

2020.2 Key Feature Problem (KFP) and Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) Re-run: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Updated 1 December 2020

Timing

Where can I find exam dates?

Exam dates and enrolment periods for 2020 and 2021 are [available online now](#).

When will I receive my exam time and instructions for exam day?

You have already received state- and venue-specific exam information from your local RACGP faculty by email. If you have any questions you can [contact your faculty directly](#).

When will I get my results?

Results release dates are [available online now](#).

Delivery model

How will the exam be delivered?

The December 2020.2 KFP and AKT will be delivered on paper. You will complete the exams by hand for the AKT, you will fill out computer-readable marking sheets. The KFP involves a combination of multiple-choice answers and write-in responses.

Can I see samples of the exam booklets?

Yes. These samples will give you an idea of what to expect on exam day.

- [KFP 2020.2 - Booklet layout](#)
- [KFP 2020.2 - Image Booklet layout](#)
- [AKT 2020.2 - Answer Booklet layout](#)
- [AKT 2020.2 - Question Booklet layout](#)

The exam booklets are bound, not loose-leaf.

Why are the exams paper-based?

There was not enough time to engage with a new exam software company, complete end-to-end testing and ensure the stability of the exam platform to deliver an online solution in 2020. Even if we could develop new software, finding enough venues with enough computers that are still COVID-safe around Australia was not feasible in the time available.

This left us only one option: having a paper-based solution.

Will paper-based exam delivery be run more than once?

Yes. The 2020.2 re-run and the 2021.1 exams will be delivered in a paper-based format. We will continue to monitor and assess the delivery model for 2021.2.

Where will the exams be held?

All candidates sitting the 2020.2 AKT and KFP have now received their venue location details – please [contact your state faculty](#) if you have any questions about your venue.

Will there be morning and afternoon sessions for the exams each day?

No, because we are not limited by the number of computers we can access, all candidates will sit at the same time and we cannot offer alternative times. The KFP will run in the afternoon of Friday 4 December and the AKT will run in the morning of Saturday 5 December.

Why can't I move to another venue?

As we aren't using an online delivery method for this exam, moving a candidate from one venue to another is not as simple as logging them in to another computer. The timelines for our paper delivery method means that your unique exam paper, labelled with your details, is already being printed and packaged so it is ready for you at your venue. With a very short window until the exam re-run, we cannot get exam papers reprinted and sent to a new venue.

Exam day

Many frequently asked questions are answered in the [Important Candidate Information](#) document emailed to enrolled candidates. Please review this document carefully for exam day information.

Can I bring food into the exam?

Eating can be extremely distracting for other exam candidates. Many snack foods come in loud packaging which will rustle or crinkle as you touch it. Many foods have odours, which other candidates may find off-putting or distracting. Some people are particularly sensitive to the sounds of others chewing, especially in otherwise silent environments such as exam conditions. Unless there is a specific medical reason that you must eat during the exam, we do not allow you to bring food into the exam room.

You can eat during the registration period and immediately after the exam if you wish to.

Why do I need to arrive so long before the exam?

We need to allow for additional steps in the registration process due to COVID-19 safety plans. We will be asking you some questions to confirm that you are feeling well, and candidates must maintain distance between each other. We have asked for some more of your time before the exam to make sure everyone can be in the venue safely and with enough time to get the exam started on time.

Do I need to bring a pen?

We recommend bringing two black ball-point pens that you are comfortable writing with. We will also have pens in every venue. If you choose to use an RACGP-provided pen, you are welcome to keep it after the exam. For infection control, all used pens will be thrown out at the end of each day.

Can I use a pencil / erasable pen / fountain pen / felt-tip pen / marker or other writing device?

Our scanning and data management vendor instructs you to use a black ball-point pen. If you choose to use a different writing implement, there is a chance your answers will not be readable for a range of reasons. For example, pencil marks may be shiny, and not be read properly by the scanner. Smudges from erasing pencil can make your intention harder to understand. Erasable ink is designed to disappear when heated, which may occur in transit or during scanning. Inks from fountain pens, markers, and other types of pen are prone to smudge, bleed, or run, which could make your answers harder to read, or may not be compatible with the scanning process. To ensure your responses are clearly recorded, use a black ball-point pen.

What if I make a mistake?

If you make a mistake in a multiple choice question, simply cross it out and select a new answer. To re-select a crossed out answer, re-shade the bubble so that your preferred answer is a circle, with no cross-marks visible. If there is any doubt, a human examiner will review your answer.

If you make a mistake in a write-in question, neatly cross out your original answer and write your intended answer above it on the same line. If you run out of space, you can write your answer elsewhere on the page, so long as it is clearly identified which question your answer is for.

What if I need a replacement exam paper?

We are printing spare exam papers – every venue will have a small number of spare papers if a candidate needs a new paper because their original paper is damaged during the exam.

Do I need to wear a mask?

All candidates must follow the guidance of their respective state Chief Health Officer. In Victoria this means masks are required, unless an exception applies.

For candidates who are not required by local regulations to wear masks, we strongly encourage wearing a mask as you move about the exam venue. Once you are settled at your desk, you may choose to remove your mask.

If you wish to, or are required to, wear a mask you should bring your own.

This advice is subject to change and may be overruled by specific COVID-safe plans at your venue.

How will the RACGP keep me safe from COVID-19?

We remind you that every candidate is a GP. Every candidate has the responsibility, knowledge and professional ethical obligation to keep others safe. On exam day, every candidate will need to declare that they have no infective or unexplained symptoms which could be COVID-19. There will not be temperature checks during registration.

As a GP, you know that there are many reasons that a person may cough, sniff, or otherwise display symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection. Many of these reasons are not infectious (eg, allergic rhinitis; psychogenic cough). Therefore, a candidate who is displaying symptoms for clearly known reasons other than COVID-19 will still be permitted to sit the exam.

What other COVID-19 safety measures will be in place?

By law, all venues have COVID-safe plans in place. However, the exact safety measures will vary from state to state and will be in line with the guidelines of each jurisdiction on the date of the exams. Your state faculty and in-venue signage will give you specific instructions on what you're required to do on exam day.

What about the outbreak in South Australia?

Luckily, the South Australian outbreak appears less widespread than initially thought. Nevertheless, we are carefully monitoring the COVID-19 situation in South Australia. At this stage, our plans remain unchanged, but we will update South Australian candidates on any changes.

What happens if I have reason to believe I have COVID-19 before the exam?

If you are worried you may have COVID-19 or are awaiting results of a COVID test, we thank you for telling us and keeping your colleagues, their families, their patients and their communities safe.

You will not be able to sit the exam if you suspect you have COVID-19. The RACGP will support you in making all necessary arrangements for you to be able to sit the exam in 2021.1, including maintenance of exam eligibility and requisite training time extensions.

I write slower than I type, will I receive additional exam time?

For the KFP, in consideration of the paper exam format, 30 minutes of additional time has been added to the existing 30-minute universal allowance already in place for all candidates.

- Previous online format – 3.5 hours
- Re-run paper format – 4 hours

For the AKT, no additional time has been added. The AKT is a multiple-choice exam, and candidates will only be required to mark bubbles on the answer sheet, not write full answers. The AKT is designed to be completed in 3.5 hours, with an existing 30-minute universal allowance already in place.

- Previous online format – 4 hours
- Re-run paper format – 4 hours

I'm worried about my handwriting being messy, what can I do?

Please take your time when completing the exam paper and try your best to write as neatly as possible. We have added 30 minutes of additional time allowed to complete the KFP. You will receive more information and tips on how to complete the exam paper when you receive your exam details.

Just like in computer-based exams, we do not require your spelling or writing to be perfect – so long as the examiner can read your writing and understand your intent, marks will be awarded appropriately.

What if I run out of room for a KFP answer?

KFP answers do not require full sentences, and you do not need to provide the rationale behind your answer unless it is specifically asked for. The answer booklet contains more than sufficient room to write answers of the appropriate length.

Can I make notes in the exam booklet?

For the KFP:

You will receive spare paper in your exam to make notes. We ask you not to make notes in the exam booklet to ensure clarity for our examiners. The more writing, notes, and annotations there are in the booklet, the less clear it will be for our examiners exactly what you intend for your answer to be. Noting that overcoding penalties still apply in the Key Feature Problem (refer to the [RACGP Examinations guide](#)), we suggest candidates do not write anything on the page that they do not intend to be considered as part of their exam answer.

If you wish to underline, circle or flag key information in the question you may do so, but we urge you to take care not to risk confusing your examiner.

For the AKT:

You will receive spare paper in your exam to make notes. You may underline, circle or flag key information and may make notes in the question booklet if you wish to do so. It is critical that you do not make any notes in the answer booklet.

Enrolment, eligibility and candidacy

I was granted special consideration for the remote cancelled exam/s, will this still apply for the re-run?

All special consideration requests which were granted for the October KFP and AKT will be honoured, except those requests specifically relevant to the remote-proctored delivery method.

Unless your circumstances have changed, you don't need to re-submit your special consideration request. Please note that the timeframe for seeking special arrangements in the exams has now passed. Any further requests will only be considered in extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis, subject to supporting documentation and feasibility.

If I opted out of 2020.2, how do I claim my free exam attempt?

Candidates affected by the cancellations will be able to sit one KFP and one AKT at no cost over the next 18 months, up to and including the 2022.1 exams.

To avoid being charged by our online enrolment system, please email examinations@racgp.org.au when you'd like to enrol, and we will organise a manual enrolment for you.

I withdrew from the 2020.2 remote KFP and/or AKT. Can I be part of the group that will be sitting the next exam, and can I receive what has been offered to this group?

No. The December re-run is only for candidates enrolled in the KFP and/or AKT at 9.00 am AEDT on 9 October 2020.

What if my eligibility to sit the exams has expired?

The 2020.2 re-run will have the same eligibility requirements as applied on 9 and 10 October 2020: that is, if you were enrolled to sit from 9.00 am AEDT on 9 October 2020 for the KFP and/or AKT, you were still eligible to sit the re-run.

If you were required to sit the 2020.2 exams by other organisations; for example, the Medical Board of Australia, the Department of Health, Services Australia or the Department of Home Affairs, you should contact those agencies directly. The RACGP can confirm the cancellation of the original exam dates to support your application.

If you have chosen not to enrol in the re-run and instead wish to sit in 2021.1 or later, you will need to demonstrate eligibility, as normal. Check your eligibility criteria on the [policy framework](#).

Can I still sit the 2020.2 RCE?

Candidates who sit the 2020.2 re-run on 4 and 5 December 2020 will be able to sit the 2020.2 RCE, in March 2021, if:

- They have a valid pass mark in the AKT, up to and including a pass from 2020.2
- and
- They have a valid pass mark in the KFP, or, sat the 2020.2 KFP on 4 December 2020.

All other eligibility requirements for the 2020.2 RCE apply as normal.

Please note: The special exemption only applies to those who were affected by the 2020.2 exam cancellation and sit the re-run KFP; it does not apply to candidates who choose not to sit the re-run KFP.

Why can't I enrol in 2021.1 if I sit the 2020.2 re-run exams?

As a result of the delays in delivering the 2020.2 written exams, we won't be able to release results in time for unsuccessful candidates from 2020.2 to repeat the exams in 2021.1. You cannot enrol in the 2021.1 exam before knowing whether you passed the 2020.2 exam.

However, this doesn't prevent anyone from sitting different segments in 2020.2 and 2021.1, for example the AKT in 2020.2 and KFP in 2021.1.

Can I suspend my candidacy?

Subject to the limitations of the [Fellowship Exam Attempts Policy](#), you can suspend your candidacy in any semester in which you do not sit an exam. For the avoidance of doubt, attempting to sit the KFP on 9 October does not constitute sitting an exam in 2020.2.

If you sit the 2020.2 KFP on 4 December, the 2020.2 AKT on 5 December, or the 2020.2 RCE in 2021, you cannot suspend the 2020.2 semester.

If you sit the 2021.1 KFP, AKT or RCE, you cannot suspend the 2021.1 semester.

Will the RACGP secure extensions to current 3GA programs/provider numbers through SAPP/MDRAP/RLRP?

These programs are not under the RACGP's control; however, we have approached the agencies to explain the situation and seek to minimise disruption for affected candidates.

Will I be granted an extension on my training time – in the AGPT Program or Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) – due to the cancelled exams?

The RACGP supports the granting of training time extensions to cover the period of disruption caused by the cancelled exams when required. Candidates who sit and pass the re-run KFP and AKT, and the 2020.2 RCE, will not have any further training delays as a result of the cancelled exams and are unlikely to require extensions.

Please discuss your options with your Training Organisation. If you are an RVTS registrar, the RVTS has the discretion to grant an extension of your training time. If you are an AGPT registrar and your RTO approves your request for an extension, your RTO may apply for an extension on your behalf to the RACGP in line with clause 5.7.4 of the AGPT Program COVID-19 Support Policy 2020. Granted extensions as per this clause will not count towards your training time cap or standard allowances for extensions of training time.

Exemptions and policy queries

Will the pass mark be lowered to compensate candidates?

No. We sincerely apologise for the distress candidates have experienced since our delivery method for the KFP failed in October, and the AKT was subsequently cancelled. However, the RACGP Fellowship exams are set at the standard expected of a Fellow. Passing these exams and earning the Fellowship of the RACGP allows GPs to practice unsupervised anywhere in Australia. Lowering that standard is not a safe, fair or reasonable course of action.

Can candidates be excused from the KFP, AKT or RCE?

No. Many candidates have reported distress stemming from the failed delivery of the KFP and AKT, and do not wish to sit further exams. However, the purpose of the exams is to ensure that all specialist general practitioners in Australia have met the standard of competence required to practice safely and unsupervised. The RACGP cannot award Fellowship to candidates who have not demonstrated their competence. Candidates affected by the re-run of the 2020.2 KFP and AKT have an additional semester in which to sit their exams.

Will I still be required to complete PEP to sit an exam after 1 January 2022?

This is a frequently asked question, and we are currently working on the answer. While we have not announced any exemption to this requirement at this point, it is being considered. Check back for updates.

Background information – risks and mitigations

The following information relates to the RACGP's processes and plans around the delivery of the exam – not your specific experience on the day. We present this information in the interest of transparency.

What happens if the exam papers are not printed in time or lost in transit to a venue?

In the event that our national printing vendor is unable to deliver exam papers for any reason (mechanical failure, COVID-19, staffing issues, insolvency, or other), we have identified back-up printers to print the exam papers in every capital city with a short turn-around to delivery.

What quality assurance is done on the exam papers after printing?

Our national printing vendor has its own quality assurance processes to ensure all papers are correctly printed.

All papers are individually checked after receipt in each venue two days before the exam. We have contingencies in place to address any errors.

How will exam papers be safeguarded before the exams?

Exam papers are being transported by secure couriers and delivered personally to dedicated and accountable staff at every exam venue. Wherever possible we are using RACGP employees to receive and safeguard papers. In some cases, we are using staff from Training Organisations. All staff responsible for exam papers will receive specific training and must have approved, individual plans for securely storing the papers between receiving them and the day of the exam. All papers are delivered in tamper-evident packaging and checked by RACGP staff before the exam.

How will interruptions in venues be handled on the day?

The RACGP has well-established procedures for handling incidents in exam venues, and we do not expect this year to be any different to previous years.

We have structured decision-making and escalation processes for any issues that arise, from a room clock stopping through to major threats to the safety of candidates.

How will papers be secured from damage after the exam?

All papers are securely stored by RACGP staff who are trained in managing exam arrangements. We are using the highest service level of a globally recognised courier company to ensure papers are transported safely, securely and quickly back to our scanning and data management vendor.

How will candidates' exam papers be identified?

Every exam paper is uniquely printed with the candidate's details on every page before the exam. These details are automatically read by the scanners to associate candidates' answers with their names.

If we need to use generic papers, for example because the candidate needs a replacement booklet, the candidate and the invigilator will work together to enter and verify the candidates' details on the paper. Both the candidate and an RACGP staff member must check that the details are correct before leaving the exam room.

What happens if a paper is lost in transit after the exam?

We are using the highest service level of a globally recognised courier company to ensure papers are transported safely, securely and quickly back to our scanning and data management vendor.

If a paper is **delayed** in transit, we will start marking the other exam papers while working to recover the delayed exams.

In the extremely unlikely event that a paper is **destroyed** in transit, the candidate will need to take another exam.

We can't make copies of the exam papers at the venues. Photocopying or photographing 2,500 stapled exam booklets before transportation for professional scanning is not feasible, and such additional handling creates unacceptable risks.

As soon as the RACGP receives the digitised papers, they will immediately be stored safely and securely, with all our usual data protection including secure storage and both on- and off-site backups.

These arrangements are consistent with the procedures implemented by other educational institutions, including Australian specialist medical colleges, when delivering paper-based exams at multiple sites.

What happens if an AKT answer sheet is untidy?

Hand-completed answer sheets are scanned, and your answers will be digitally recognised. Where the computer cannot confidently identify your answer, human intervention is used to recognise your intent – this is most common when you've had to cross out an answer.

How will the KFP be marked?

Your answer booklet will be scanned. Multiple choice answers are digitally recognised. Written responses are read by our examiners, who are Fellows of the RACGP.

What happens if an answer is hard to read?

Answer sheets are professionally scanned, so there should not be problems with the digital version of your answers being hard to read. If a scan is low-quality, the original paper exam can be retrieved and reviewed.

Because our examiners are Fellows of the RACGP, they understand the medical terminology and will work to interpret what you have written. Examiners can refer difficult-to-read handwriting to other RACGP Medical Educators if they are unsure of your intent.

So long as we can understand your intent, marks will be awarded appropriately. The only time you will be penalised for messy handwriting or poor spelling is if your answer cannot be understood at all.