

Policy - Regulatory Examinations

June 2023

Request for reasonable adjustments for objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)

Purpose

This document sets out the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia's (the Board) policy for assessing requests for reasonable adjustments from applicants undertaking the Board's regulatory examinations for overseas-qualified Chinese herbal medicine practitioners and acupuncturists (candidates).

Scope

This policy applies to candidates for all divisions requesting reasonable adjustments to OSCE to accommodate a disability.

Policy

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments (also known as testing accommodations) are special arrangements for the administration of the MCQ examination and/or the OCSE to provide candidates with disabilities (physical or mental impairment/s) full access to the examination where possible. Reasonable adjustments must be made in line with the inherent requirements for safe and competent Chinese Medicine practice in Australia and must not compromise the integrity of the examination. The expected level of clinical competence is the same for all candidates and cannot change as part of a reasonable adjustment arrangement.

Certain items (e.g. medicines, medical devices and mobility devices) do not require a request for reasonable adjustments and are allowed into the examination room if they do not produce sound that will potentially distract other candidates. The examination centre staff may allow candidates to take these items into the examination room without pre-approval, subject to a visual inspection of the item by examination centre staff.

Medical devices such as insulin pumps, some glucometers, etc. that are attached to the body require a request for reasonable adjustments. Devices that do not produce sound or potentially distract other candidates will be allowed into the examination room. If a candidate has a device that does produce sound, Ahpra would need to request a separate room for that candidate and may require the candidate to reimburse Ahpra for any additional cost charged for that separate room.

Requests for reasonable adjustments to examinations because English may be a candidate's second language will not be considered, even where a candidate believes that this impairs their ability to pass the Board's regulatory examinations. Proficiency in English is a mandatory requirement for registration in Australia.¹

¹ Details of the Registration Standard: English Language Skills (2015) are available online at <https://www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx>.

Requests for reasonable adjustments to examinations because a candidate experiences anxiety or phobias will not be approved unless supported by a specific and professionally recognised diagnosis found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Test/examination anxiety is not a recognised diagnosis according to the DSM-5.²

OSCE

Due to the nature of the OSCE, requests by candidates for reasonable adjustments to the OSCE are unlikely to be approved. The regulatory examinations are conducted under standard examination conditions. If requested adjustments are considered to be reasonable, a special sitting of the OSCE may be required at an additional fee to the candidate. Adjustments will not be made if the psychometric soundness, fairness and security of the OSCE are threatened.

Request for reasonable adjustments

Candidates must submit a request for reasonable adjustments to Ahpra at the time of booking their OSCE. Relevant documentation must be provided by the candidate at the time of the request.

Appropriate documentation supporting the request for adjustments must be provided by the candidate at the time of the request and must include, at a minimum, a letter from a registered medical practitioner describing the candidate's disability/impairment and recommendations for reasonable adjustments with a stated rationale as to why the medical practitioner considers the requested adjustments are necessary and appropriate for the disability/impairment.

If the request relates to a diagnosed disability or impairment, the candidate must arrange for results of diagnostic testing and/or a report to be submitted by a qualified professional with expertise in the area of the diagnosed disability or impairment. The report (or supporting documentation) could include:

- A history of the disability/impairment and any past adjustment(s) granted to the candidate, as well as a description of the impact that the disability or impairment has on the individual's functioning
- Identification of the specific standardised and professionally recognised test/assessments given (e.g., Woodcock-Johnson, Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale)
- The scores resulting from testing, interpretation of the scores and evaluations, and
- Recommendations for reasonable adjustments with a stated rationale as to why the recommended adjustments are necessary and appropriate for the diagnosed disability/impairment.

Ahpra assessment of request

Ahpra will assess each candidate's request for reasonable adjustments to the OSCE, including the supporting documentation. This assessment will be completed as soon as possible, and not more than 20 working days, after Ahpra receives all the information

After assessing the request, Ahpra must consider whether the requested adjustments are reasonable for the candidate's needs, based on the candidate's request and supporting documentation. Ahpra's assessment will also consider the inherent requirements of safe and competent Chinese Medicine practice in Australia and the Board's standards, codes and guidelines applicable to disabilities and impairments. Ahpra legal advice will be sought where required.

Ahpra will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the assessment of their request for reasonable adjustments to the OSCE, including the reasons for the outcome.

Ahpra may:

- refer the request for reasonable adjustments to the Examinations Committee for advice on whether the requested adjustment compromises the psychometric soundness, fairness and security of the OSCE;

² *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* are available online at <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>

- approve the request; or
- decline the requested adjustment because it compromises the psychometric soundness, fairness and security of the OSCE.

Ahpra will inform that candidate about the outcome of Ahpra's assessment of their request, including the reasons for that outcome.

If Ahpra does not consider the requested adjustments are reasonable, Ahpra will notify the candidate of the outcome of Ahpra's assessment of their request, including the reasons for the outcome.

If the candidate does not agree with the outcome of Ahpra's assessment of the request for reasonable adjustments, the candidate may apply for further review by the Examinations Committee. The candidate must pay the relevant fee at the time of requesting the review.

Examinations Committee review

The Examinations Committee review will assess the request and supporting documentation, including any request for a review of Ahpra's assessment of the request.

Candidates must apply for a review by the Examinations Committee within five working days of being notified of the outcome of the Ahpra's assessment of the request for reasonable adjustments. The candidate must pay the relevant fee at the time of requesting Examinations Committee review.

There are two reasons for seeking a review by the Examinations Committee:

- The candidate believes that the manner in which the *Request for reasonable adjustment for OSCE candidates* has been followed was procedurally unfair.
- The candidate believes that the outcome of Ahpra's assessment of the request for reasonable adjustments is unfair or unreasonable on the basis of the available evidence.

All records relating to the review of the candidate's request for reasonable adjustments will be made available to the Examinations Committee, including information supplied by the candidate. The candidate has the right to appear before the Examinations Committee.

The Examinations Committee review findings may be:

- The original outcome of Ahpra's assessment of the request for reasonable adjustments is upheld.
- The original outcome of Ahpra's assessment of the request for reasonable adjustments is not upheld.

Where the original outcome of Ahpra's assessment of the request for reasonable adjustments is not upheld, the Examinations Committee will determine a new outcome and will advise that review fee may be refunded in full or in part.

The Examinations Committee will advise Ahpra of the outcome of their review.

Ahpra will notify the candidate in writing as soon as practicable following the Examinations Committee review decision and provide reasons for that decision.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed from time to time as required. This will generally be at least every three years.

Definitions and abbreviations

The regulatory examinations are used by the Board to assess overseas-qualified Chinese herbal medicine practitioners and acupuncturists who apply to register in Australia and who are assessed as holding a qualification that is relevant but not substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an Australian approved qualification (and who meet the mandatory registration standards).

Inherent requirements: the core activities, tasks or skills that are essential to a workplace in general, and to a specific position or role as a Chinese medicine practitioner or acupuncturist in Australia. The activities and/or tasks cannot be allocated elsewhere, are a core element of the position or role, and result in significant consequences if they are not performed.

Reasonable adjustments: special arrangements for the administration of the examination to provide candidates with physical or mental impairments full access to the examination without compromising the integrity of the examination and ensuring all candidates are assessed to the same level of competence.

Associated documents

Regulatory examinations candidate handbook – Objective structured clinical examination

Effective date

June 2023