

KSS GP School

Support for Trainees (including MRCGP Exam Failure)

Any trainee who is experiencing difficulties in progression in their GP training, including failure in the essential examinations for MRCGP should consider whether there are any supportive measures available which may be of help to them, whatever stage of training they might be at. We would encourage you to read this document and consider exploring the various suggestions and possibilities, ideally having discussed your situation with your educational supervisor / programme directors.

The GP health service

In some cases exam failure may impact on wellbeing. This might be anticipated and would not be unusual. Mental health issues can affect anyone, including GP trainees.

The GP health service, (<http://gphealth.nhs.uk/>) is a free, confidential service for GPs and GP trainees in England. The service can help trainees who have mental health concerns, addiction problems and exam related anxieties. If you think you have a mental health issue which requires specialist psychiatric help, you should access this help through your GP.

See [Accessing services](#) for contacting them to discuss whether an assessment by PHP might be of use to you. They are able to provide access to CBT and other interventions in a very timely manner, and the service is completely confidential.

Further details about the GP health service, can be found at http://kssdeanery.ac.uk/sites/kssdeanery/files/NHS%20GP%20Health%20service%20Briefing%20pack%20V1.0_1.pdf.

Mentoring and Career Support

HEEKSS runs a Mentoring service to support **ST3s** who may be concerned about career progression due to difficulties encountered with one or more components of the MRCGP examination process, including Work-place based assessment (WPBA).

This programme is **by invitation only** through nomination by your Associate Deans, but you might wish to discuss mentoring with you trainers and/or programme directors who can refer on to their Patch Associate Dean. Mentoring might be helpful if:

- your esteem has been shaken by exam failure
- you are querying your future and or worrying whether GP is the right choice for you

Mentoring is entirely voluntary, you may accept or decline the invitation, and it does not affect or alter your relationships with your Educational Supervisor/Trainer or programme directors.

Our mentors are all GPs with an interest in personal professional development. They can offer support and guidance. ***We need to stress that this is not an examination coaching resource but an opportunity to reflect and perhaps find additional resilience and problem-solving skills.***

If you accept an invitation you will be allocated one of our Mentors and they will make contact to arrange the first meeting. We anticipate two or perhaps three meetings to complete the programme. We will ask you to complete a short 'exit questionnaire' at that stage.

Dyslexia

Whilst the AKT requires a sound knowledge base its format of computer based multiple choice questions may present problems for those doctors who have dyslexia.

If you have failed the AKT with a low score or on more than one occasion you may wish to consider if dyslexia might be contributing to this. You may have unrecognised dyslexia depending on the type of examinations you have undertaken in the past: oral examinations and many professional exams may be less likely to expose the problem but the combination of this, the MCQ computer format, time pressure, possibly working in a second language and dyslexia may combine and lead to failure where you have not encountered failure before.

Where dyslexia is confirmed the RCGP may award you extra time in the AKT (but **not** the CSA). There is general guidance on mitigating circumstances relating to the MRCGP can be found on the RCGP website at: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview/mrcgp-applied-knowledge-test-akt.aspx>

There are on line assessments you can undertake which may indicate if you have dyslexia but in order to provide the RCGP with the appropriate evidence of your condition you will usually need a formal assessment. The GP School recommends you discuss with the RCGP exams Department what type of assessment would be accepted.

Formal dyslexia assessments can now be accessed through the Professional Support Unit, <https://www.lpmde.ac.uk/professional-development/dyslexia>. Trainees need to complete the British Dyslexia Association online checklist. Both the trainee and their trainer need to answer further questions. Depending on these responses, you may meet the criteria to have dyslexia assessment funded by the trainee support services.

There is information and advice about dyslexia, assessment for dyslexia and its impact on websites available here: The British Dyslexia Association at <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>.

Professional Support Unit

The services of the Professional Support Unit are now available to all trainees across London and the South East (LaSE) region. Trainees and educators can access a number of excellent e-learning resources, and can request a variety of courses and personal interventions. Any trainee requesting personal support will be supported via the HEE KSS TS system.

Much more information is available here: <http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/professional-development/professional-support-unit>

Study Advice

The GP School has collated feedback from previous trainees (including those who failed at their first attempts at the CSA and AKT) trainers, programme directors and CSA examiners. Detailed guidance can be found in the GPStR handbook at:

<http://kssdeanery.ac.uk/sites/kssdeanery/files/HEE%20KSS%20GPSTR%20Training%20Handbook%20-%20Aug%202018.pdf>.

Below are a few key tips:

Study Advice AKT

- Working with others is often helpful. Breaking the curriculum down into sections allows you to share the work
- Practising questions is useful – there are lots of resources available online
- Have a look at the RCGP websites content guide: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview.aspx>
- Research statistics and epidemiology and administration, ethical and regulatory frameworks are often poorly answered, and deserve special attention
- Other useful resources include Essential Knowledge Updates on the RCGP website, the BNF and latest NICE / SIGN / GMC and DVLA guidance
- Ensure you allow sufficient time for studying the medical knowledge as detailed above rather than only practising questions.

Study Advice CSA

- Discuss your CSA feedback: the columns tell you the areas you most need to work on
- Practice by videoing lots of your surgeries and analysing them with supervisors or your study group
- Role play with colleagues may not be as helpful as you think: doctors are not generally good simulators
- You need to accept constructive feedback to help you improve your skills.
- Joint surgeries are another useful way for both direct feedback and also to watch how your supervisor consults as you can often pick up useful ways of saying things or learn different ways of tackling a problem
- The more real life exposure to consultations that you have, and the more conditions you have seen in the surgery the better