



ROYAL COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Exceptional fifth attempts at the MRCGP Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) and Recorded Consultation Assessment (RCA)

This policy allows examination candidates, who have the support of their deanery, to make exceptional fifth attempts at the AKT or RCA on the basis of additional educational attainment. This change has been approved by with GMC and is in line with their guidance on exceptional attempts.

Candidates, whether in training or within six months of exit from training without receiving a CCT, who have failed an examination for the fourth time after 1 August 2016 may request an exceptional fifth attempt at either the AKT or RCA by submitting an application to the RCGP, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria given below.

Making an application

Applications should be submitted to the RCGP Examinations Office: exams@rcgp.org.uk

The application form will need to be completed by the current or most recent Head of GP School/GP Director who will confirm that either:

1. Additional educational experience has been gained by the candidate *since their fourth examination failure* and sufficient progress has been made to merit a further attempt.

or

2. Additional educational experience is deemed very likely to be gained, given the declared, planned educational interventions which have been put in place *since their fourth examination failure*.

These might include one or more of the following, but the list below is not exhaustive:

- a remedial placement has taken place in a different practice
- intensive exam preparation has been undertaken as approved by the GP School or RCGP
- there has been additional language/communication skills teaching
- the individual has received relevant additional coaching or other support from a recognised source such as the GP School or Professional Support Unit

and

3. That in the candidate's (i) final or (ii) most recent ESR, the capability domains were rated as (i) competent for licensing (or excellent) or (ii) meeting expectations (or better).

Eligibility for an exceptional fifth attempt

1. The candidate must have passed the AKT in order to be considered for an exceptional fifth attempt at the RCA
2. The candidate must have passed the RCA in order to be considered for an exceptional fifth attempt at the AKT
3. Candidates will not be permitted to make more than five attempts at either the AKT or

RCA

4. Candidates will not be permitted more than one exceptional attempt at either the AKT or RCA following their exit from training without receiving a CCT

Exceptional fifth attempts, additional training and ARCP outcomes

A request for an exceptional attempt at the AKT or RCA, if granted by the RCGP, will not confer any right to additional training or be considered as grounds for appeal against any previous ARCP outcome.

FAQs

If I have failed one of the exams four times, but not yet successfully passed the other, can I apply for an exceptional fifth attempt?

No. An application for a fifth attempt is only available to those who have failed one of the exams but passed the other and have satisfactorily completed Workplace Based Assessment (WPBA).

If the result for the other exam is pending you will need to await the outcome before asking the ES to complete the application form.

Can I apply for an exceptional attempt if I have failed only one of the exams but have not been assessed as being competent for licensing in all 13 capability domains?

Yes, provided you have not had your final ESR/ ARCP.

If you have not had your final ESR/ARCP, you must be making satisfactory progress with WPBA and be assessed as 'meeting expectations', or above, in all capability areas.

If you have had your final ESR/ARCP you must be assessed as competent for licensing or excellent in all capability areas.

Do the marks from my previous attempts at an exam determine whether I can be considered for an exceptional fifth attempt?

Your application for an exceptional fifth attempt must be supported by your Head of GP School/GP Director. It is up to them to make a global assessment and judge whether an additional attempt is merited.

However, you must meet the criteria stipulated above.

If I have no training time left can I still apply for an exceptional fifth attempt?

Yes. If your application is successful you would usually be expected to make this attempt within six months of exiting training. Please note that candidates on their fifth attempt for the RCA need to be in training to be able to record the consultations. The form would still need to be completed and submitted by the deanery Head of GP School/GP Director, and is likely to include evidence from your final ARCP.

If I am granted an exceptional fifth attempt will the GP School give me any additional training time?

The granting of an exceptional fifth attempt at the AKT/RCA does not confer any right to additional training time. The granting of additional training time is a decision for the GP School.

Some fifth attempts may therefore occur outside GP training and if successful an application through the CEGPR (AP) process would be needed.

Can I apply for an exceptional fifth attempt if I have failed for the fourth time before the 1 August 2016?

No. The regulations only apply prospectively with effect from 1 August 2016.

Are there any circumstances where it is possible to apply for an exceptional sixth attempt?

No.

Can I apply for a further attempt under both mitigating circumstances and via this route?

No. The RCGP has a clear policy for considering mitigating circumstances that applies to all attempts.

Mitigating circumstances must be reported to the RCGP Examinations Office or an invigilator as soon as the circumstances arise, or as soon as possible thereafter, and no later than 48 hours after the exam has been sat. It is not intended as a default route for obtaining additional attempts.

If one of my earlier attempts has been voided (ie. the result has not been issued) can I apply for a fifth attempt?

Yes. Exam results which have been voided are not considered when the number of attempts expended are counted.

Is there any time limit on how long after my last failed attempt I can apply?

There is no time limit, provided that you are still in training.

If you have exited training you would normally be expected to apply for and make an exceptional fifth attempt within 6 months of exiting training.

Why can't all candidates have a fifth attempt at the AKT or RCA?

For candidates who entered UK GP Specialty Training after 1 August 2010 a maximum of four attempts at both components is permitted (an exception to this applies to candidates on the Targeted GP Training Programme). This limitation on the number of attempts is evidence based and has been approved by the GMC.

This notwithstanding, there is anecdotal evidence that some candidates demonstrate late take-off in terms of acquiring the capabilities required for success in the AKT or RCA and do succeed at their fifth attempt. Fifth attempts should therefore always be exceptional rather than the norm.

This change will allow the possibility of a fifth attempt at either the AKT or RCA for late developers who have undertaken an appropriate educational intervention following their last examination failure and have made sufficient progress to merit a further attempt.