



## Policy on extensions of time to submit or resubmit portfolios

### **Mediators working towards accreditation**

The FMC Manual of Professional Standards and Self-Regulatory Framework ('the Standards Framework' sets out (at p.6) that:

*Mediators who wish to gain FMC accreditation will need to do so within three years of completing initial training. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended to up to five years with endorsement from the mediator's Professional Practice Consultant (PPC). Mediators who have not gained accreditation within this period will need to undertake further training as advised by the FMC.*

### **Extensions are available as follows:**

#### **Category A – PPC Extension**

A PPC can grant one or more extensions **up to a combined maximum of two years** for exceptional circumstances and where a mediator has taken an extended period of time taken off work, for example because of:

- Parental leave
- Illness
- Bereavement or
- Carers' responsibilities.

PPCs must satisfy themselves that the reason for the extension is legitimate.

These circumstances **do not include**, for example, not being able to find suitable cases for inclusion in a portfolio.

The length of the extension should reflect the amount of time off and may include up to an additional 4 months to allow a reasonable period for the mediator to re-establish themselves.

### **Category B – Other extensions**

The FMSB recognises that completing a portfolio is a significant undertaking that requires a considerable amount of work, and is also reliant on finding cases that are suitable to submit.

The FMSB will grant extensions as follows:

1. A twelve-month extension where mediators have made a reasonable start (see below) on their portfolio. A “reasonable start” is defined as having:
  - i. Drafted at least one case commentary and
  - ii. An average of 10 hours of mediation practice per year since their training date and
  - iii. At least one mediation session observed by their PPC and
  - iv. Met their CPD requirements as set out by the Standards Framework:
2. A two-year extension where a mediator has attended or will attend a 3-day refresher course that meets FMSB requirements. The refresher course should be attended prior to the mediator’s portfolio deadline. The two-year extension starts from the date of completion of refresher training.
3. Exceptional circumstances not covered by PPC extensions which will be considered and decided on a case-by-case basis. Exceptional circumstances include extended time off work due to illness or caring responsibilities.

When considering these applications, the FMSB will take in to account the need to ensure that the mediator has sufficiently maintained and developed their skills since training and has shown progress towards FMC accreditation. Additional training may be required if specific areas of skills development has lapsed. For example, training regarding children’s cases where a mediator has only conducted financial cases for the last 24 months and has done no CPD relevant to children’s matters. Following long periods of no or low activity, this additional training may include attending a 3-day refresher course.

In every case an extension application must be made with the support of the mediator’s PPC and in the form prescribed (see below), to ensure all relevant information is provided.

## **Multiple Extensions**

Extensions on the basis of Category B1 and B2 above can only be given once. Such extensions may, however, be given in combination with other categories A and B3. For example, a person who has taken a period of parental leave and so had a PPC extension for a year may also apply for a further twelve-month extension on the basis of having made a reasonable start to their portfolio.

Extensions on the basis of Category B3 may be given multiple times.

All cumulative extensions are subject to a back stop date (see below).

## **Back stop date**

A back stop date is the date five years after completion of the original Mediation Foundation training. Thereafter the length of time between training and submission is too great for a mediator to have sufficiently maintained their skills from Foundation training. Mediators who reach the back stop date and wish to stay on the FMC register beyond this date must therefore complete an FMC approved Foundation Training Course.

The back stop date can only be extended in extenuating circumstances. For example:

- Multiple extended periods of time off work due to parental leave
- Illness
- Bereavement, or
- Carers' responsibilities.

Where there are extenuating circumstances, it is necessary to demonstrate evidence of commitment to practice (whilst able to work) and that the mediator's skills are being maintained. Additional training may be required if specific areas of skills development has lapsed (see B3 above).

## **Dates of cases**

Extensions given other than under Category A and B1 automatically extend the dates of cases that you can submit in your portfolio.

Category B2 does not extend the date of cases.

Category B3 will be decided on an individual basis depending on the length of extension, the reason for the extension being required and the amount of additional training required.

Where a mediator has an extension to submit a portfolio and the cases are all outside the scope of the normal time frame for cases (i.e. they have all started more than two years before the date of the submission) the mediator must include examples of more recent work in their reflective account.

### **Logging an extension granted by PPC or applying for an extension**

To log an extension granted by your PPC, or to apply for an extension please complete the relevant form, which is available on the FMC website [here](#):

<https://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/mediators-working-towards-accreditation/>

The form must be fully completed including being counter -signed by the mediator's PPC before it will be considered by the FMSB.

### **Mediators with Provisional Accreditation**

Mediators granted provisional accreditation must submit the additional information required by assessors within 12 months of receiving their assessment results.

Mediators who do not submit this additional information within 12 months from this date will revert to working towards accreditation, and must submit an action plan.

This action plan must set out a time frame for progression to accreditation and resubmission of their portfolio. This action plan must be submitted within 12 months of the date of receiving the assessment results granting provisional assessment.