



# RACP

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## Divisional Written Examinations (DWE) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

It is strongly recommended that all candidates familiarise themselves with the October 2025 Divisional Written Examination (DWE) information on the [College website](#).

The DWE comprises two papers to assess your understanding of medical sciences and clinical knowledge. The exam consists of a combination of new and previously validated questions. All these questions will count towards your total score for the exam.

For all dates relating to the DWE, please refer to the [College website](#).

### Eligibility and Registration

#### **Q: What are the eligibility criteria for attempting the DWE?**

**A:** To be eligible to attempt the DWE, you must have completed 24 months FTE of certified Basic Training (PREP Basic Training program) or completed the Consolidation phase of training (new Basic Training Program) before:

- the beginning of the clinical year for the February exam; or
- 31 August for the October exam

If you require training before 31 August to be certified to confirm your eligibility for the October exam, the Basic Training team will contact you following your registration for the October DWE to advise you of the requirements that must be completed by 31 August.

If you already have 24 months of certified training, you meet these eligibility criteria and will not be required to complete specific requirements by 31 August.

#### **Q: How many attempts do I have for the DWE?**

**A:** The [Progression through Training Policy](#) specifies limits on the total training time allowed and the number of exam attempts.

As of 1 January 2024, all trainees on the three-attempt Basic Training Program have four attempts at the DWE. Please refer to the correspondence sent on 24 August 2023 regarding the number of attempts you have remaining.

Please note that the number of allowable attempts for the Divisional Clinical Examination (DCE) has not increased.

For more details, please see the relevant [Basic Training Handbook](#) and the [Progression through Training Policy information](#) (Item 4).

The 'Prepare' tab of the [DWE October 2025](#) page on the College website has up-to-date information, including instructions on preparing for the examination.

**Q: What if I have outstanding fees?**

**A:** You cannot register for the exam if you have outstanding training fees. All fees must be paid in full before registration. Please see the [College Fees Terms and Conditions](#). To arrange or discuss payment, please email [examinations@racp.edu.au](mailto:examinations@racp.edu.au).

**Q: What happens if I choose to withdraw from the exam?**

**A:** If you apply and withdraw from an exam, this is not counted as an exam attempt.

If you withdraw, you may be eligible for a refund. Refund amounts depend on when you withdraw. Please refer to the [College Fees Terms and Conditions](#).

Submit an application form under the [Special Consideration for Assessment Policy](#) to request a refund on medical and non-medical compassionate grounds.

If you withdraw, you can reapply to sit the exam at the next sitting (i.e. February 2026) if you meet the eligibility criteria. Application fees will not be rolled over from one examination sitting to another.

Email [examinations@racp.edu.au](mailto:examinations@racp.edu.au) to withdraw from the October 2025 exam.

## **Preparation, Resources and Support**

**Q:** What resources are available to support trainees preparing for the Divisional Examinations?

**A:** The 'Resources' tab of the [DWE October 2025](#) page on the College website provides a comprehensive range of resources to assist trainees in preparing for their barrier examinations, particularly as they approach their exams. Key offerings include:

- [College Learning Series](#): This series is a cornerstone resource for preparing for the Divisional Examinations.
- [Divisional Examination Readiness Course](#): This course provides information, study tools, and resources to support trainees in preparing for the Divisional Examinations.
- [Medflix](#): RACP's extensive collection of powerful and engaging education videos, including BPT exam preparation.
- Preparation Tips: Practical advice and strategies to enhance exam readiness.
- Practice Questions and Sample Papers: Trainees can access practice examination questions, answers, and sample papers to familiarise themselves with the exam format and content.

These resources help trainees develop confidence, optimise their study strategies, and perform effectively in their exams.

## Examination Day

### Q: Where can I find the timetable for exam day?

A: The exam day timetable can be found under the 'Exam day' tab on the [October 2025 DWE page](#) of the College website.

### Q: Why was the decision made to stagger the start times for the examination?

A: This decision upholds the commitment to delivering a fair and secure examination process for all candidates across various time zones in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

### Q: How do the staggered start times for the examination affect me?

A: Start times will vary depending on where you have registered to sit your examination. The table below outlines the different start times in the relevant locations:

Location	Arrival time (local time)	DWE Start & finish times (local time)	Changes for candidates
Western Australia (WA)	7:30am	8:30am – 3:10pm	The Western Australian (WA) AM & PCH DWE will commence at 8:30am (local time), effective Wednesday, 1 January 2025.
All Australian States/Territories (except for WA)	8:00am	9:00am – 3:40pm	All other Australian exam sites except for WA will commence the AM & PCH DWE at 9:00am (local time), effective Wednesday, 1 January 2025.
Aotearoa New Zealand	9:00am	10:00am – 4:40pm	All Aotearoa New Zealand exam sites will commence the AM & PCH DWE at 10:00am (local time), effective Wednesday, 1 January 2025.

### Q: Can I bring a water bottle into the exam room?

**A:** Yes. You can bring any water bottle into the exam room containing only water. The water bottle(s) must be on the floor under your desk during the exam. No other beverages are permitted into the examination room without pre-approval.

If you require other beverages during the examination for medical reasons, you must submit an application for special consideration by the [closing date](#) using the [Special Consideration for Assessment application form and guide](#).

**Q: Can I bring a pencil case into the exam room?**

**A:** Pencil cases are not permitted. However, pens (blue and black), a ruler, and a highlighter may be carried into the exam room in a small, clear, resealable plastic bag. Pencils, gel, erasable, or felt-tipped pens are not allowed.

**Q: Can I use a pencil to mark my answers in the exam?**

**A:** No. Candidates are required to use blue or black ballpoint pens. No pencils, gel, erasable or felt-tipped pens are permitted.

Your answer sheet will be scanned to create a digital copy of your responses. Black or blue ballpoint pens scan the most clearly. Pencil shading does not produce the best markings for scanning purposes, especially if a response is erased and leaves behind a shadow.

To answer each question, fill in the answer bubble corresponding to the option you think is correct. Use black or blue ballpoint pens only. If you wish to change a response, mark a clear X through the incorrectly filled bubble and then fill in your preferred answer. To reselect a previously crossed-out answer, circle that answer and cross out all incorrect answers. Heavily edited answers will be manually reviewed.

An example of the answer sheet can be found below:

The diagram illustrates two examples of how to mark answers on a sheet with four bubbles labeled A, B, C, and D.

**Example 1:**

- DIRECTIONS:** Each question has four possible answers. Choose **ONE ONLY** and then fill in the bubble beneath your choice.
- How to show an answer:** Bubbles A, B, and D are empty. Bubble C is filled with a solid black mark. Below the bubbles, it says: "Show your answers like this, C is your answer."
- How to show a correction:** Bubbles A, B, and D are empty. Bubble C is filled with a solid black mark and has a large 'X' drawn through it. Below the bubbles, it says: "B is your answer."
- Text:** "(C was your first answer but you crossed it out and now B is your answer)"

**Example 2:**

- DIRECTIONS:** Each question has four possible answers. Choose **ONE ONLY** and then fill in the bubble beneath your choice.
- How to show an answer:** Bubbles A, B, and D are empty. Bubble C is filled with a solid black mark. Below the bubbles, it says: "Show your answers like this, C is your answer."
- How to show a correction:** Bubbles A, B, and D are empty. Bubble C is filled with a solid black mark and circled. Below the bubbles, it says: "C is your answer."
- Text:** "(You have crossed out B and C, but C is now your final answer)"

**Q: Can I eat during the exam?**

**A:** If you need to eat during the exam for medical reasons, you will need special permission from the RACP. Food will not be allowed into the examination room without pre-approval.

Please submit a Special Consideration application form by the [closing date](#) using the [Special Consideration for Assessment application form and guide](#).

**Q: Can I choose where I sit on exam day?**

**A:** Seating lists showing your allocated seat number will be displayed near the venue entrance. Discuss any seating enquiries with the Chief Invigilator as early as possible on exam day.

If you require specific seating arrangements during the examination for medical reasons, you must submit an application for special consideration by the [closing date](#) using the [Special Consideration for Assessment application guide and form](#).

**Q: Where do I leave my mobile phone and/or electronic devices?**

**A:** All mobile phones, digital watches, sports watches, smart watches (including but not limited to Apple Watch, Garmin, Fitbit, and Samsung), pagers, and electronic communication devices must be switched off, placed on the floor under your desk, and visible to the invigilators.

**Q: How do I report an incident during my exam that I believe impacted my performance?**

**A:** All incidents must be reported to the invigilator, who will complete an Incident Form and submit it to the College. You may also apply for post-exam special consideration using the [Special Consideration for Assessment application guide and form](#).

Details of the incident must be clearly outlined, and documentation to support your application may be provided. All post-special consideration applications must be emailed to [examinations@racp.edu.au](mailto:examinations@racp.edu.au) no later than 5pm AEDT/5pm NZDT, **Tuesday, 28 October 2025**.

Refer to Appendix A of the [Special Consideration for Assessment Policy](#) (PDF) for possible outcomes of a successful application for special consideration.

**Q: What is the role of RACP staff observers?**

**A:** RACP staff observers represent the College and are there to liaise with candidates and provide information should candidates wish to follow up on anything after the assessment.

**Marking, Results and Feedback**

**Q: Why does it take time before results are released?**

**A:** We understand the anticipation that candidates may experience whilst waiting for their results. Your patience is very much appreciated. The timeline for processing and releasing exam results involves multiple stages, particularly because this large-scale paper-based exam is administered over numerous sites. Quality assurance and data integrity checks must be

followed at all stages to ensure the accuracy and fairness of candidate outcomes.

Below is a high-level summary of the key steps involved. This applies to both Paediatrics & Child Health (PCH) and Adult Medicine (AM) candidates across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand:

Steps Post-Exam Day	Description
Exam Data Collection	Scanning and processing answer sheets, with double verification by external companies.
Data Verification	Checking for anomalies and data comparison.
RACP Item Analysis	Review of item statistics by internal experts.
Item Review by SMEs	Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) review flagged items.
Item Analysis Meeting	Discussion and finalisation of item decisions.
Cut-Score Determination	Establishing the final passing threshold.
Results Confirmation	Confirmation of results for release.
Results Administrations	Final preparation of results for release
Results Release	Results are typically released mid-week to ensure candidates can access College support if needed.

While we aim to work as efficiently as possible, these steps are essential to ensure the fairness, accuracy and integrity of your results through careful Quality and Assurance processes and discussions.

**Q: What feedback is provided to candidates and supervisors following the DWE?**

**A:** Feedback following the DWE is structured to help candidates and supervisors understand performance and identify areas for improvement. Candidates receive a personalised report that breaks down their performance by curriculum-linked topic areas, indicating the number of items in each topic area and the number they answered correctly. Supervisors receive a summary report displaying candidate performance by topic area, alongside training setting, state/territory, and overall exam averages. Directors of Physician/Paediatric Education (DPEs) are provided with training hospital summaries for all candidates in their setting, enabling targeted support.

Feedback is typically delivered within four weeks of exam results being released, with ongoing efforts to streamline this process for faster delivery.

## Examination, Development and Quality Assurance

### **Q: How are examination papers constructed?**

**A:** The construction of DWE papers involves a comprehensive, multi-step process to ensure the questions effectively assess the required knowledge and skills. The Adult Medicine (AM) and the Paediatrics & Child Health (PCH) DWE are constructed in line with the examination 'blueprints', which outline the expected distribution of questions across specialties. These blueprints are available on the [Prepare](#) tab.

Item Writing Panels (IWPs) meet three times a year for Adult Medicine and twice for Paediatrics & Child Health, to write and review potential exam questions. Each panel include over 20 specialists who help write and approve new questions. The Chairs of the IWPs and Written Exam Committee work with the RACP Assessment Development team to construct the final exams, including a proportion of previously validated items that have demonstrated strong psychometric performance. These items serve as 'anchors' in the exam analysis phase to support the equating and stability of examination difficulty over time. Multiple specialists review new and past questions to finalise them for exam readiness.

The draft exam undergoes multiple reviews, including those by the IWP Chair, who reviews the selection and suggests edits or replacements, open book reviewers drawn from the Written Exam Committee, or an Expression of Interest pool. The IWP Chair also provides additional feedback. All comments and feedback received are reviewed by the IWP Chair and Technical Editor, who resolve queries and make final adjustments to the questions. Key stakeholders, including the RACP Assessment Manager, Senior Executive Officer, and Written Exam Committee Chairs, conduct a second review. Once all content is approved, the exams undergo a final quality assurance process, including checks for image quality on proofs. Exams are then prepared for printing. This meticulous process ensures that the examinations are reliable, fair, and aligned with the College's rigorous standards of assessment.

### **Q: How is the standard set for the Divisional Examinations?**

**A:** The standard-setting processes for the Divisional Examinations ensure that candidate performance is assessed fairly and consistently across all candidates. For both exams, the standard is set using criterion-referenced methods, meaning the standard is set using pre-determined criteria for exam performance related to exam content. There is no quota for the number of candidates who can pass, and performance is not scaled to a 'bell curve' or by other norm-referencing means.

For the DWE, the standard is primarily determined using the *Modified Angoff method*. A full paper calibration using this method occurs every five years, with the most recent calibration conducted in 2024 for the 2025 examinations. Psychometric analysis, based on the Rasch model (an item response theory model), stabilises the cut score for subsequent exams. This

approach uses the previously described 'anchor' items to maintain consistency and fairness across administrations.

These approaches are designed to ensure reliability and fairness in assessing the knowledge and performance of candidates, maintaining rigorous standards of quality and consistency.

**Q: What quality assurance measures are in place for Divisional Examinations?**

**A:** Divisional Examinations are supported by a robust quality assurance framework to ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency across all assessments. This framework is underpinned by detailed business rules tailored to each examination's purpose, format, and potential risks. These rules cover every stage of the examination process, including planning with relevant committees, blueprinting, item creation and review, examiner recruitment and calibration, examination conduct, item analysis for written exams, scoring reviews for practical exams, and standard setting. Additional measures include thorough checks for data accuracy, results meetings and ratification (addressing borderline candidates or events that might affect results), communication of results to candidates and stakeholders, and the collection and utilisation of feedback to refine future assessments.

These quality assurance measures uphold the credibility and reliability of Divisional Examinations, ensuring that all candidates are assessed to consistent and rigorous standards.

**Q: How does the College manage risks and contingencies for Divisional Examinations?**

**A:** The College has a robust risk management and contingency planning framework for Divisional Examinations, refined and enhanced through lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. This framework ensures examinations are delivered effectively whilst maintaining quality and minimising disruptions.

Comprehensive Risk Management Plans are in place to address situations that could impact exam delivery. These include Situation Management Plans, which guide responses to external events, supported by a Crisis Communications Plan to ensure clear and effective communication. In addition, Contingency Plans provide strategies for deferring examinations or implementing alternative delivery methods. These plans are published on the College website and reviewed before each examination cycle to address emerging risks and ensure readiness.

These measures demonstrate the College's commitment to proactively managing risks, maintaining examination quality, and providing support to all stakeholders during the examination process.

**Q: How are examination registration fees used?**

**A:** Examination fees support the delivery of the exam and fund the complex operational and logistics requirements involved in managing the assessment across multiple locations.



Fees contribute to a wide range of essential costs, such as funding the salaries of dedicated staff who support candidates throughout the exam process, venue hire and invigilation services across multiple locations, the production and manual processing of exam materials, and contracts with external providers for essential services such as scanning. Additionally, fees support meetings for exam development and standard setting, including travel, accommodation and catering for participants, as well as costs related to exam committee activities, observer deployments, and the licensing and maintenance of secure digital exam platforms used for exam administration and results management.

These expenditures ensure that each DWE is delivered fairly, securely, and in alignment with the RACP's high standards of quality and professionalism.