



Extension Policy and Procedure for mediators due to submit portfolios for accreditation by 31.12.17

This policy and procedure applies to all those mediators who were given an 'amnesty' by the FMC in their guidance document dated October 2014, allowing all those who had trained prior to 1.1.15 to have a three year period in which to submit their portfolios for accreditation.

This three year period expires on 31.12.17.

A number of mediators do not believe they will be able to submit their portfolios by this deadline but would like to continue working towards accreditation. The FMSB, on behalf of the FMC, has therefore considered how to ensure standards can be maintained, while allowing mediators who wish to continue to pursue accreditation the opportunity to do so.

This document sets out the different circumstances in which the 31.12.17 deadline for submission of portfolios may be extended, and the length of the extension that may be given, as well as how mediators should apply for such an extension. The FMSB hopes that mediators will be able to use this document to help them plan their next steps in working towards accreditation.

This policy and procedure applies to all mediators who trained prior to 1.1.15, irrespective of whether they intend to submit their portfolios for accreditation to the FMC or, instead, to the Law Society.

The decision of the FMSB (on whether or not to grant an extension and, if so, subject to what conditions, if any) will be final.

Basis of application for an extension

For the purposes of this extension policy, mediators will fall in to one of four categories.

Category 1

Applies to: Mediators who have made a reasonable start on their portfolios, that is, as a minimum they have:

- a. drafted at least 1 case commentary and
- b. have at least 10 hours of mediation practice per year since 1.1.15 or a total of 30 hours since 1.1.15 and
- c. had at least one mediation session observed by their PPC.

Extension and conditions: If granted, an extension of 12 months will be given, without any further training required. If a mediator is still unable to complete his or her portfolio within this time, he or she will need to apply to the FMSB for a further extension, providing an explanation as to why it has not been possible to submit the portfolio in time. Further training (most probably a refresher course) will be required.

A mediator in this category may use cases that he or she would have been able to use if the portfolio had been submitted at the time he or she made an application for an extension. (This gives a mediator up to a year's extension on the age of cases he or she may use).

Category 2

Applies to: Mediators who have not had sufficient mediation practice to enable them to make a start on their portfolios (that is, they are not able to meet the requirements in Category 1 above) OR any mediator who wishes to attend a refresher training course in any event*.

Extension and conditions: Mediators who undertake a mediation refresher course of 3 days** before 31.12.18 will, if an extension is granted, be given a further 2 years to complete their portfolios, which shall expire on 31.12.19.

Category 3

Applies to: Mediators who have been unable to submit their portfolios due to reasons of ill health, maternity, paternity, bereavement or a planned career break.

Extension and conditions: If granted, the extension will match the period of time that the mediator was away from work, plus an additional 4 months - on the basis that it takes a reasonable period of time to re-establish oneself.

Category 4

Applies to: Mediators who do not fall into one of the three categories above.

Extension and conditions: Applications for extensions will be considered and decided on a case-by-case basis.

Applying for an extension

This procedure will be applicable to all mediators who do not feel that they will be able to submit their portfolios by the 31 December 2017 deadline.

1. A mediator seeking an extension must:
 - notify the FMSB (in writing) by 30.11.17 that he or she will not be able to submit his or her portfolio by 31.12.17 and
 - state:
 - which category of mediator he or she believes he or she falls into, and why
 - provide a statement from his or her PPC which supports the request for an extension, the PPC to confirm the accuracy of the information set out in the request to the best of his or her knowledge and belief
 - request the FMSB to confirm the mediator's understanding is correct and to confirm the course of action required as per the procedure
2. The FMSB must then decide whether to grant an extension and, if so, must (in writing) confirm the extension and required course of action to the mediator within 28 days of receiving the request.
3. A mediator who is granted an extension must (when submitting his or her portfolio) submit a copy of the letter from the FMSB confirming the extension, together with evidence of having complied with any conditions to which the extension was made subject.

A standard form will be available for mediators to use.

Notes

*Any mediator may choose to attend a refresher course, and then be given a further 2 years in which to complete his or her portfolio.

**Only refresher courses run by approved foundation course providers will be acceptable. A refresher course must be a minimum of 3 days in duration, and its content must meet the requirements of the FMSB (will be set out by the FMSB in due course).

Continuing registration

Mediators who are due to submit portfolios for accreditation before the end of 31.12.17 and do not do so will be eligible to register with the FMC in 2018 as working towards accreditation only if they have:

- a) submitted a portfolio and are awaiting the results; or
- b) submitted an application for an extension to the FMSB by 30.11.17, and that application has been granted.

Mediators in Category 2 will be able to reregister with the FMC in 2019 as working towards accreditation only if they:

- a) have complied with the requirements above and registered in 2018; and
- b) provide the FMSB with evidence of having completed an appropriate refresher course by 31.12.18.