**AKT preparation**

General preparation

Reading the information on the RCGP AKT webpage is helpful.

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview/mrcgp-applied-knowledge-test-akt.aspx>

**‘Preparing to take the applied Knowledge Test (AKT)’** is very useful.

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview/-/media/5FF0F964DB8A48AB843D2104512AD443.ashx>

1. **Trainees**

* **CKS** [**https://cks.nice.org.uk**](http://cks.library.nhs.uk/home)is a key resource. Using CKS to learn about the things you are seeing every day in all your posts will help you to build knowledge to the level required to be an effective GP and to pass the AKT.
* **The Oxford Handbook of General Practice** is also very useful as it covers a large part of the curriculum concisely, but remember some elements will be out of date, and you may also need to look at more comprehensive sources if your existing knowledge on a subject is limited. The first few chapters cover the key elements of the ‘Organisational’ questions well, and reading the remainder provides a good way to ensure good coverage of the ‘Clinical’ questions.
* **BNF/ BNFC** are essential resources to use both for clinical care and AKT preparation. A significant proportion of the AKT clinical questions focus on therapeutics, referenced to the BNF. So building a comprehensive knowledge of the indications, contraindications, interactions and side effects of commonly prescribed drugs is essential. A knowledge of the more rarely prescribed but significant medications (e.g. because of serious side effects, interactions etc.) that may be initiated by secondary care is also important.
* **RCGP AKT: Research, Epidemiology and Statistics. Hick and Emmerson (2014).** This book is well designed to learn and revise for the ‘Evidence interpretation’ element of the exam.
* **How to Read a Paper by Greenhalgh (2014)** helps to build the required breadth and depth of understanding required. In addition, ask to review practice performance data, graphs and charts sent to your trainer, and review some published evidence to practice ‘data interpretation’ which has been a key element of the exam in recent sittings.
* **Fourteen Fish AKT is a comprehensive package that HEEYH has made available to all GPRs from 2019.** This includes video tutorials on exam technique and clinical areas, and practice questions with feedback. HEEYH GPRs should have been sent a link to access this. Contact your scheme administrator if you have not. <https://www.fourteenfish.com/about/akt>
* Sources like GP notebook and patient.info have their benefits but the information is not consistently well referenced and evidence based so are not encouraged as a source, except perhaps when CKS does not cover a topic or a starting point for an unfamiliar area.
* In addition to those on Fourteen Fish, there is a short paper on the RCGP AKT web page, and AKT-type questions are published each month on the RCGP’s *InnovAiT* website.
* OnExamination, PassMedicine and other commercial providers also have large banks of practice questions which many GPRs have found helpful, but HEEYH cannot specifically endorse.
* Doing exam questions will help with becoming familiar with the question formats and with identifying areas of weakness but is a relatively poor way to learn the well-constructed applied knowledge that is tested in the exam.
* Use the exceptional potential of each consultation in GP or elsewhere. Keep thinking what are the Patient Unmet Needs and translate these into Doctor Educational Needs. (Every time you get away by knowing just enough, think what you need to know to have a confident response rather than a scrape –by!).
* Use the details on the college website to look for college approved courses for preparation for the AKT. <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/learning/mrcgp-courses.aspx> NB In Y & H Training Programmes will usually only pay for college approved courses and will not pay for a course outside their area, if there is a local course happening at the same exam window period. Many courses are designed for use several months before the AKT and not last minute preparation.

**Closer to the time of the exam**

* + The minimum preparation time for somebody who is doing well, with good existing knowledge and able to study for 10-20 hours a week, is 3 months before the exam. If you have come from another speciality, or are less familiar with UK medical practise, then it is likely that starting at least 2-3 months earlier than this is sensible.
  + Look at the AKT content guide and use this as a needs assessment tool to help plan your education needs <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview/~/media/D96EB4E0188E4355BCC9221B55859B08.ashx>
  + Look at the feedback on AKT Summary Reports, on, produced after each exam detailing where candidates have performed less well and make sure you cover these areas. <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview/mrcgp-applied-knowledge-test-akt.aspx>
  + Consider forming an AKT revision group, to compare how you are doing and keep up the momentum to keep at the revision. Some people recommend using a group to share out looking at key areas, as it is hard to do this alone and such groups can produce useful notes for each other.
  + Do at least one timed practice exams – there is not a lot of time to do it all so get used to doing it under timed conditions. Particularly if you have language difficulties, you may find that you need to allow more time than you think. This is because you will be given brief scenarios that you have to read and understand before answering a series of questions in the paper.
  + **Dyslexia.** If you find you struggle for time this may (commonly) be because you have not got your knowledge levels high enough. However, the AKT exam regularly unmasks dyslexia in high achieving doctors. Running out of time, or unexpected low scores warrant dyslexia screening. The RCGP allows extra time in the exam if you have dyslexia, and this can be the difference between a pass or fail. If you think this might apply to you, contact your local scheme administrators for information to complete the online initial screening for dyslexia. (This cost will be refunded by HEE). If that is positive, HEE will fund a full dyslexia assessment, which if positive, qualifies you for extra time in the AKT exam.
  + **Disabilities**. If you know you have dyslexia or another disability, as well as discussing this with your CS/ES/TPDs, it is important to notify the RCGP **before** taking the exam so you are awarded extra time and appropriate support <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/mrcgp-exams-overview/~/media/53A148A1346B41F38B54F1A1EAC466CA.ashx>
  + If your wellbeing, mental health may be affecting your preparation, or you know you get very nervous before or during exams then consider getting help for this.
  + Options include; Attending the “study skills for busy doctors” course, ( contact local scheme administrators) and also the HEEYH commissioned support services for trainees. <https://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/learner_support>

• Remember to use the college’s link to look at exactly what the Pearson Vue centre will be like so that you are as familiar as possible with it before you get there.

**In the exam**

It is important to have a clear planned approach to taking the exam. Ensure you arrive at the examination centre as well rested, calm and prepared as you can be. Attended to all your physiological needs for the 3+ hour exam. We expect that you should be able to have appropriate time protected by your employer (e.g. not expected to work overnight before, or on the morning of an afternoon exam).

This is what the RCGP states!

We promised not to repeat information available elsewhere, but please bear with us as at EVERY exam sitting to date there has been MORE THAN one trainee turned away because of incorrect ID or turning up late.

We cannot over-emphasise this enough so please ensure your photo ID matches your registration details including your professional name. If in any doubt, contact the Exam department well before the day of exam to make sure there will be no problems on the day.

Make sure you are clear of how to get to your chosen Pearson VUE test centre and have allowed ample travel time. Even if you are only a few minutes late, due to the quarantine regulations, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

1. **Trainers and Educational Supervisors**

* Keep checking knowledge as part of debriefing. Where there are gaps, set specific but appropriately challenging targets of areas of learning, in achievable chunks.
* Assess knowledge through regular Random Case Analysis, pulling out the threads of the knowledge gaps that are identified and ensuring these are added to the learning plan/ addressed on the log diary.
* Use results of investigations to look at why these were done, what the justification is, how predictive is this result, what are the options for managing it etc.
* Encourage trainees to challenge the trainer’s knowledge and well established habits with some evidence based questioning.
* Identify the gaps in knowledge when doing CbD.
* Encourage use of CKS and BNF as learning resources.
* Share and discuss practice performance data, graphs and charts with your GPR.
* Maintain an expectation that there will be evidence of reading especially through ST 1 and 2 and that this reading supports the GP curriculum

1. **Schemes**

**Some suggestions**

* Keep encouraging the formation of small groups to learn and support learning together
* Remind people of resources and courses, and check regularly from early on what preparation is being done to prepare for AKT.
* Do games like “Just a minute” on medical topics (“You have 1 minute to talk without deviation, repetition or hesitation on causes, presentation and management of …. “(and registrars all put in to a hat short topics.. e.g. Acute Glaucoma, Gout, CKD3 etc.)
* Encourage or set up in scheme time a reading / journal club and encourage use of and discussion of journals using the relevant statistical terms.
* Encourage those providing the teaching on the release course (whether GPs, AiTs or consultants) to provide MCQ questions on some of the knowledge that is needed for the session – ideally in advance of the session - so that the release course time is using knowledge that at least some of the AiTs have been looking at already
* Cover areas like evidence interpretation, statistics and critical appraisal on schemes.
* Utilize fourteen fish AKT resources during scheme sessions.
* Consider regular practice AKT examinations
* (The Yorkshire Faculties of the RCGP are able to offer courses to schemes, based on the regional courses, including an RCGP written practice exam, and teaching of Evidence Interpretation. Contact [nickprice62@gmail.com](mailto:nickprice62@gmail.com)).

Revised July 2019 by

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