



Guidelines for Handling of Requests from Specialist Trainees with Disability or Special Education Needs (SEN)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons (“HKCOS”) is committed to promoting positive educational outcomes and meeting the objective of equal opportunities of specialist trainees with Disability and Special Educational Needs (“SEN”), while maintaining professional standards required for training of medical specialists in Hong Kong in the field of Orthopaedics and Traumatology.
- 1.2. This set of guidelines and respective mechanisms/procedures should ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap 487 of the Laws of Hong Kong).
- 1.3. The professional standards and requirements expected in the training of medical specialists should not be compromised, as specialist trainees have duties and responsibilities unique to their profession and are obliged to attain and maintain adequate standards.

2. INTERPRETATION

For the purpose of this set of Guidelines:

- 2.1. “Disability” has the same meaning as in the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap 487 of Laws of Hong Kong).
- 2.2. “Special Accommodation” means measures or actions taken in order to fulfil the educational and training needs of the specialist trainees with disabilities or SEN, such as the provision of aids, facilities or services to meet his or her individual needs.
- 2.3. “Special Educational Needs (SEN)” applies to specialist trainees who have significantly greater difficulty in learning or receiving training than most others undergoing specialist training and who are not able to benefit from the ordinary provision of specialist training made generally available for their counterparts without additional support or adaptations in the training. SEN can cover a wide range of needs, including physical or mental disabilities and cognition or educational impairments, including but not limited to:

Type of SEN	Example
Physical and Sensory Disabilities	Visual Impairment
	Hearing Impairment
	Physical Impairment
Learning and Developmental Disabilities	Specific Learning Difficulties
	Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder
	Autism Spectrum Disorder
	Developmental Coordination Disorder
Mental Illness	Chronic
	Depression
	Anxiety disorders
	Obsessive Compulsive Disorders
Others	Chronic medical illness, acquired brain injury, and more than one type of disabilities

3. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS FROM SPECIALIST TRAINEES

- 3.1. A medical or assessment report must be provided by a registered medical practitioner or a qualified professional (such as an audiologist, speech therapist, psychologist, educational psychologist or clinical psychologist) for the concerned trainee. This report should be submitted to the College through the trainee's Chief of Service of his/her training centre. The HKCOS would then consider and assess the extent of Special Accommodation required for the trainee, if any and where applicable. The Education Committee of the HKCOS may consider to form an ad hoc review panel for special case(s) where such need arises, and determine the procedure of its meetings as appropriate. Recommendations and views regarding specific cases would be reported to the Council of the HKCOS for deliberation as needed.
- 3.2. It is important to note that all trainees pursuing specialist training, regardless of whether they have a Disability or SEN, need to meet and possess the competencies set out for different stages of their training in order to ensure patient safety. Any Special Accommodation shall be reasonable and shall not compromise the standard and level of the professional education and training, including any assessment that a specialist trainee shall receive and undergo.
- 3.3. In considering the question of reasonableness, "Guidelines for Handling of Requests of Specialist Trainees with Disability or Special Educational Needs" (Appendix I) of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine might be referred to. With regard to Special Accommodation requests for extra time in assessment, the guiding principles outlined in the HKAM's Guidelines for reference.
- 3.4. In assessing the need and extend of Special Accommodation required, consideration should also be given to the needs and expectations of the public towards specialist trainees who are expected to be a specialist practicing in Hong Kong after completion of the training. Of note, according to the "Introduction" of the Medical Council of Hong Kong's Code of Professional Conduct for the Guidance of Registered Medical Practitioners (October 2022), "Medicine as a profession is distinguished from other professions by a special moral duty of care to save life and to relieve suffering. Medical ethics emphasizes the priority of this moral ideal over and above considerations of personal interests and private gains". In this respect, the threshold for granting Special Accommodation to specialist trainees with a similar Disability or SEN could vary across different professional degrees. All SEN requests shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by taking into consideration the unique circumstances as presented.
- 3.5. After endorsement by the Education Committee and Council of the College, the College should submit its recommendation(s) on the Special Accommodation required for the concerned trainees to the HKAM for its review.
- 3.6. The HKCOS should implement the recommendations on the Special Accommodation as decided/endorsed by the HKAM, in collaboration with the concerned trainee's training centre as deemed appropriate.
- 3.7. All aspects of the review, deliberations, determinations, and decisions should be handled under strict confidentiality.
- 3.8. In the event that the concerned specialist trainee can lodge an appeal to the Academy Council against the decision or Special Accommodation granted, the Guidelines for Handling of Requests of Specialist Trainees with Disability or Special Educational Needs of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine should be referred to.

4. REFERENCE

- 4.1. Guidelines for Handling of Requests of Specialist Trainees with Disability or Special Educational Needs of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. Oct 2024.