

WITHDRAWALS AND ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING ILLNESS

This information is provided to help you take the correct action if you think your performance in the examination will be, or has been, adversely affected by illness or some other problem. **Please read the entire document with great care then show it to your tutor and discuss it with him or her to ensure that you are clear about what to do in the event of illness or other problems.** You must also read the examination regulations carefully because more detail is provided there.

The Society's Examiners are responsible for the delivery of the registration examination, including considering individual candidates' adverse circumstances and awarding results. It is important to remember that the Examiners' overriding duty of care is to the public rather than to examination candidates. This means that - in line with the Society's obligations - decisions taken by the Examiners, when considering individual requests for "null and void" or "request to pass", will be in the best interests of the public as potential patients rather than in favour of candidates as potential pharmacists.

A. Withdrawal BEFORE OR ON the day of the examination (Regulations 5.1 - 5.4)

This section summarises your options and the action you must take if you decide not to sit the examination sitting for which you have entered.

If you decide that for any reason you are unable or do not want to attempt the examination sitting for which you have entered, **YOU CAN WITHDRAW AT ANY TIME UP TO THE START OF THE EXAMINATION.** You must inform Laura McGarry, Examinations Manager, by letter postmarked no later than the 5th day after the day of the examination so that you can be treated as though you have not made an entry. It will be necessary for you to provide the Society with another examination entry form by the relevant date for your next sitting, and your examination fee will be transferred to this attempt (see regulation 5.4).

The Examiners would urge you most strongly to exercise this option and consider withdrawing from the examination if you believe beforehand that your performance will be adversely affected by illness or any other situation. In particular, if this will be your third (final) attempt at the examination, you are strongly advised to sit it ONLY if you feel fit and are ready to do so.

When deciding whether or not to withdraw from an examination sitting, it can be helpful to think about the examination from the perspective of actual practice. If a pharmacist is unwell or distracted by adverse circumstances they would be expected to make the professional decision not to work on that day. A pharmacist must not make dispensing or advice errors and then excuse themselves from these errors because of circumstances. This would be unacceptable in a real life scenario and the Examiners reflect this attitude with regards to the examination.

You must demonstrate your competence by meeting the pass mark of 70% overall and 70% in the calculations section. If you choose to sit the examination despite being adversely affected by illness or some other problem, you should be aware that you will not automatically be granted a "null and void" or "request to pass" if you advise the Examiners of your adverse circumstances after the examination. In particular, it is an expectation that all successful candidates achieve a minimum of 70% in the calculations section.

B. Your options if you sit the examination when affected by illness or adverse circumstances (Regulations 6.1 - 6.8)

This section summarises the action you need to take if you believe that your performance has been adversely affected by:

- (i) illness or some other problem which occurred before the examination in the days/weeks leading up to it or shortly before it started, but you decide nevertheless to sit the examination i.e. you do not withdraw (regulation 6.1)

or

- (ii) illness or some other problem which occurs during the examination. In this case, it is up to you to decide whether or not to complete the examination (regulation 6.2)

In either case, you must report the circumstance to the Chief Invigilator at the examination centre. You must sign the report form on which the Chief Invigilator makes his/her report. You will be given a copy of the report and a copy will be forwarded to the Examiners.

After the examination you have TWO options which are described below. If you would like to exercise one of these options (you cannot choose both), you must:

- write to Laura McGarry, Examinations Manager, sending your letter by Royal Mail's Recorded Signed-for service (which provides proof of posting, signature on arrival and online confirmation of delivery). The letter must be postmarked no later than the 5th day after the date of the examination
- summarise in your letter the nature of your illness/adverse circumstances
- state CLEARLY which option you would like the Examiners to consider in your case
- send evidence with the letter to corroborate your circumstances (in the case of ill-health this must include a report by a medical practitioner)
- send with the letter your copy of the Chief Invigilator's report.

Your letter and enclosures will be anonymised and forwarded to the Examiners for consideration when results are awarded.

1. Nullification option

Request to have the examination attempt nullified (Regulation 6.5)

This is the option to choose if you believe that your performance in the examination has been SERIOUSLY adversely affected by illness or other adverse circumstances during the examination, whether or not you decided to complete the examination. In this case, you may request in your letter to Laura McGarry, Examinations Manager, that you be treated as though you did not have an examination attempt on this occasion. Your request (anonymised) will be presented to the Examiners before marks are considered to award results.

If the Examiners grant your request, they will not consider your marks and you will not be informed about any marks for this examination sitting. The attempt will be nullified. A subsequent attempt will carry the same conditions of entry as the attempt not counted and you will be required to pay a new fee for any future entry to the examination.

2. Request to pass option

Request to be granted a pass (Regulation 6.4)

This is the option to choose if you believe that your illness/circumstances might have prevented you from achieving a pass by a narrow margin. In this case, you should request in your letter to Laura McGarry, Examinations Manager, that your circumstances be taken into account and that you be granted a pass.

In exceptional cases (i.e. rarely) the Examiners may take into account a candidate's illness or adverse circumstance and grant him/her a pass, but **ONLY** if his or her marks in the examination **narrowly** fail to meet the pass criteria.

You must note that it is not possible to ask the Examiners to decide between options 1 and 2 on your behalf: it must be your decision as to which is requested because only you can judge how badly your performance was affected.

You must also note that after a request has been made to the Examiners under one of the two options, the Examiners will not subsequently give consideration for the same situation under the other option.

Some candidates who do not draw their illness or other adverse circumstances to the Examiners' attention before the Examiners have met to award results, as instructed above, apparently decide to adopt a 'wait and see' approach. If they fail, they then seek to appeal on the basis of their circumstances. **You are strongly advised not to do this because attempting to appeal after you receive your result on the grounds of a problem that you knew about at the time of sitting the examination and did not draw to the Examiners' attention by exercising one of the available options, will not succeed.** A brief summary of the reason for this is given here:

The Appeals System

The appeal mechanism exists to enable a candidate to ask for a re-consideration of his or her result if s/he has failed, based on:

- procedural grounds i.e. because some aspect of the examination procedures or systems has not been applied correctly in his or her case

or

- some other matter which has come to light subsequently and which the candidate could not have notified to the Examiners before the examination commenced or at any time up to the 5th day after the date of the examination.

Note also that if you do notify the Society of adverse circumstances prior to the Examiners' meeting to award results and submit evidence for this, the circumstances will have been brought to the attention of the Examiners at their meeting to award results. An appeal against a result for the same reason will not normally be considered again by the Examiners.

Remember to read the examination regulations thoroughly. If you have a query on any aspect of the regulations, or with this document, please contact Laura McGarry on laura.mcgarry@rpsgb.org or 020 7572 2484