



Faculty of Public Health Medicine procedures regarding resubmission of PHRs that fail

This document sets out the Faculty procedures regarding resubmissions of failed PHRs, including the situation where on the third sitting the PHR fails outright, or where amendments have not been carried out in the timeframe required, or to the standard expected by the Examiner. Although a rare and exceptional situation which has not arisen to date, this document sets out what would happen if this circumstance arose.

RCPI Faculty Examination regulations

The Examination Regulations state that candidates are allowed three attempts at the Part II examination (Part IIA and Part IIB PHRs) irrespective of the number of PHRs submitted for examination at one attempt/sitting. Candidates are also advised that one attempt/sitting of the Part II examination is taken when one or more PHRs are submitted for examination. Each Part II attempt/sitting may involve submission of either one PHR only (i.e. submission of Part IIA only or submission of Part IIB only for that attempt/sitting) or submission of two PHRs at the same time (i.e. submission of Part IIA and Part IIB at the same attempt/sitting).

A candidate who is unsuccessful in Part II may resubmit written material if so, advised by the Examiners; Examiners may advise the candidate to abridge, enlarge or otherwise alter any part of the PHR before resubmission or may request further written material. Alternatively, the candidate may be advised or may choose to submit a PHR on a different topic.

Examination and assessment of PHRs

Two Examiners, one of whom is the Lead Examiner, assess and mark each PHR separately, using the assessment form available at RCPI website here:

<https://www.rcpi.ie/Learn-and-Develop/Examinations/RCPI-Examinations/Membership-of-the-Faculty-of-Public-Health-Medicine/Information-and-Resources>

In advance of the oral, the Examiners discuss their assessments, and in the event that fewer than 3 areas are graded/deemed satisfactory and/or any area graded/deemed unsatisfactory (fail), the Extern is notified.

At the oral examination, the performance of the candidate is assessed and there is the opportunity to modify and amend the assessment that was based on the written PHR. The final assessment result is agreed by the Examiners with oversight from the Extern who attends the oral examination. The Lead Examiner, who liaises with the Second Examiner on the detail of the content, provides written feedback to each candidate using a standard form.

Procedures followed when PHRs fail.

If the PHR fails, the Lead Examiner will indicate to the candidate whether or not the PHR is suitable to be resubmitted again for examination at another sitting.

If, as is generally the case, the PHR topic is suitable for resubmission, the Lead Examiner will provide detailed feedback using the standard feedback form on the changes that need to be made to the PHR, including but not confined to issues relating to methods used, presentation of results, or interpretation of the work that need to be addressed to bring it to a standard that can pass the examination.

If the candidate chooses to re-submit the PHR, then they are expected to have addressed all of the comments provided in the detailed feedback from the first submission of the PHR.

The candidate is advised by the Convenor of Part II that they need to provide information in tabular format, on how each item of feedback has been addressed and reference this in the resubmitted PHR. The form for providing this information is available in appendix A.

If the feedback and specific requests for change have been addressed comprehensively when assessed by the Examiners, then the re-submitted report will pass.

If the changes required have been addressed to some extent, but further amendments are required, then the candidate must complete these as detailed by the Lead Examiner, and within the timeframe set out by the Faculty without the possibility of extension.

If the candidate has not addressed the required changes adequately, they will fail again. The Lead Examiner will indicate whether this PHR can be re-submitted again in the feedback to the candidate, and will provide detailed feedback on the areas that need to be addressed. If this PHR is resubmitted, the candidate will need to provide information in tabular format, on how each item of feedback has been addressed and reference this in the resubmitted PHR. The form for providing this information is available in appendix A.

A third re-submission of failed PHR will be the third and final sitting allowed for a candidate. If the re-submitted PHR fails, due to not addressing the previous Examiner feedback and requirements adequately and within the timeframe allowed, then the candidate has failed Part II and is not permitted to submit at further sittings.

For SpRs in higher specialist training this will mean that in effect they cannot progress to CSCST, as will not have been able to progress in exams.

The PHMEC will inform the National Specialty Director of the outcome of exams involving SpRs in Higher Specialist Training, and will highlight candidates who have failed on resubmission. The National Specialty Director will engage with affected SpRs and their Trainers, and follow up appropriately on any implications for training and supports that may be required, or any indication that the examination results may indicate an SpR who is in difficulty.

As agreed by the Public Health Medicine Examinations Committee, 30 March 2022.