

Mitigating Circumstances for candidates in the MRCS and MRCS ENT examinations

1. Introduction

ICBSE operates a policy of “fit to sit”; that if a candidate presents to an examination they are confirming that they are in a fit state to take the examination. However, ICBSE recognises that there may be occasions when a candidate when taking an examination, experiences an event before the examination is completed that may cause them to perform at a less than optimal level. This policy provides guidance for candidates and Colleges to address such mitigating circumstances in a fair and equitable manner.

2. Definition

Mitigating circumstances are serious or extraordinary events that take place during an examination that significantly affect candidate performance. They might fall into a number of categories:

- Personal ill health
- Accident
- Bereavement
- Ill health of a dependent

Personal ill health or injury through accident during the examination, which affects a candidate’s performance, can be considered under the remit of this policy.

Bereavement or the ill health of a dependent can be considered under the remit of this policy if a candidate is informed of the situation during the course of the examination he/she is taking.

3. Procedure

Any application for special consideration due to mitigating circumstances should be supported in writing with relevant original documentation from an appropriate health practitioner (please see section 4 ‘Evidence’ below). Any such applications should be received by the Head of the Examinations Department within 14 days of the date of the examination.

The Head of Examinations will acknowledge receipt of the mitigating circumstances application and will then investigate ensuring that a report including written statements from those concerned are presented to the Chair of the Board of Examiners for review. The Head of Examinations will discuss the case with the Chair of their Board of Examiners and may undertake further investigations, as he/she deems necessary.

If the Chair of Board of Examiners considers that the application is within the permitted grounds, and the mitigating circumstances have had a significant effect on the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Chair of ICBSE for their approval, recommending the result be annulled and the attempt expunged. The Head of Examinations will wait for the approval of the Chair of ICBSE before notifying the candidate accordingly.

4. Evidence

Evidence in support of a mitigating circumstances application on the grounds of personal injury or ill health should include a medical certificate or letter on headed paper from the doctor who provided treatment, or a General Practitioner.

Evidence in support of a mitigating circumstances application on the grounds of bereavement or the ill health of a dependent should be a letter from an educational supervisor or a General Practitioner.

5. Outcome

Candidates should note that mitigating circumstances will not result in additional marks being awarded. Nor will mitigating circumstances result in a fail result being changed into a pass result. The outcome of a mitigating circumstances application submitted under these Regulations may only be determined as either:

- Rejected as considered to be unsubstantiated or outside the permitted grounds.
- Rejected as out of time or incomplete.
- Upheld, result of the examination (or relevant section) annulled and attempt expunged.

It is not possible to apply to have an attempt expunged on the grounds of mitigating circumstances after the exam result has been received.

Candidates who have had an attempt expunged on the grounds of mitigating circumstances will not receive their exam result. It will not be possible to reverse this decision once the attempt has been expunged.

Candidates should also note that fees will not be reimbursed for any attempts that have been expunged.

Confidentiality

All Mitigating Circumstances information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Related documents

MRCS Regulations

MRCS ENT Regulations

DO-HNS Regulations

Intercollegiate Appeals procedure