

## EXAM HANDBOOK FOR CANDIDATES

### RACGP Examination Policies and Processes

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Assessment in the Fellowship Exams

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners ("the College") Fellowship Exams ("the Exams") consists of three segments:

- Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) – a multi-choice test conducted online
- Key Feature Problems (KFP) - a multi-choice and short answer test conducted online
- Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) – a series of 14 clinical cases conducted with examiners and role players.

Passing the Exams is the usual method by which doctors become eligible to apply for Fellowship.

Eligible candidates can enrol in all three Exams of a cycle, however must pass the AKT as a prerequisite to sitting the OSCE.

### 1.2 Exam information

The Exams are currently held twice per year across Australia. The "Exam enrolments" page at [www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/Exams/exam-enrolments/](http://www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/Exams/exam-enrolments/) has up to date information and access to:

- enrolment and exam dates
- exam centres
- enrolment fees
- the online enrolment form

Candidates must enrol in the Exams during the enrolment period. Enrolments will not be accepted outside this period. Upon completion of the online enrolment form, including payment, an enrolment confirmation email and instructions for further steps will be sent to the preferred email address on file.

### 1.3 Further information and contact details

For any questions regarding the contents of this handbook, or to make any application, please contact Fellowship Services by:

Email: [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au) (preferred method), or

Mail: Fellowship Services  
Royal Australian College of General Practitioners  
100 Wellington Parade  
Victoria 3002  
Australia

### 1.2 The Exams – AKT, KFP, and OSCE

The format and the objectives of each exam segment are different and preparation should be geared to each exam.

#### 1.2.1 Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)

##### *Objective*

To assess the breadth and application of contextual knowledge required for certification to enter unsupervised general practice.

### *Exam format*

All questions in the AKT are clinically based to reduce the likelihood of testing facts in isolation from the clinical context. The level of applied knowledge to be assessed in this exam is that required for functioning as an unsupervised GP within Australia.

There are 150 questions to be completed. The AKT is designed as a three hour test for which a universal allowance of an additional one hour has been granted to allow for the extra time needed for candidates with English as a second language, for slow readers or typists, or for other reasons. Therefore, all candidates may use up to four hours to complete the AKT.

All questions are of equal value and no negative marks are given for incorrect answers. Candidates are therefore advised to attempt all questions. Where there appears to be more than one possible correct answer, candidates are advised to select the most correct answer.

There are two item types: single best answer and extended matching questions. Questions of each type are grouped together.

#### 1.2.2 Key Feature Problems (KFP)

##### *Objective*

To assess clinical decision making skills in general practice cases.

##### *Exam format*

A 'key feature' is a critical step in the resolution of a clinical problem in the context of everyday general practice. A KFP question consists of a clinical case scenario followed by questions that focus only on those critical steps.

Candidates are required to either type short responses or select responses from a list of options.

There are 26 cases (of equal value) designed to be answered in three hours, however a universal time allowance of an additional 30 minutes has been granted to all candidates taking this assessment task. Therefore, all candidates may use up to three hours and 30 minutes to complete the KFP. In general, most cases contain more than one part, following a logical sequence.

On each question, candidates supply or select whatever number of responses is appropriate to the clinical task and which are specified by the question. Depending on the question, candidates will be penalised for giving extra responses.

For most questions, candidates will receive a weighted reduction in score for the overall paper for all extra responses given. However, in completion questions, candidates who input extra responses will score 0 for the entire question.

#### 1.2.3 Objective structured clinical exam (OSCE)

##### *Objective*

To assess applied knowledge, clinical reasoning, clinical skills, communication skills and professional attitudes in the context of consultations, patient Exams and peer discussions. This is a clinical consulting performance assessment.

### Exam format

The OSCE reflects aspects of a typical session of general practice in Australia. The gender and age distribution of cases is selected to match Australian epidemiological data.

There is a combination of 14 clinical cases of either eight minutes or 19 minutes duration, with rest stations interspersed between the clinical stations. It will take candidates approximately four hours to complete all OSCE stations.

The eight minute consultation stations require candidates to focus on one or two aspects of a consultation. These consultations are not intended to represent whole consultations. Other eight minute stations will focus on other areas such as clinical reasoning or professional attitudes.

The 19 minute stations more closely resemble standard consultations, and usually require the candidate to focus on a number of tasks.

Clear instructions will be provided for both the eight minute and 19 minute stations. It is critical that candidates read the instructions carefully and understand the task(s) required.

Although each task will be focussed, candidates are expected to exhibit a 'whole patient' approach by demonstrating the general practice skills of communication, empathy, history taking (relevant and systematic), examination (relevant and systematic), patient education, preventive care, opportunistic medicine and involvement of carers, as appropriate to each simulated case.

Each station will present its own challenges and reflect what is seen in general practice. For example, candidates might consult with an emotional patient, a confused patient, a patient with multiple medical problems, a new patient, or a patient with diagnostic and management dilemmas.

Each station will also have a different marking schedule, i.e. a station that calls for a focus on history taking will have a marking schedule that is weighted towards this aspect, whereas a station where developing a management plan is being examined will have a marking schedule that reflects this element's importance. Furthermore, if a station presents a diagnostic problem in which candidates need to take a history and discuss differential diagnoses with the patient, simply arriving at the 'correct' diagnosis may not be enough to pass this station. Other important elements such as taking a good comprehensive medical history and demonstrating communication skills may also contribute to a candidate's score in this station.

Candidates should note that in the OSCE they may encounter examiners that are known to them or whom they have met on previous occasions, such as during their GP training. This does not constitute a "conflict of interest". Conflict of interest will only be considered in circumstances primarily where examiners / candidates are family and personal friends, or doctors with whom they have shared a practice or supervised, or have some other exceptional relationship.

All examiners are given a list of candidates they are to examine and are required to notify the College if there is a conflict of interest.

## 2. ENROLMENT IN THE EXAMS POLICY

### 2.1 Eligibility for enrolment in the RACGP Exams

To be eligible to sit the Exams, doctors must meet the eligibility requirements of one of the three pathways. Please see the handbooks and / or policies applicable to each of the pathways via the links given:

- The General Practice Experience (Practice Eligible) Pathway, at [www.racgp.org.au/becomingagp/imgaus/pep](http://www.racgp.org.au/becomingagp/imgaus/pep)
- The Specialist Pathway Program (SPP) at [www.racgp.org.au/becomingagp/imgos/specialist-pathway](http://www.racgp.org.au/becomingagp/imgos/specialist-pathway)
- The Vocational Training Pathway, at [www.racgp.org.au/becomingagp/students/vocational-training-pathway](http://www.racgp.org.au/becomingagp/students/vocational-training-pathway)

#### 2.1.1 Current Australian Medical registration

All candidates require current Australian medical registration throughout the assessment process. The College considers a doctor to have current medical registration if their name appears on the Australian Health Practitioner regulation Agency (AHPRA) website [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au). This includes doctors whose renewal application is being processed.

Candidates who lose their medical registration must inform the College and withdraw from any Exams they are enrolled in. Enrolling or presenting for Exams without medical registration will be considered academic misconduct and will be handled as per the *Academic Misconduct Policy*, 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).

#### 2.1.2 Membership

All candidates must be financial members of the College when sitting the Exams and for Fellowship. Please see [www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/membership/](http://www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/membership/) for membership options.

#### 2.1.3 Enrolment cap

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.

At the end of six unsuccessful attempts at the same exam segment candidates are required to have twelve months exclusion from that exam segment during which time they are required to participate in a remediation program.

This cap applies to all candidates who have not enrolled in an exam segment prior to the 2014.2 cycle.

Candidates who have previously enrolled and sat an exam segment prior to the 2014.2 cycle are excluded from the enrolment cap and may continue to apply within the application of their three year cycle.

The maximum duration of a candidate's exam cycle remains at three years as required by clause 6.5 Completion of the Exam cycle.

### 2.2 Venue Allocation

#### 2.2.1 Home Address allocation

Candidates will be allocated to the closest available exam centre to their "Home Address" on the College database. If the College has no "Home Address" for the candidate, the candidate will be allocated to closest centre to their "Practice

Address". It is the responsibility of the candidate to notify the College of any address changes.

Candidates will be allocated to the available positions at each exam centre by priority of enrolment date. If the closest exam centre to a candidate is oversubscribed, they will be allocated to the next closest centre to either their home or practice address, also by priority of enrolment date.

If a candidate is allocated to an exam centre which is not the exam centre closest to their home address or practice address, the candidate may advise the College within 5 working days of being notified of the exam centre allocation that the candidate wishes to withdraw from the exam segment. In this case the candidate will be refunded the enrolment fee for that exam segment less an administration charge of \$300. If a candidate elects to withdraw from an exam segment the candidate's 3 year exam cycle will not be extended.

In circumstances where a candidate cannot attend another exam centre for medical reasons or for other exceptional reasons, a candidate may make a request for Special Consideration to be placed in a specific exam centre. These requests must be received no later than the last day of the enrolment period for the relevant exam, and sufficient documentation to support the request must be provided.

The College will attempt to accommodate all candidates who enrol by the enrolment closing date, however if an exam segment is oversubscribed alternative arrangements will be made with each individual.

#### 2.2.2 Individual Supervision for the AKT and / or KFP

If a candidate's place of residence is:

- a) Remoteness Area 2 (RA2) and Rural Remote Metropolitan Area 3 (RRMA 3) or greater;
- b) Remoteness Area 3 (RA3) and greater; or
- c) Outside Australia and the Candidate cannot come to Australia for the Exams

an individual candidate may request remote supervision. A candidate is required to make the request at the time of enrolment by emailing [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au).

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, but believes they have valid reasons for remote supervision, they should contact the College directly to discuss their options.

Candidates who elect to sit under remote supervision will be required to pay a fee (determined annually) to cover the costs of holding the assessment, (such as invigilator fees and catering).

Due to the resources and costs involved with conducting an OSCE, it is not possible to request the establishment of a remote supervision or a remote centre for the OSCE.

#### 2.2.3 Sitting the AKT and / or KFP on an alternative day for religious or exceptional circumstances

Candidates who are precluded from sitting the AKT and / or KFP on the designated exam date are eligible to apply to sit the segment(s) on an alternative date. These candidates need to contact the College at time of enrolment in order to make this request.

All candidates submitting requests to sit on an alternative day require relevant appropriate documentation which conforms with the requirements of the in the



*Special Consideration Policy*, 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). For candidates who are not able to sit on a Saturday due to religious beliefs, a letter from the leader of the congregation, signed and dated on the letterhead of that organisation must be provided.

All candidates must also complete a statutory declaration stating they will “not divulge or discuss the content of the College exam with any other party before all other candidates have completed the exam”. This declaration must be signed and witnessed as per the *Witnessing and Certification of Documentation Policy* prior to commencing the exam. Any breach of this declaration will constitute an incident that will be dealt with under the *Academic Misconduct policy*, 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 who elect to sit on an alternative day will be required to pay a fee to cover the costs of holding the assessment, (such as invigilator fees and catering).

The OSCE cannot be held on alternative dates and the scheduling of the OSCE alternates between Saturday (in May) and Sunday (in October) to accommodate those who may not be able to sit on either day.

## 2.3 Verification of applications

Candidates are not required to submit any documentation supporting their application for enrolment, however verification of eligibility will take place during each enrolment period. The College will undertake audits of applications and candidates may be asked for evidence at any time between the date the applicant enrolls and the exam date.

Any questions falsely answered in the online enrolment system may be considered academic misconduct as per the *Academic Misconduct Policy*, 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).

## 2.4 Personal Information

The College will collect and may distribute your personal information in accordance with the National Privacy Principles for the purposes of:

- a) determining eligibility to enrol;
- b) assessing performance; and
- c) exchanging relevant information with appropriate third parties for the purpose of achieving items a) and b) listed above.

For further information concerning the collection or distribution of personal information please refer to the College Privacy Statement at [www.racgp.org.au/usage/privacy/](http://www.racgp.org.au/usage/privacy/).

## 2.5 Withdrawal of enrolment in the Exams Policy

If a candidate needs to withdraw from an exam they may do so by writing to the College at [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au). Withdrawal fees will apply as per 2.5.1 below

Once withdrawn, candidates must submit a new application to enrol in a subsequent enrolment cycle.

Candidates cannot transfer their enrolment either between different segments or different cycles of the Fellowship exam.

### 2.5.1 Withdrawal fees and refunds

All withdrawals from the Exams will incur a \$300 withdrawal fee per segment, regardless of when they are received.

- Candidates who withdraw up to and including 30 days before the exam will be refunded the exam fee less a \$300 withdrawal fee
- Candidates who withdraw 29 days or less before the exam will forfeit the entire exam fee.

In exceptional circumstances candidates may apply for Special Consideration detailing the reasons why they cannot present for the exam. Requests for Special Consideration must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation. Where Special Consideration is approved, the enrolment fee will be refunded less \$300.

#### 2.5.2 Candidates who have paid for an OSCE but were unsuccessful with the AKT.

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 after the release of the AKT results.



### 3. ASSESSMENT PREPARATION

The Exams aim to facilitate learning so that practitioners will be actively involved in continuing professional development beyond the exam.

The first question a candidate should ask is "What is Australian general practice?". The answer to this question will provide insight into the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are relevant to everyday practice, and therefore the Exams. The curriculum was written to act as a guide to the knowledge, skills and learning experiences that are necessary for competent, unsupervised general practice. For this reason, many candidates find it useful to refer to the curriculum to guide their preparation for the Exams. The curriculum can be viewed at <http://curriculum.racgp.org.au/>.

The domains of general practice that form the basis of the exam matrix are the same as those used in selecting questions and cases for the Exams.

The frequency and patterns of problems as they present to general practice should also be considered during exam preparation. This is information gathered from studies such as the Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health (BEACH) study used to design the exam matrix. The questions used in the Exams aim to reflect the frequency of problems as they occur in Australian general practice. Candidates may therefore find it useful to compare their practice profile with that of other practitioners by reviewing their practice using a log diary of, for example, 100 consecutive patients.

Comparing your practice profile with the BEACH data may assist you to identify learning needs. For example, if you see very few paediatric cases, you may wish to undertake further study in paediatrics in order to prepare for the Exams. This study may include organising some sessions in a facility with a paediatric population, as well as reading journals and attending lectures and workshops. A more formal method to review your practice profile is to take part in BEACH. See The University of Sydney website for further information and up to date BEACH data at <http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/fmrc/beach/>.

Training for general practice occurs in the work setting. Similarly, preparation for an exam of general practice should occur in the practice setting. The Exams do not solely assess book knowledge. Rather, they aim to assess how this knowledge is applied to everyday situations involving patient care. The actual processes of patient care and doctors' attitudes are also important aspects of this exam. The Exams assesses the competencies that candidates would use in actual practice

Candidates can become more aware of their own performance in general practice and change any aspects they consider appropriate. By performing well in actual practice it becomes easier to translate these behaviours into the exam situations. It may be helpful to invite a trusted colleague to provide constructive feedback on your consultations: ask them to spend time watching you consult, either in the practice or by videotape (such methods would of course require informed patient consent).

#### 3.1 Pre-exam courses

Each College faculty and sub-faculty provides information and practice opportunities for candidates during a pre-exam course. Dates and venues are advertised in faculty newsletters. Please contact your state faculty for further information. Contact details are available at [www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/faculties/](http://www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/faculties/).

#### 3.2 Study groups

Although the practice setting provides the best preparation, some candidates find it useful to form study groups. Such groups typically comprise three to six candidates living in close proximity to each other. Registrars interested in forming study groups should contact their regional training provider. Other candidates should contact their state faculty office.

### 3.3 QI&CPD program

Many activities that are promoted through the College Quality Improvement and Continuing Professional Development (QI&CPD) program may also be useful to candidates as they prepare for the exam. These include clinical audits, clinical attachments, lectures, workshops, small group learning and online learning programs. While this is not a comprehensive list, it indicates the breadth of educational material available to candidates.

Candidates interested in accessing further QI&CPD activities can contact the QI&CPD unit in their state or search for activities online at [qicpd.racgp.org.au/](http://qicpd.racgp.org.au/).

#### 3.3.1 'check'

The College 'check' program is one of the most successful self education programs for Australian general practice. 'check' is a versatile self education program and QI&CPD activity that provides a range of cases written by expert clinicians. Each case includes a brief clinical scenario followed by a series of questions designed to bring out the important issues for practitioners to consider in the clinical history, exam, investigation and/or management of a problem.

#### 3.3.2 gplearning

gplearning is the College's interactive online QI&CPD service containing over 200 activities on a wide range of subject areas and including Category 1 and Category 2 activities. There are dedicated gplearning modules set up to support candidates in studying for the Exams, the details for which are sent leading up to the exam. For more information, please visit [www.gplearning.com.au](http://www.gplearning.com.au).

### 3.4 Exam Support Online

The College has developed practice Exams for the online AKT and KFP Exams which display similar style questions in the same format as the exam. These practice Exams are made available to enrolled candidates prior to each exam, and scores and feedback is given. Further details of how to access this resource will be provided leading up to the AKT and KFP Exams.

#### 4. ASSISTANCE SITTING THE EXAM - SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

This section only covers Special Consideration in the form of special arrangements in the Exams. Please see the *Special Consideration Policy*, 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/) for further information on Special Consideration.

##### 4.1 Presumption of fitness to sit

Candidates should ensure that they are sufficiently fit and healthy to present in the Exams.

Marks in the Exams are based solely on the performance of the candidate in the assessment, and can never be changed on the basis of personal circumstances (be they illness, or other misadventure) surrounding the exam.

##### 4.2 Special arrangements – medical condition

A candidate who has a medical problem that is likely to impair his or her assessment performance may lodge a request for special arrangements. These requests for special arrangements must describe the medical problem in detail and specify the nature and level of support sought. The candidate must make the request prior to commencing any segment of the exam.

In the case of a short-term, long-term or emergency medical problem or disability, the request for assistance must also have attached a detailed medical certificate showing:

- a) The date(s) on which the candidate sought medical treatment or advice;
- b) A description of the medical problem or disability;
- c) The period of the medical problem or disability; and
- d) The medical practitioner's professional opinion about the effect of the medical problem or disability on the candidate's assessment performance, and where appropriate specify the assistance required.

In making such an application, candidates agree that they are waiving to the College their rights to privacy in relation to the medical condition that may affect their assessment performance. The waiver of privacy is solely for the purpose of the College considering the application, and reaching a determination, as to whether it is an appropriate case for Special Consideration, and the form which such Special Consideration may take.

The medical practitioner supplying the evidence should not be a relative and should have a proper, professional doctor-patient relationship with the applicant.

##### 4.3 Applications for Special Consideration

Candidates who wish to apply for Special Consideration must contact Fellowship Services, by email to [racgpeducation@racgp.org.au](mailto:racgpeducation@racgp.org.au).

## 5. RULES AND THEIR OBSERVANCES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE EXAMS

- You must read the Education 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
- You must be in the waiting area for the online Exams at least 30 minutes before the scheduled commencement time
- You must present primary proof of identity to the administrator or supervisor at the commencement of the exam. A primary proof of identity should be current, and be an original document, and include a photograph. Any of the following are accepted forms of proof of identity:
  - a) Australian passport in your name, 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 force
  - 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 carries your photograph
- You may bring a pen, wallet and small handbag into the exam room. Exam supervisors may inspect anything that you bring into the exam room. Except for these admissible items, exam supervisors may forbid admission to the room of any materials that are deemed unsuitable
- You must not bring any writing paper, notes, books, mobile telephones, computers, calculators or any recording or electronic devices, bags or other personal belongings the invigilator may nominate, into the exam room
- The RACGP accepts no responsibility for the loss of your personal property in or around the exam rooms
- You must obey any instruction given by an exam supervisor
- Exams will be conducted in English and you must answer all questions in English
- You will not be re-admitted into the exam room after you have left it unless an exam invigilator supervises you during the whole period of your absence from the exam room
- You must not smoke in any exam room or otherwise disrupt the conduct of the exam
- You must not eat in any exam room without prior approval
- You may drink only water from a clear, colourless plastic bottle
- You must leave all paper on which you have written notes in the examination room after completing the exam
- You must not leave the exam room during the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of the exam
- You must not communicate with or provide assistance to any other candidate during the exam
- You must not look at another candidate's computer screen for any purpose
- You must not accept assistance from any other candidate during the exam
- You must not permit any other candidate to read or copy from your screen
- You must not disturb any other candidate during the exam at any time
- Ear plugs are permitted however you must ensure you can hear announcements made by the invigilator

## **6. INCIDENTS, RESULTS, FEEDBACK AND RECONSIDERATION, AND FELLOWSHIP**

### **6.1 Incident Reports and Procedural Error**

Candidates are provided the opportunity to note down any incidents or possible procedural errors during the course of the exam. If it not possible for a candidate to complete the incident report during the exam, they must complete and return it to the College as soon as possible after the exam. Incident reports received more than 48 hours after the exam will not be considered.

All incident reports are scrutinised by the Board of Censors or delegated committee prior to the release of results. They are first investigated for their materiality as an incident. It is accepted that while any disruption may be unsettling, it is understood that disruptions occur daily in general practice and must be dealt with in that context. If an incident is considered material, then it will be reviewed for it's impact on the candidate's performance. If it is found that the incident impacted on the candidate's performance, then it may be found to be a procedural error.

### **6.2 Possible Procedural Error outcomes**

#### **6.2.1 AKT and KFP**

The candidate may be granted a free resit for a reduced fee or full fee waiver. Please note the finding of a procedural error in the AKT or KFP will never result in a change of mark for that exam

#### **6.2.2 OSCE**

Where the procedural error is proven to have occurred then the Candidate will be granted the higher mark out of:

- a) the mark they received; or
- b) the average mark across the entire cohort sitting that exam across Australia for that particular case.

Any amendment to an assigned mark will only apply to the particular case during which the error occurred; no consequential effect on following cases will be considered.

### **6.3 Results**

Summary of the exam results will be:

- a) emailed to candidates (unless they elect not receive this notification by email).
- b) Made available through the Exams results portal of the RACGP website
- c) posted on the College website (identified by RACGP number).

Exam results will not be telephone or faxed.

### **6.4 Censor feedback to candidates**

An important element of any educational process such as the Exams is feedback.

Censor feedback may be requested by candidates who have failed any segment of the Exams from the Censor in each state. Censors give feedback on areas in which candidates performed well, as well as the areas of concern. Feedback may be delivered as a group activity with other unsuccessful candidates.

Candidates are advised to avail themselves of this service, as it encourages candidates to identify their strengths and areas for improvement in practice and to obtain further training in

those areas. Thus the exam has an educational value over and above its value as assessment process.

Please note that candidates who request reconsideration under the College's *Board of Censors' Decisions Reviews policy* or *Appeals policy* (both 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)) will not be eligible for feedback until these processes are complete.

## **6.5 Completion of the Exam cycle**

The maximum duration of a candidate's exam cycle is three years, during which time all segments of the Exams must be completed successfully. A pass mark in any one segment of the exam may be carried over for a period of three years. A failed segment may be repeated until a pass mark is achieved in that segment. If a candidate is unable to successfully complete each of the segments within this three year period, the initial pass can no longer be carried over. A new exam cycle will need to be commenced and each of the three segments will need to be undertaken and successfully completed, regardless of the result achieved in a previous exam cycle.

The commencement of the three year cycle is defined as the cycle date of the first pass of any 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 assessment segment.

## **6.6 Request for a reconsideration**

Candidates may request a reconsideration of their result if they believe:

- a) the College made an incorrect decision in relation to the exam process; or
- b) a procedural error occurred in the conduct of the exam and the candidate's performance was directly and significantly impaired.

In the reconsideration process:

- the candidate's exam paper or performance cannot be remarked
- the clinical content of any exam cannot be questioned
- claims of procedural error will be investigated and decided as per section 6.2 above. Please note that it is more difficult to investigate or substantiate any claim of procedural error at release of results, as it is substantially after the exam.

To request a reconsideration a candidate should read the *Board of Censors' Decisions Reviews policy*, 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), fill out the appropriate form at the end of the policy, and return the request with payment to the College within 10 days of the release of results.

## **6.7 Reconsideration outcomes**

### **6.7.1 Incorrect assessment result**

If there is found to be an error with the overall result in any of the Exams, the mark will be amended to reflect the correct result.

### **6.7.2 Procedural Error**

If there is found to be a Procedural Error the possible outcomes are listed in section 6.2 above.



## 7. ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE REPORTING (MARKING AND SCORING OF EXAMS)

### 7.1 Standard setting

A standard is a conceptual boundary between acceptable and unacceptable performance. For the College exam, the standard of performance required of candidates is demonstration of competence for unsupervised general practice in Australia.

Standard setting is the process by which a standard is translated into a passing score, intended to divide a group of candidates into those who are at or above the standard, and those whose performance is below the standard.

The procedures used to set the 'cutting scores' for the AKT and KFP involve a group of expert examiners making judgments about hypothetical borderline candidates' performance in each question. The actual performance of candidates in the same questions can then be considered before determining final scores.

This standard setting process has an additional benefit to candidates. The quality of every question used in the exam is scrutinised by the group of expert examiners for face validity and statistical reliability and quality. Any questions considered to be of less than excellent quality are debated at length and often omitted.

The 'borderline group method' is used to set the cutting score for the OSCE. This method uses each examiner at each clinical station throughout Australia. At each of the 14 clinical stations, each candidate is judged on a number of different performance domains, as well as on their overall performance. Standard setting is achieved through statistical analysis of the performance domain scores against the overall performance scores.

Although the overall pass mark varies from exam to exam, the standards used in determining those pass marks remain constant. The processes employed by the College in determining cutting scores are less arbitrary than simply choosing a pass mark. They involve both judgments by examiners and analysis of actual candidate performance in the assessment tasks. The result is a process that is both fair and accurate.

### 7.2 Candidate performance reporting

The Board of Censors will review the scores achieved by all candidates at the conclusion of the administration of each segment of the Exams. This information is de-identified so that the Censors are unaware of a candidate's identity. The administration of the assessment segments, the candidates' scores and the cutting score for each segment are reviewed by the Board of Censors who ratify and approve the segment cutting scores, and the overall result for each candidate.

The exam results, as ratified by the Board of Censors on behalf of RACGP Council, shall be final and will not be subject to review except:

- at the instigation of the candidate in conformity with the *Board of Censors' Decisions Reviews policy*, 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/).
- pursuant to a resolution of the RACGP Council, duly passed, directing the Censor in Chief to review exam results for any purpose the Council deems fit in its sole unfettered discretion
- the Censor in Chief, having conducted a review of exam results as ratified, may make recommendations to the RACGP Council and any resolution of the Council as to such recommendation shall be final.