

# 2026 Divisional Clinical Examination (DCE) Candidate Information Session

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Overview

Candidate information sessions were held across five (5) sessions for the 2026 Divisional Clinical Examination (DCE), two (2) sessions for Paediatrics & Child Health and three (3) sessions for Adult Medicine. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) below respond to the questions raised during those discussions. Where a question is not already addressed on the College website, we have provided general guidance here.

All candidates sitting the 2026 Divisional Clinical Examination (DCE) should ensure they review the DCE information available on the College website, as this remains the primary source of up-to-date details about the examination.

### Allocation & Pre-Examination

**Q: When will I know my examination date and location?**

**A:** Candidates will be sent their allocation letter via email, no later than 6 weeks before the examination commences. The allocation letter will include your examination date, location, arrival time, assembly point and any additional requirements from your hosting hospital.

**Q: How are allocations (examination date and location) determined?**

**A:** Allocation is completed taking into account your working/training history, where you have previously sat the DCE (if applicable) and any pre-examination Applications for Special Consideration.

**Q: Can I request to sit my examination not on a specific date or at a specific location?**

**A:** Once you have registered for the DCE, please submit a pre-examination [Application for Special Consideration](#). We recommend clearly stating your preferred location(s) as well as any dates that are preferred or unsuitable. The team will make every effort to accommodate requests where possible and will contact you directly if further discussion is needed. If we are able to meet your request, this will be confirmed in your allocation letter.

**Q: If my prep course is in Sydney, and I am from Victoria, can I still sit the examination in another hospital/town in NSW, or is it still considered a conflict of interest to sit it anywhere in NSW?**

**A:** In your application you will be asked to advise hospitals you have trained in. Please include the hospital you completed your prep course in, and this will be taken into consideration during allocation. If you are unsure where to include this information in your registration, please email [DCE@racp.edu.au](mailto:DCE@racp.edu.au) as soon as you have completed your registration.

**Q: How can I advise Local Examination Organisers (LEOs) of my dietary requirements? (e.g, I'm vegan with allergies and happy to bring my own food, I just want to avoid the hospital ordering a meal with animal products that would be wasted)**

**A:** For specific dietary requirements please email [DCE@racp.edu.au](mailto:DCE@racp.edu.au) with the details so we can inform the LEO at your hosting hospital.

**Q: Can I visit the hospital the day before the examination to familiarise myself with the location, so I don't get lost on the day?**

**A:** While you are permitted to attend the site for logistical reasons and directions, please note that as per the [Academic Integrity in Training Policy](#) you cannot approach the hospitals to obtain information, inspect rooms, departments or Examiners possibly involved in the examination at your allocated hospital. Please note that your allocation email will contain detailed assembly point information for your examination day.

## Examination Day

**Q: What do I do if I am running late on the day?**

**A:** If you are running late, please contact the LEO at your examination site or the RACP helpline for assistance as soon as possible. If you have not arrived by the advised time the LEO will likely contact, you to check in and see if you need assistance.

**Q: Can Examination Assistants assist with holding a briefcase?**

**A:** Yes, the Examination Assistant can hold the brief case in the room if there is nowhere to put the case. However, they cannot hand you your equipment. For more information on what Examination Assistants can and can't do please see the Examinations Assistants Information sheet on the DCE webpage under the 'Resources' tab.

**Q: Who can assist patients with walking for a gait assessment?**

**A:** One of the Examiners in the room will assist the patient with walking (if required) for a gait assessment.

**Q: How are we expected to adjust the bed if we are not familiar with the type of hospital bed on the day?**

**A:** If you are unsure how to adjust the bed, please ask the Examiners for assistance. You are not expected to know how to use every type of bed and the Local Examiner should be able to assist.

**Q: Are patients allowed to bring their phone into a Long Case? If they have medical records on their phone, can they show us?**

**A:** Yes, patients may bring their phone into the examination room, they are asked not to answer calls. Yes, if they have medical records/notes on their phone and choose to show you that can be used.

**Q: I've heard of candidates who had a respiratory exam led by a Respiratory physician**

**A:** Every effort is made by the College and the hospital organising team to offer a variety of case types and have examining teams with a range of specialists. In the event the case type is the same specialty as one of the Examiners, that Examiner would not be the lead for that case. Where this situation arises, the National Examiner and Chief Examiner would ensure the standards are the same, regardless of the specialties.

**Q: How will the examining team, a Quality Assurance Lead (QAL), an Examination Assistant and patient fit in the examination room?**

**A:** A QAL will only attend hospitals carefully selected by the Clinical Examinations Committee. They will take into consideration the size of the examination venue and avoid hospitals where there is insufficient space to accommodate a QAL in examination rooms.

**Q: What happens if a medical emergency happens during the examination?**

**A:** Emergencies will be managed by hospital staff on the day, and the Chief Examiner will determine the plan for the examination to proceed. If there is an emergency on the day that you feel impacted your examination, please submit a post-examination [Application for Special Consideration](#).

## Equipment & Personal Items

**Q: What equipment can I bring?**

**A:** For a full list of permitted and not permitted items please see the [Adult Medicine DCE](#) or [Paediatrics & Child Health DCE](#) webpage, under the 'Exam Day' tab.

**Q: Can I bring a digital blood pressure machine?**

**A:** Yes, however, if you demonstrate that you're doing the blood pressure in a Short Case, that should be with a manual blood pressure cuff.

**Q: What equipment will be available on the day?**

**A:** It is recommended you bring mostly your own equipment, as advised in the permitted items list so that you are familiar with it. Hospitals will have spare equipment, as well as sphygmomanometers, ophthalmoscopes, auroscope, blood pressure monitors, spare batteries and timers available.

**Q: Do we need special consideration to have personal medication with you?**

**A:** No, special consideration is not needed for personal medication. Please ensure your medication is in a zip-lock bag with your name and contact number on it.

**Q: Do wedding rings count as needing to be removed as bare below the elbows?**

**A:** You may leave your wedding ring as you would in your usual working hospital.

**Q: How do we assess RR and HR if we cannot wear watches while examining patients?**

**A:** You will be able to assess vital signs with your watch on your wrist. Please note, you may have to demonstrate that you removed your watch to complete hand hygiene, after this you may put your watch back on.

**Q: Are we allowed to bring in 2 watches simultaneously into the examination? (e.g., 1 wristwatch to be worn on Long Case Presentation and 1 belt/fob watch to use when examining patients when the wristwatch is removed)**

**A:** Yes, you can bring two watches for this purpose.

## Examination

**Q: Is fundoscopy a testable examination skill in the DCE?**

**A:** Yes

**Q: Are we allowed to time ourselves during our Long Case presentation to the Examiner?**

**A:** Yes, the Examiners will also be timing. Please note that if you are timing yourself, the time that you have with the Examiner starts at the time that the bell rings rather than the time that you start preparing and discussing.

**Q: Are we allowed to speak/describe findings during our Short Case examination?**

**A:** There are no rules advising you cannot speak during the examination. You are encouraged to speak to your DPE's or mentors for advice on what should be done during the examination.

**Q: Are we provided with observations (e.g., temperature, O2 saturation, etc.)?**

**A:** No. Weight, height and urinalysis (if applicable) are provided for a Short Case. Examiners may expect a clinical evaluation of oxygenation rather than saturations. Candidates can comment on observations they would like to know and clinically discuss it from there.

**Q: What are the expectations of interpreting investigations (e.g., TTE)? Will the report be given or are we expected to interpret?**

**A:** Yes, you would be expected to interpret X rays and CT scans in order to help with your differential. If an echocardiogram is relevant in a Long Case, you would typically receive the report rather than the actual images or video. You would then be expected to discuss the implications of the reported findings on diagnosis and management

**Q: For patients from non-English speaking backgrounds is there an expectation of them understanding enough English to engage appropriately**

**A:** Yes, patients or carers are expected to be able to give a relevant history and understand instructions which is taken into consideration during case selection. Examiners also independently assess the patient's ability to communicate during their blind examination, and this is taken into account when evaluating candidate performance.

**Q: Previously a candidate had a patient that was eating during their Long Case, are we expected to ask them to stop this given the loss of time?**

**A:** If you feel the patient's behaviour is limiting your ability to conduct the examination (e.g., they are eating) you may politely ask them to pause or request the Examination Assistant to do so on your behalf. At the start of your presentation, the Examiners will ask whether any incidents occurred during the encounter. If you believe the patient's behaviour (e.g., eating, using their phone, or similar distractions) resulted in lost time, you should report it at that point.

## Post Examination

**Q: What does the supplementary exam entail?**

**A:** The supplementary examination is another attempt at the DCE within the same year. Candidates sitting a supplementary examination will need to complete 2 Long Cases and 4 Short Cases. The only difference being that during a supplementary you are only examined by members of the National Examining Panel (NEPs).

**Q: Is there a backup exam day if the RACP must push back the planned exam day?**

**A:** For more information regarding risk management and contingency planning please see the DCE website, under the 'Overview' tab. If there were any changes to the planned examination every effort would be made to inform the impacted candidates as soon as possible.

## Miscellaneous

**Q: What are the plans for Quality Assurance Leads (QAL) in 2026?**

**A:** In 2026, Paediatrics & Child Health will pilot the QAL role for the first time, while the ongoing pilot of the QAL role will continue in Adult Medicine. A QAL will be present at only a small number of hospital sites, and candidates will have the option to opt out of having a QAL involved in their examination.

**Q: What has been put in place to reduce concerns for bias and ensuring equity and fairness?**

**A:** In addition to the ongoing pilot of the Quality Assurance Lead (QAL), the examiner training introduced in 2025 will continue. All Examiners will be required to complete annual training focused on concepts related to bias and racism.

**Q: Candidate wellbeing - Support available on the day and afterwards.**

**A:** On examination day candidates can seek support from the Candidate Support Officer (CSO), Examiners, Examination Assistants and the Local Examination Organiser (LEO). You can also contact the DCE team directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Before, during and after the examination, candidates are encouraged to utilise the [RACP Support Program](#) for support. This includes a free, fully confidential, and independent helpline is available 24/7 and is managed by Converge International. You may also contact the Training Support Unit directly at [TrainingSupport@racp.edu.au](mailto:TrainingSupport@racp.edu.au) should you wish to engage with the program or seek further guidance.