



COVID-19 MRCGP FAQs

MRCGP

I cannot find an answer on the RCGP website to my specific questions about the AKT, CSA or WPBA.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic the RCGP is following national guidance and the vast majority of the exams team will be working from home for a potentially prolonged period. We still have a full team of staff dedicated to the exam who will be responding to queries from trainees, but the change in our working arrangements may impact our ability to respond as quickly by telephone.

If you email the exams team at exams@rcgp.org.uk we will endeavour to reply as soon as we can. Please bear in mind that although we would usually try to get back to you within five working days, the unprecedented number of queries coming through may mean some delays. We will continue to update the MRCGP website as the situation changes.

Please bear with us, we know how important this is to your career.

My GP specialty training ends this summer. How will I be able to obtain a CCT if I haven't been able to take the AKT and/or CSA?

This is a really challenging situation which involves the RCGP, COGPED, GMC and government. We would like to reassure you that important cross-party discussions are already taking place and we will update this document as soon as we have more clarity.

It is likely that ST3 GP trainees, who have been progressing satisfactorily, will be asked to work in primary care under less direct supervision during the pandemic, but will have to take any outstanding MRCGP assessments once national pandemic restrictions have been lifted.

Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA)

I was able to sit CSA in early March 2020. When will results be released?

We will release results as per the original publicised date.

I was able to sit CSA in early March 2020. What do I do if I did not pass?

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic all medical specialty postgraduate assessments, including the MRCGP, have been cancelled until further notice and this applies to any candidate needing to request a re-sit.

It is currently uncertain when we will be able to re-schedule the CSA, but once government advice is clear, the MRCGP exams team will prioritise additional CSA sittings as soon as is practical to do so.

I was due to sit the CSA in March, April or May 2020. When will the CSA examination be re-scheduled?

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic all medical specialty postgraduate assessments, including the MRCGP, have been cancelled until further notice.

It is currently uncertain when we will be able re-schedule the CSA, but once the government advice is clear, the MRCGP exams team will prioritise additional CSA sittings as soon as is practical to do so.

I was due to sit the CSA in March and April 2020. What will happen to the fee I paid?

Payment for an exam that has been postponed, or where the candidate can demonstrate the reason for their inability to attend, will be automatically carried over until the next booked CSA sitting. We will refund any fees on request, however due to the ongoing pandemic these are unlikely to be paid until April 2020.

It is important to note that there will likely be an extremely high demand for examination sittings when the CSA resumes, and so priority for re-booking will be given to those already booked and carrying forward their fee.

For refunds, please email the exams team at exams@rcgp.org.uk.

I was due to sit the CSA between March 19th – 28th 2020.

What will happen to the travel and accommodation costs I have paid and which cannot be reclaimed because of the short cancellation notice?

We regret that we cannot refund any advance travel and accommodation costs. This means you will need to seek a refund from the supplier in the first instance, and failing that, your insurance company.

I was due to sit the CSA in April or May 2020.

What will happen to the travel and accommodation costs I have prepaid?

We regret that we cannot refund any advance travel and accommodation costs. This means you need to seek a refund from the supplier in the first instance, failing that your insurance company.

I booked and paid for an examination preparation course which I feel is now wasted - can I get a refund?

Refunds in this case will depend on the provider and so may vary. Please contact your provider for information.

I am a trainee that is part of the Targeted GP Training scheme (TGPT). How will these changes affect me?

As stated, we plan to provide the CSA and AKT exams when it is safe and responsible to do so. For further advice please see the relevant TGPT section in either the HEE or NES website.

With the CSA exams suspended, can I submit a video of patient consultations instead?

No. The format of the MRCGP is approved by the GMC and remains unchanged. Videos of patient consultations are not an acceptable substitute for the CSA component of MRCGP. We shall restart the CSA exams as soon as it is safe and responsible to do so.

Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)

I was due to sit the AKT in April 2020. When will the AKT examination be re-scheduled?

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic all medical specialty postgraduate assessments, including the MRCGP, have been cancelled until further notice.

It is currently uncertain when it will be safe to re-schedule the AKT, but once the government advice is clear, the MRCGP exams team will prioritise additional AKT sittings as soon as is practical to do so.

I was due to sit the AKT in April 2020. What will happen to the fee I paid?

Payment for an exam that has been postponed, or where the candidate can demonstrate the reason for their inability to attend, will be automatically carried over until the next booked AKT sitting. We will refund any fees on request, however due to the ongoing pandemic these are unlikely to be paid until April 2020.

It is important to note that there will likely be an extremely high demand for examination sittings when the AKT resumes, and so priority for re-booking will be given to those already booked and carrying forward their fee.

For refunds, please email the exams team at exams@rcgp.org.uk.

Workplace based Assessments (WPBA)

Am I going to have to do all of my remaining workplace based assessments?

No, it is unlikely that all the current requirements for workplace based assessments will apply to trainees affected by the pandemic this year. We are working with the various stakeholder groups to agree this and will update this section in due course. For trainees who are about to finish training, in addition to passing your CSA and AKT, you do need your ES to have rated you as being competent for licensing against all the 13 capabilities and been given an overall satisfactory outcome.

My training was due to end after August 2020. Does this mean that the new workplace based assessments have been shelved?

No, it is hoped these will still go ahead, however the transition arrangements are such that if you have less than six months to go until the end of training you would stay on the old assessment requirements, i.e. the assessment requirements prior to August 2020.

I am pregnant/ in a vulnerable group regarding COVID-19. How can I be expected to see patients and cover the curriculum?

This needs to be discussed with your supervisor and if you believe yourself to be in a high-risk group then arrangements must be made locally for you to still have remote contact with patients, but not face-to-face. Most practices have stopped or minimised face-to-face consulting during this time.

Because of COVID-19 we have moved to mainly telephone triage and this means I cannot get my CEPS done. What should I do?

Your ES still needs to be able to confirm that you are competent in CEPS during your final review. However, if you have not managed to get your mandatory CEPS observed and assessed it is acceptable to document the missing CEPS in your log without these having been observed. If you do not feel competent to do any of the mandatory examinations, then you do need to declare this in your final review as you would not be signed up if you have concerns about your ability to examine patients.

I am less than full-time/out of programme/on maternity leave/ on sickness absence. How do these changes affect me?

This depends very much on when you are supposed to finish training and how long this pandemic persists. The reduced assessment requirements will persist for the duration of the pandemic and the situation reviewed when training returns to normal.

I am not yet in ST3, and I'm worried about how I can possibly do a QIP or a prescribing assessment when the new WPBA changes come in. Is there going to be flexibility on this?

A QIP is not a mandatory requirement in ST3 but there is an expectation you will be involved in an audit. It is hoped with the current forecasts of how long the pandemic will last for that this would still be possible in ST3. Prescribing will also be taking place during telephone consultations and, if anything, it is even more important with the risks associated with telephone consulting that you are a safe prescriber during these consultations. The assessment numbers from August 2020 are almost half of the current requirements so it is hoped these will still be possible

I'm currently less than full-time. Will I be made to work full-time because of the crisis?

No, this would need to be approved at Deanery level. You would have needed a valid reason to be granted less than full-time training and these reasons may still exist. If you wanted to change your training to full-time then this would need to be approved by your Deanery and an application made to them.

I've heard that I could be redeployed in clinical areas of need regarding COVID-19. If that happens, how can I be expected to cover the GP curriculum and get my workplace based assessments done?

Although the assessment requirements have been reduced during the pandemic, you will still be expected to demonstrate your understanding of the clinical experience groups and capabilities through your log entries which should not stop completely. These can occur in any placement.

My clinical/ educational supervisor is self-isolating / off sick with COVID-19 and there is nobody else to deliver my tutorials and complete my workplace based assessments. What should I do?

Tutorials may well have to stop or reduce during this time and Deaneries are looking at how the educational requirements of training can be managed. If you are at the end of your placement or end of your training year, it is hoped your CS/ES will already have enough of a picture to complete your review and this can be done remotely. The assessment numbers will have been reduced during this time.

How do I complete my PSQ?

The PSQ in ST3 will need to be waived if your practice is not doing face-to-face consulting

I haven't done my practical Basic Life support (BLS) session and I am due to finish training in the next few months. What do I do?

As this is a requirement in every training year, please document in your log when these sessions have previously been carried out and attach the relevant certificate. It is not currently going to be possible to update this skill, but instead you must demonstrate an updated knowledge through completing an e-learning module on BLS and attach this to your log. As soon as the pandemic ends it is recommended you attend a practical BLS workshop.

I am not going to have added a reflective learning log on a safeguarding issue. What do I do?

You must complete a child safeguarding e-Learning module at level 3 and attach the certificate into your log. During the pandemic this will be sufficient.

What happens when training restarts. Will it automatically be assumed I will have to complete the full year's worth of assessments even if I am already half way through the year?

Depending on how long the pandemic lasts for will determine requirements for each training year. Advice will be given on this when normal training resumes.