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Definition of a mitigating circumstance: Mitigating circumstances are defined as significant, unforeseen, and unavoidable events beyond a candidate's control that may have a material and adverse effect on their ability to undertake or perform in the examination.
- 1.2 Purpose of the Policy: This policy explains how mitigating circumstances are handled in relation to the ORE Part 1 examination, including the process to follow before the examination, on the day of the examination, and after the examination (retrospectively).
- 1.3 Candidates may submit a request for mitigating circumstances through the General Dental Council (GDC). In doing so, candidates may either withdraw from an examination before the examination date, or request retrospective consideration following an examination sitting.
- 1.4 Requests for mitigating circumstances are submitted to the General Dental Council (GDC) via the refund application process.
- 1.5 All decisions relating to examination attempts, including whether an attempt counts and whether a refund is issued, are made solely by the General Dental Council (GDC).
- 1.6 Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, the General Dental Council (GDC) retains sole responsibility for determining whether an examination attempt will count and whether a refund will be issued.
- 1.7 Scope of application: This policy applies to all candidates undertaking the ORE Part 1 examination and supports consistent, transparent, and defensible decision-making.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1 Fitness to sit : Candidates who present themselves at an examination are deemed to have made a professional judgement that they are fit to sit the examination.
- 2.2 Retrospective consideration in exceptional circumstances: Where a candidate commences or continues the examination, performance will be assessed in the same manner as all other candidates and no retrospective adjustment to marks will be made, unless there are exceptional circumstances where it was deemed that the candidate was not in a position to make a reasoned judgement regarding their fitness to sit the examination.

- 2.3 No on-the-day adjustment: Adjustments will not be made for circumstances disclosed for the first time on the day of the examination. If candidates encounter a circumstance on the day of the examination which means they are unable to continue, they must inform the Lead Examiner immediately.
- 2.4 Finality of decisions : Decisions made under this policy are final, subject to any review by the General Dental Council (GDC).

### 3. Scope of mitigating circumstances

- 3.1 Circumstances considered: Circumstances which may be considered include acute illness, injury, bereavement, serious personal or family emergencies, and significant disruption during the examination. The GDC outlines the exceptional circumstances where a candidate would be considered for refund here: [ORE refund policy](#)
- 3.2 Circumstances not normally considered: Circumstances which will not normally be considered include pre-existing or long-term conditions, where no prior application for reasonable adjustments has been made, and minor ailments unlikely to impact performance.
- 3.3 Relationships to other policies: Pre-existing conditions, disabilities, or learning differences should be addressed through the Reasonable Adjustments Policy. Issues relating to examination conduct should be addressed through the Complaints Policy.

### 4. Timing for application

- 4.1 Prior to examination: Candidates who are unable to attend due to mitigating circumstances must notify the GDC as soon as reasonably possible (examinations@gdc-uk.org), they can then apply for mitigating circumstances through the GDC Refund Form ([ORE Refund Form](#)). Notifications should relate to withdrawal from the exam- any requests for reasonable adjustments should be made in line with our reasonable adjustments policy. Please note that both the decisions regarding refunds and whether the exam in question counts as an attempt for the individual candidate rest with the GDC.
- 4.2 During the examination: Candidates who experience mitigating circumstances during the examination must inform a member of staff immediately. The Lead Examiner will consider the information provided and, where appropriate, complete an incident report recording the circumstances and any relevant observations. These details will then be reported to the GDC. The candidate will be asked whether they wish to continue with or withdraw from the examination.
- 4.2.1 Where a candidate elects to continue with the examination, their performance will be assessed in the same manner as all other candidates, and mitigating circumstances will not normally be considered retrospectively in relation to that examination attempt (see 4.3 Retrospective withdrawal).

4.2.2 Where a candidate elects to withdraw from the examination, they may request mitigating circumstances through the General Dental Council (GDC) by submitting an application for a refund through GDC Refund Form ([ORE Refund Form](#)) within five days of the examination. Any information provided by the Lead Examiner to the GDC through an incident report does not, in itself, constitute or approve an application for mitigating circumstances, but may be considered as supporting evidence in relation to a separate application submitted by the candidate.

4.3 Retrospective withdrawal: In cases where the candidate did not inform a member of staff their mitigating circumstances during the examination, in order for the Operational Lead to complete an incident report, requests for retrospective withdrawal will only be considered where there is compelling evidence that the candidate was not in a position to make a reasoned judgement regarding their fitness to sit the examination. In any case, retrospective requests will not be considered if they are made more than five days following the examination sitting.

## 5. Illness

5.1 Illness and Fitness to sit: Candidates are responsible for determining their own fitness to undertake the examination. Candidates who present themselves at the examination are deemed to have made a professional judgement that they are fit to do so.

5.2 Illness prior to examination: Candidates who become ill after the GDC has confirmed their place on an examination must notify the GDC as soon as possible if they are unable to attend. The GDC will notify the UCL Consortium Administrative Team of the candidate's withdrawal. In such cases, where candidates wish to submit a request for mitigating circumstances on the grounds of illness prior to the examination, they must complete the relevant refund application form and provide appropriate supporting evidence ([ORE Refund Form](#)).

5.3 Illness during the examination: If a candidate becomes unwell during the examination, they must immediately inform a member of the UCL Administrative Team or the Chief Invigilator. The circumstances will be formally recorded through an incident report (see Section 4 above). The candidate will be asked if they wish to continue.

5.4 Candidate Declaration of Fitness to Continue: Candidates must make a professional judgement as to whether they are fit to continue. Where a candidate elects to continue, they must confirm in writing that they are fit to do so by signing a declaration form.

5.5 Consequences of continuing: By choosing to continue and signing the declaration, the candidate acknowledges that no special consideration or adjustment will be applied, no adjustments can be made on the day without prior approval (see [Reasonable Adjustments](#) policy for more details on adjustments prior to the examination day), and their performance will be assessed in the same manner as all other candidates. Candidates will not

be retrospectively withdrawn from the examination unless there is compelling evidence to suggest the candidate was unable to make a reasoned judgement at the time.

5.6 Examiner authority and termination: The Lead Examiner or Operational Leads retain the authority to determine whether a candidate is fit to continue. The examination may be terminated where there are concerns relating to health and safety, puts the individual or others at risk, impacts the integrity of the examination, or the individual or other candidate's ability to complete the assessment. Where terminated, the attempt will normally count, subject to GDC determination.

## 6. Evidence Requirements

6.1 Medical evidence: Medical evidence must be provided by a qualified practitioner and must include details of the condition, severity, duration, and clearly dated.

6.2 Non-medical evidence: Non-medical circumstances must be supported by appropriate independent documentation.

6.3 Insufficient evidence: Applications submitted without appropriate supporting evidence will not be considered.

## 7. Outcomes

7.1 Withdrawal: Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, the outcome will normally be withdrawal from the examination.

7.2 Requirements to Resit: Candidates who withdraw will be required to sit all components of the examination at a future sitting if fit to do so.

7.3 Attempts, Refunds and GDC Determinations:

- 7.3.1 Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, the General Dental Council (GDC) retains sole responsibility for determining whether an examination attempt will count and whether a refund will be issued.
- 7.3.2 Candidates who withdraw from an examination or are granted mitigating circumstances must apply directly to the GDC for any refund consideration.
- 7.3.3 Information regarding eligibility and the application process for refunds is available via the GDC website: [ORE refund policy](#)
- 7.3.4 Candidates are responsible for submitting the appropriate refund application form and supporting evidence in accordance with GDC requirements.
- 7.3.5 The UCL Consortium does not make decisions in relation to attempts or refunds.

## 8. Communication of outcomes

8.1 Notification: Candidates will be notified in writing via email of the outcome of their application.

8.2 Time frame: Where possible, decisions will normally be communicated within ten (10) working days of a candidate's application.

8.3 Opportunity for review of the outcome: If a candidate wishes for the GDC to review the outcome of their application, the mechanism to do this is directly with the GDC (please see the [Part 1 Complaints and Reviews policy](#) for more information).

## 9. Submissions

9.1 Required documentation: Candidates must complete the official Refund Form and submit all supporting evidence ([ORE Refund Form](#)).

9.2 Incomplete applications: Incomplete applications or those submitted outside the specified timeframe will not normally be considered.