

### Changes in this version

The following updates have been made in the new version of the Fellowship Exams Candidate Handbook published on 11 September 2018.

Change
A clarification has been made regarding the implementation of the <i>Fellowship Exam Attempt Policy</i> .

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## **1. Overview of the RACGP Fellowship exams**

### **1.1 Exam segments**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' (RACGP) Fellowship exams consist of three exam segments:

- Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) – multiple choice format, computer-based test
- Key Feature Problem (KFP) – combination multiple choice and short answer format, computer-based test
- Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) – a series of 14 clinical cases conducted with examiners and role players.

The RACGP Fellowship exams assess a candidate's competency for unsupervised general practice anywhere in Australia. Each exam segment has a unique and targeted approach to assessing a candidate's knowledge and ability.

The AKT, KFP and OSCE are held twice per year.

For further information on each exam, including format, preparation, development, standard setting and results, refer to the RACGP Examination Guide available at:

[www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/exams/preparation/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/exams/preparation/)

### **1.2 Prerequisites**

Candidates can enrol in all three exams of a cycle, however, must pass the AKT and KFP as a prerequisite to undertaking the OSCE.

### **1.3 The three year rule**

Candidates must pass all three exam segments within a three year period from when they pass their first exam segment. If a candidate does not pass all three exam segments within three years any pass marks will expire. A new three year period will then begin from the next exam segment passed.

Please note that as from January 2019, limits will be placed on the number of exam attempts candidates are permitted. For more information, please see the [Fellowship Exam Attempts Policy](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

### **1.4 Restrictions on exam attempts**

Candidates have a maximum of six attempts in which to pass each exam segment.

The Board of Censors has the right to request remediation of a candidate and evidence of completion of remediation if a candidate fails an exam segment.

From 2014.2, after three unsuccessful attempts at the same exam segment, candidates will be required to show just cause to be able to enrol for a fourth attempt. Candidates who do not successfully show just cause in their first application may submit a new just cause application in the next exam cycle. Candidates will not be permitted to enrol in the relevant exam segment until they successfully show just cause. For further detail see the [Showing Just Cause Guidance Document](#).

At the end of six unsuccessful attempts at the same exam segment, candidates cannot enrol in that

segment for one year and must satisfactorily participate in a remediation program prior to re-enrolment.

## **2. Eligibility to enrol in the exams**

### **2.1 Fellowship pathway exam eligibility requirements**

Completion of the exams is one of the requirements for candidates on the Vocational Training Pathway, the General Practice Experience Pathway and in Category 2 and 3 of the Specialist Pathway Program. Candidates can find a full list of the requirements of each pathway in the following documents:

1. the Vocational Training Pathway – Examination Eligibility Policy
2. the General Practice Experience (Practice Eligible) Handbook
3. Category Two & Three of the Specialist Pathway Program Policy.

These documents are available at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/).

Candidates must check these documents for exam eligibility requirements specific to their Fellowship pathway.

### **2.2 Other exam eligibility requirements**

#### **2.2.1 Current Australian medical registration**

RACGP requires candidates to have current Australian medical registration to enrol in an exam and throughout the assessment process.

The RACGP considers doctors who are currently listed on the Registers of Practitioners on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) website [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) to have medical registration (including doctors whose renewal application is being processed).

The RACGP does not consider doctors who have a suspension on their registration, have agreed not to practice, or who appear on the list of Cancelled Health Practitioners to have current medical registration.

Category Three Specialist Pathway Program candidates are required to have current medical registration in their jurisdiction of practice to enrol in the AKT.

Candidates must disclose any conditions on or changes to their medical registration. Any non-compliance with the above will be handled as per the *Educational Misconduct Policy*, available at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/educational-misconduct-policy/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/educational-misconduct-policy/)

#### **2.2.2 Membership**

All candidates must be financial members of the RACGP when sitting the exams and for the awarding

of Fellowship. RACGP Membership options are available at [www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/membership/](http://www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/membership/).

### 3. Enrolling in the exams

#### 3.1 Enrolment

Candidates must enrol online at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/exams/exam-enrolments/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/exams/exam-enrolments/). Details of exam dates, enrolment dates, venues and fees are also available on this page. Enrolments must be submitted during the published enrolment period and enrolments outside this time will not be accepted. Candidates must provide payment via credit card as part of their online enrolment. Once an enrolment has been submitted, candidates will receive a confirmation email containing further instructions.

#### Financial Hardship

Candidates experiencing financial hardship may make a request for an alternative payment arrangement by emailing [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au). If an alternative payment arrangement is approved, candidates will be sent a manual enrolment form. Once the completed form has been received by the RACGP, an invoice per RACGP Fellowship assessment segment will be issued and sent to the candidate. A payment of \$100 per invoice must be received before a candidate can be enrolled, and candidates must then finalise payment for the remaining balance 20 business days before the scheduled exam date. If full payment is not received by this date, the candidate will be withdrawn from the exam and refunded any payments made minus a \$100 administration fee.

#### 3.2 Venue allocation

When candidates submit their enrolment, they are asked to select their preferred address. Candidates will then be allocated to the closest available exam venue to this address by priority of enrolment date. If the closest exam venue is oversubscribed, candidates will be allocated to the next closest centre, again by priority of enrolment date. If a candidate's address changes after enrolling, they must notify the RACGP of any address changes as soon as they occur.

Candidates are advised not to make any travel arrangements until their venue has been confirmed. Candidates who have been relocated to a venue other than their closest, will be contacted via email separately. All candidates will receive a venue confirmation approximately four weeks prior to an exam confirming their venue location.

**KFP & AKT exams (computer-based):** Candidates will receive their specific venue location details approximately four weeks prior to the specific exam date of the exam segment in which they are enrolled.

**OSCE (clinical):** Candidates will receive confirmation of the city their exam will be held in approximately four weeks prior to the exam date. Further information regarding the specific OSCE venue location will be provided by the relevant state faculty approximately three weeks prior to the exam date.

If a candidate is relocated from their closest exam venue, and is unable to accept the allocation, they have the option to withdraw from the exam. To do this, candidates must advise RACGP in writing within 5 working days of receiving their venue confirmation. Candidates will be refunded the enrolment fee for that exam segment less an administration fee of \$100. If a candidate chooses to withdraw from an

exam segment, the three-year exam rule (see section 1.3) will not be extended.

All candidates are advised to carefully plan their travel to and from the exam venues and consider the impact of fatigue and stress on safe travel. It is highly recommended that candidates arrange overnight accommodation close to their allocated exam venue.

In circumstances where a candidate cannot attend an exam venue for medical reasons or other exceptional reasons, they may make a request to be placed in a specific exam venue by emailing [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au). Such requests must be received no later than the last day of the enrolment period for the relevant exam, and include sufficient supporting documentation.

### **3.3 Remote supervision for the AKT or KFP**

Candidates may request to sit the AKT or KFP remotely if their usual place of residence is 200 kilometres or 2 hours travel time from an established exam centre. Candidates must make the request at the time of enrolment by emailing [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au). Upon receipt of a request of a remote supervision application, the RACGP will assess the distance and travel time using Google Maps and consider each application on a case-by-case basis.

If a suitable venue, relevant technology and appropriate supervision requirements can be arranged within the available timeframe, the candidate will be offered the opportunity to sit the AKT and/or KFP in a remote venue. If a venue cannot be arranged within the available time, the candidate will be offered the option to undertake the exam at the nearest available established exam centre or be withdrawn from the exam with a refund of the exam fee minus a \$100 withdrawal fee.

Candidates who elect to sit under remote supervision will be required to pay fees, in addition to the standard exam enrolment fee, to cover the costs associated with delivering the exam.

Due to the resources and costs involved in conducting the OSCE, it is not possible to undertake the OSCE via remote supervision.

### **3.4 Sitting an exam on an alternative day**

Candidates who cannot present for the AKT and/or KFP on the scheduled exam dates for religious reasons or for other exceptional reasons may make a request to sit the exam on an alternative previously scheduled exam day by emailing [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au). The request must be submitted at the time of enrolling. Candidates who are unable to sit the exam on a Saturday due to religious beliefs, must provide a letter from the leader of the congregation, signed and dated on the letterhead of that organisation.

Candidates approved to sit on an alternative day are required to complete a Statutory Declaration stating they will *“not divulge or discuss the content of the exam with any other party before all other candidates have completed the exam”*. This declaration must be signed and witnessed as per [List of Authorised Witnesses](#) advice from the Department of the Attorney-General, available at [www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Statutory-declarations/Pages/List-of-authorized-witnesses.aspx](http://www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Statutory-declarations/Pages/List-of-authorized-witnesses.aspx).

Any breach of this declaration will be dealt with under the *Educational Misconduct policy*, available at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/educational-misconduct-policy/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/educational-misconduct-policy/).

Candidates who elect to sit on an alternative day will be required to pay a fee to cover the costs associated with delivering the exam.

The OSCE cannot be held on alternative dates and the scheduling of the two OSCE dates alternates between Saturday and Sunday to accommodate those candidates who may not be able to sit on either day.

### **3.5 Presumption of fitness to sit**

Candidates must ensure that they are sufficiently fit and healthy when they present for an exam. Marks in the exams are based solely on the performance of the candidate in the assessment. Marks cannot be changed on the basis of personal circumstances (be they illness, or misadventure) surrounding the exam.

### **3.6 Special consideration**

A Candidate may apply for special consideration when circumstances beyond their control may have an effect on their performance or attendance at an exam.

Commonly submitted special consideration requests:

- To bring medications and/or food into the exam
- To arrange special seating arrangements (computer-based exams only)
- To bring seating and/or back support into the exam (computer-based exams & limited scope for OSCE)
- To complete exam on an alternate day (computer-based exams only)
- To seek extensions to exam completion time (computer-based exams only)
- To seek rest periods or to stand and stretch during exam (computer-based exams only)
- To bring visual or hearing aids into exam
- To change an allocated exam venue
- To use a room or private area to express breast milk: all exam candidates that expect they will be breastfeeding an infant at the time of their exam are encouraged to submit a Special Consideration Application form\*.

Candidates should refer to the [RACGP Examinations Special Consideration Policy](#) and the [Provisions and Procedures for Nursing Breaks During RACGP Exams](#) information sheet.

### **3.7 Personal information**

The RACGP will collect and may distribute your personal information in accordance with the National Privacy Principles for the purposes of determining eligibility to enrol and assessing performance. Further information concerning the collection or distribution of personal information is available within the RACGP Privacy Statement at [www.racgp.org.au/usage/privacy/](http://www.racgp.org.au/usage/privacy/).

### **3.8 Withdrawing from an exam**



### 3.8.1 Withdrawal fees

To withdraw from an exam candidates must email [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au).

Enrolment fees cannot be transferred to another exam cycle. Withdrawal fees apply to each individual exam segment in an exam cycle. Exam fees will be refunded according to the following schedule:

Date request for withdrawal is received	Fee refund
Up to and including 20 business days before the scheduled exam date	Exam fee less a \$100 withdrawal fee
19 business days or less before the scheduled exam date	No refund*

\*If a candidate needs to request to withdraw 19 business days or less before the scheduled exam date due to circumstances beyond their control, or cannot present to an exam due to illness or other exceptional circumstances, they may apply for special consideration for a late withdrawal. Details on how to apply are provided in the *RACGP Examinations Special Consideration Policy* available at: [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/racgp-examinations-special-consideration-policy/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/racgp-examinations-special-consideration-policy/).

### 3.8.1 Candidates unsuccessful in the AKT and enrolled in the OSCE

Candidates who enrol in the AKT and OSCE for the same cycle but fail the AKT will be withdrawn from the OSCE and refunded the full enrolment fee following the release of the AKT results.

### 3.8.2 Candidates unsuccessful in the KFP and enrolled in the OSCE

Candidates who enrol in the KFP and OSCE for the same cycle but fail the KFP will be withdrawn from the OSCE and refunded the full enrolment fee following the release of the KFP results.

## 4. Exam rules

1. Candidates must read the Fellowship Pathway policies available at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/) prior to each exam.

### 4.1 Presenting for an exam

2. Candidates must be in the waiting area for each exam at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled exam commencement time.
3. Candidates must present primary current proof of identity to the administrator/supervisor at the commencement of the exam. A primary proof of identity should be an original document and include a photograph. Accepted forms of proof of identity include:
  - a. Australian passport, not expired more than two years
  - b. current overseas passport
  - c. current Australian photo driver's license
  - d. proof of age or identity card issued by an Australian State or Territory Police

- e. current Australian student identity card
  - f. any other Australian entitlement or identity card, issued by the Commonwealth or a State or Territory Government, that includes a photograph of the candidate.
4. Candidates must present all mobile phones at the point of registration, demonstrate to staff that it is completely turned off, and store it in a clear plastic bag provided by staff for the duration of the exam.

Candidates will be asked to pat themselves down (for example, along the arms, legs and waistline) to show that there is nothing hidden on their body. Candidates will also be asked to empty their pockets for the purposes of allowing the staff to verify that nothing is in them.

Mobile phones and all other personal belongings will be securely stored by RACGP staff until the exam ends and candidates are released from the exam and or any designated quarantine areas.

#### **4.2 Items that can be brought into an exam**

5. Computer-based exams:
- a clear, colourless plastic water bottle
  - earplugs are permitted, however, candidates must ensure they can hear announcements made by the Invigilator or Supervisor.
6. OSCE:
- All equipment required will be provided by the RACGP; however, candidates are permitted to bring in their own stethoscope.

Except for these admissible items, exam supervisors may prohibit the admission of any materials that are deemed unsuitable. The RACGP accepts no responsibility for the loss of candidates' personal property in or around the exam rooms.

#### **4.3 Items that cannot be brought into an exam**

7. Candidates must not bring the following items into the exam room:
- pens (pens will be provided by RACGP in all examinations)
  - watches of any type or description
  - writing paper, notes, books, computers, calculators or any recording or electronic devices
  - food or beverages (unless special consideration has been granted)
  - any other personal belongings.

#### **4.4 Taking notes during an exam**

8. Computer-based exams:
- a. Candidates will be provided with paper to take notes during the exam.

- b. Candidates must leave all paper in the exam room after completing the exam.
9. OSCE:
- a. Candidates will be provided with a clipboard, which contains paper to take notes during the exam.
- b. Candidates are not permitted to take notes prior to the exam commencing (in the waiting area), or during rest stations. Candidates are only permitted to take notes during the allocated reading time prior to each case.

At the conclusion of each case, all notes must be submitted to the examiners and cannot be removed from the exam room.

Failure to comply with this rule will be handled as per the *Educational Misconduct Policy* available at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/educational-misconduct-policy/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/fellowship-of-the-racgp/policies/policies/educational-misconduct-policy/).

#### **4.5 Conduct in the exams**

10. Candidates must obey all instructions on exam materials or given by an exam supervisor.
11. During an exam, candidates must not:
- smoke in any exam venue
  - disturb any other candidate (e.g. mumbling, talking)
  - communicate with or provide assistance to any other candidate
  - accept assistance from any other candidate
  - look at another candidate's computer screen for any purpose (during the computer-based exams)
  - permit any other candidate to read or copy from their computer screen (during the computer-based exams)
  - disturb the exam proceedings in any other way.

#### **4.6 Leaving an exam room**

12. If a candidate needs to leave the room during an exam, they must be escorted by an invigilator/supervisor or examiner. Candidates will not be re-admitted into the exam room, unless an invigilator supervises the candidates during the period of absence from the exam room.
13. During the computer-based exams, candidates must not leave the exam room during the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of the exam.
14. During the OSCE, once a candidate has completed a case and they have left the exam room, they may not re-enter that exam room.

## 5. Submitting an incident report

If a candidate has encountered an exam incident that they believe has had a significant effect upon their exam performance they can complete an incident report at the exam venue. The Exam Supervisor or Clinical Lead Rotation Supervisor in charge of each exam venue may assist candidates in determining if an incident report is warranted.

Alternatively, candidates can download the incident report form from [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/exams/exam-incidents/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/exams/exam-incidents/) and email the completed form to [examinations@racgp.org.au](mailto:examinations@racgp.org.au) within two business days of the exam. Only incident reports received within this timeframe will be considered.

Incident reports must be completed in full and with all relevant details included.

All candidates who submit an incident report will receive an email acknowledging receipt of the report/s.

All incident reports are investigated and the impact on a candidate's performance is considered by the Board of Censors (or delegate) prior to the release of results. If it is determined that an incident occurred due to an error in exam procedures the candidate may be compensated.

**Computer-based exams:** If compensation is deemed appropriate, this will administered be in the form of a reduced enrolment fee in a subsequent attempt in the same exam segment (if applicable). Compensation cannot extend to the re-marking of an exam or an adjustment to an exam result.

**OSCE:** Any adjustments will be applied PRIOR to the release of exam results.

**While every effort is made to ensure all exams run smoothly and without incident, circumstances beyond the control of the RACGP may occasionally arise.**