

## The RCGP Curriculum & AKT

This guide is to help KSS trainees navigate the RCGP curriculum and prepare for the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) exam.

### The RCGP Curriculum

The [RCGP curriculum](#) is defined, bitesize and achievable to cover, if preparation is started early in ST1. There are three core themes that are evaluated throughout your training, but the clinical topics and life stages are most relevant for the AKT examination.

The RCGP has broken down the curriculum into a [super condensed guide](#) which provides a brief summary for the earlier stages of training.

### The AKT Exam

The [AKT](#) is a computer-based multiple-choice assessment of UK primary care knowledge, which consists of 200 questions and is sat over 3 hours and 10mins. These questions are broken down into 3 main groups:

- **Clinical Medicine** - 80% (160 questions)
- **Evidence Based Medicine** (statistics) - 10% (20 questions)
- **Health Informatics** (practice administration) -10% (20 questions)

CURRICULUM TOPICS	<i>Professional Topics</i>	<i>Clinical Topics</i>
	Consulting in general practice Equality, diversity and inclusion Evidence based practice Improving quality & safety Leadership & management Urgent and unscheduled care	Allergy & Immunology Cardiovascular health Dermatology Ear, nose & throat, Speech & hearing Eyes & vision Gastroenterology Genomic medicine Gynaecology & Breast Haematology Infection Disease & Travel Health Kidney & Urology Mental health Metabolic problems & Endocrinology Musculoskeletal health Neurodevelopmental disorders Neurology Population health Respiratory health Sexual health Smoking, alcohol & substance misuse
	<i>Life Stages</i>	
	Children and young people People with long-term conditions Maternity & reproductive health Older adults End-of-life care	

The exam is a rigorous assessment, requires significant revision, and should not be underestimated. Those that pass will have a good revision technique and give themselves at least 3 months of substantial revision time, focussing on the main curriculum areas. If you are LTFT or have other commitment outside work, then we recommend up to 6 months dedicated preparation.

Resources to help with learning include:

- [Essential Knowledge Updates and Challenges](#) - curriculum learning website
- [NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries](#)

- [BNF A-Z Treatment Summaries](#) - 20% of exam requires prescribing knowledge
- [RCGP Learning](#) - free for all trainees including *InnovAiT Magazine*
- [RCGP e-Library](#) - free e-books to download and revise from
- [DVLA Fitness to Drive](#) guidance
- [NB Medical Guide to Medical Statistics](#) – simple online guidance
- [GMC Good Medical Practice](#) guidelines
- [First Practice Management](#) – contains a database of topics relating to the administration of general practice
- [RCGP AKT Summary Reports](#) – the highlighted topics that may be tested on subsequent sittings

## Avoiding Failure

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There are common pitfalls amongst trainees who fail the AKT. It is vital to have a core knowledge base that covers the breadth and depth of the RCGP curriculum. Many trainees will concentrate their revision on the statistics or practice administration or rely on using commercial question banks for the majority of revision, not focussing on core medicine.

**MCQs should be used to test knowledge and exam technique, they should not be used to acquire the knowledge itself. This may leave you with large gaps in your revision. The RCGP curriculum should be used to guide your revision plans.**

## Top Tips

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- **Timing is everything.** Statistically, trainees that attempt the AKT in ST2, generally do best, and have more time to rectify mistakes. Some trainees will not attempt their AKT until the latter stages of ST3 which leaves them under pressure when faced with other requirements of the MRCGP.
- **Set aside 3-6 months to revise before the exam.** You cannot cram the week before and the AKT requires substantial preparation. Use the curriculum to formulate a revision plan and set aside significant time in your day to revise.
- **Start early and be prepared.** Make a revision timetable, mapped to the RCGP curriculum to ensure you do not have any gaps in your knowledge. Leave enough time in your preparation to go back through the content, to ensure you have consolidated the breadth and depth of the RCGP curriculum.
- **80% of the exam is based on core clinical knowledge.** Clinical knowledge is not a given, even for the most competent of trainees. The exam is a primary care problem-solving assessment and the bulk of questions test this.
- **Using MCQ question banks as the only way of learning is not reliable.** This is a poor way to learn and does not contextualise nor reinforce knowledge. MCQs should be used as an aid to learn and test exam technique, rather than the only way to learn.
- **Ask for help.** Speak to your Educational Supervisors, Training Programme Directors or the KSS GP School Curriculum Team if you are struggling – we are all here to help.

- **Learning style is important.** Do you know how you learn best? How did you revise at Medical School? Remember to use the techniques that you know work for you.

## The Professional Support Unit & Dyslexia

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Do you struggle with any of the following?

<p><b>Verbal communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Linguistics difficulties</li> <li>• Verbal expression with patients or colleagues</li> <li>• Undertaking oral presentations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading &amp; Written Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking longer to read</li> <li>• Misreading words or numbers</li> <li>• Needing to re-read several times to understand text</li> <li>• Feeling embarrassed about reading aloud</li> <li>• Structuring and wording referral letters</li> <li>• Drug names may be misspelled</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organisation and time management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising work (e.g., e-portfolio)</li> <li>• Sequencing the order of tasks</li> <li>• Handover and multitasking difficulties</li> <li>• Managing and completing tasks on time</li> <li>• Managing administrative work</li> </ul>	<p><b>Poor short- term memory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recalling people’s names</li> <li>• Remembering information to pass on to colleagues</li> <li>• Forgetting simple tasks and having to write things down</li> </ul>

The [PSU](#) can offer further information, dyslexia screening, a formal dyslexia assessment, courses for exam stress and dyslexia coaching support. Trainees with dyslexia can struggle with the AKT, so further support and extra time can be provided by the RCGP. **It is vital that extra time is requested, and the supporting information is supplied to the RCGP exam office during the exam booking window, it will be not accepted after this period.**

## Resitting the AKT

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If you have failed the AKT, please contact your AKT TPD lead for your training programme for a 1-1 meeting to discuss how you can make sure you pass next time. We are asking all trainees who have been unsuccessful to contact the PSU for a dyslexia assessment. We are here to support you and help you succeed; you are not alone.

## Contacts & Sources of Support

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- TPDs – contact the AKT lead TPD for your training programme
- [The Professional Support Unit](#)
- [KSS Courses and Conferences](#)
- The KSS GP School Curriculum Team
  - KSS Team Lead – Dr Pavan Uppal – [pavan.uppal@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:pavan.uppal@hee.nhs.uk)
  - Sussex – Dr Joshua Getty – [joshua.getty@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:joshua.getty@hee.nhs.uk)
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