



2018/2019 Edition CSA ABC



50 Top Tips to pass the MRCGP CSA exam



Top Tip #1

- Start preparing for the MRCGP CSA exam at least 3 months before the start of the CSA exam.
- Choose your preferred month below!
- Dates taken from the RCGP Website:

Which month you wish to do the CSA (Right)	October 2018	December 2018	Jan/Feb 2019	March 2019	April 2019	May 2019
Apply via website	29-31 Aug 2018	23-26 Oct 2018	11-14 Dec 2018	22 - 25 Jan 2019	26 Feb - 1 Mar 2019	2-5 April 2019
CSA exam dates	4-6; 13, 26 & 27 Oct 2018	30 Nov - 6 Dec; 8 Dec 2018	25-31 Jan 1 to 9 Feb 2019	9- 23 Mar 2019	8 - 13 April 2019	13 - 25 May 2019
Results published	7 Nov 2018	14 Dec 2018	19 Feb 2019	3 Apr 2019	26 April 2019	31 May 2019

- **CSA ABC top tip #2:** book onto our [CSA ABC Online Video course](#), well in advance, so that you have can learn and implement all the high scoring techniques & strategies into your consultation, to score the highest marks.

Top Tip #3

- Book early, as soon as the application process opens
- Why? Because not all candidates will always get a place to sit the exam that chosen month, if too many trainees apply.



- **CSA ABC top tip #4:** When you apply, you can express a preference of days of the week that you wish to avoid and also whether you would prefer to choose an AM or PM exam sitting. So if you're an early bird, choose AM!
- **CSA ABC top tip #5:** Our [CSA ABC Video course](#) is all Online, we know you're a busy registrar, so we have made it easy for you to access in your own time!

Top Tip #6

- The RCGP CSA exam is expensive: get back almost £300 after the exam, by calling HMRC on the below number
- **HMRC: 0300 200 3300**
- Just explain you have sat a recognised Royal College GP exam and are eligible for tax relief and they will adjust your tax code that year, which will generate a tax rebate.
- They will talk you through the rest, but have a recent payslip, National Insurance Number and P45 to hand.



- **CSA ABC top tip #7:** Don't feel shy, the money is there for you to take and it's all within the law! You can use that money towards covering the cost of a course you sat ([hint, hint](#)) to help you pass the CSA.
- **CSA ABC top tip #8:** Money is important, that's why our CSA ABC Video Course, is the best value course in the UK!

Top Tip #9

- Revise in groups of 3-4 people, it will give you plenty of chance to: practice, role play and observe.
- Anything more than 4 people in a group can become inefficient.



- **CSA ABC top tip #10:** there are over [50+ CSA cases \(with mark schemes\)](#) on the CSA ABC website, for you to practice with your colleagues. Just register a FREE account, download the [FREE case](#) to get a flavour and start practising!

Top Tip #11

- Practice with 2-3 different groups if possible.
- Being exposed to different consultation styles and seeing how other colleagues do things is a good learning tool.



- **CSA ABC top tip #12:** If you don't ask to join a group, you may not be invited. The CSA is a big exam, so a few seconds of asking politely, may make a big difference in the long run.

Top Tip #13

- Eat healthily, Eat well, Don't Skip meals, Sleep.
- The CSA exam can cause a lot of stress and anxiety in the build up. It is not unusual for trainees to start becoming unwell and burnt out in the lead up.
- Chronic tiredness and stress will be noticeable on the day of the exam! It can shave marks off your performance.



- **CSA ABC top tip #14:** Ignore this tip at your peril! Don't be that trainee who is fizzled out on the day.

Top Tip #15

- The CSA exam is made up of 13 actor based stations, who role play patients.
- 13 patient's: 10 minutes each,; that is just over 2 hours of consulting.
- You will get a coffee break after finishing case 7!
- If you are not use to seeing 13+ patients in a half day surgery, you are not ready for the CSA.



- **CSA ABC top tip #16:** Aerobic exercises and seeing lots of patients, are a good way of building up your stamina!

Top Tip #17

- In the MRCGP CSA exam, you will have your own consulting room, where the actors/patients will come in and see you.
- Remember to take your own doctor's bag though!



- **CSA ABC top tip #18:** On our [CSA Video course](#), we take you through a full orientation of the exam venue with real images of the actual consulting room itself! This saves on money visiting the Royal College and familiarises you, ready for the big day.

Top Tip #19

- Know the very basics of using an Apple Ipad, because all the patient case notes, will be on an Ipad in your room, to read before you see each patient.



- **CSA ABC top tip #20:** Don't worry if your not technology savvy. Before the exam, the Royal College will explain how the software works, it's actually quite easy.

Top Tip #21

- The CSA exam is conducted in the Royal College of GP's building, in London.
- Plan ahead: book a hotel EARLY if you wish to stay near the RCGP building, the night before the exam.
- This is London, metropolis for the world, so rooms can get snapped up fast!



- **CSA ABC top tip #22:** you can book into the RCGP building itself, where you do the exam, to stay the night, but it is not necessary and can be tricky to find an available booking.

Top Tip #23

- Treat every patient you see in day to day surgery like a potential CSA station.
- It is tricky, because real life patients don't have scripts, so focus on only one area to work on for that day e.g. Red flags.
- For each patient, you will make sure you definitely cover red flags properly, this will rapidly develop that skill area.
- At the end of one week, you will have covered 6-7 key areas.



"I'm disappointed; if anyone should have seen the red flags, it's you."

- **CSA ABC top tip #24:** Sometimes, in order to get better, your consultation may get a little worse, whilst your upgrading your skills, don't worry, this is normal.

Top Tip #25

- Video your consultations; all practices should provide equipment to allow you to video record your surgeries.
- You will need to get written consent from the patient before you do this.
- Seeing yourself consulting on video, is one of the QUICKEST ways to learn and improve fast.



- **CSA top tip #26:** go through your video consultations with your supervisor if you can, they can highlight areas to work on.
- Write a list of things to improve and then see **#21**
- **CSA ABC top tip #27:** [CSA ABC has model consultation videos online](#), so you can see how to do consultations properly, in order to pass.

Top Tip #28

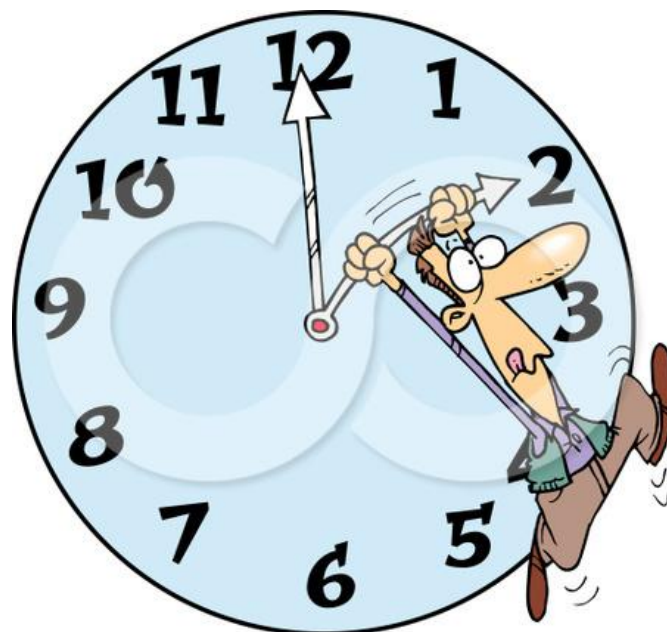
- Get your trainer to observe you consulting with patients, on tutorial days.
- This mimics the real pressure of the CSA, as you have someone watching over your back, just like the actual exam.
- It will highlight the key weaknesses, that you are likely to bring up in the real exam, when under pressure.



- **CSA ABC top tip #29:** Don't feel down if you notice that you don't seem to perform as well as when you are consulting alone, it is good to get use to the unnatural pressure over time.

Top Tip #30

- In the real CSA, you will not have to 'record keep', so this saves time and makes a 10 minute consultation much more achievable.
- Every case created for the purposes of the the real MRCGP CSA exam, is completable in 10 minutes. They have all been tested.



- **CSA ABC Top Tip #31:** In real life, you may want to keep your consultation lengths at 15 minute appointments, as this will give you 5 minutes to type up the case/read round the topic briefly. But if you can get down to 10 minutes, you are doing very well.

Top Tip #32

- You will definitely have women's health cases in the CSA, so if you're a male trainee and need to brush up on these areas, start early.
- Sometimes in real life, female patients prefer to see lady doctors, leaving male trainees with less experience than their female counterparts.



- **CSA ABC top tip #33:** Our [Online CSA ABC videos](#) have a wide range of Women's Health scenarios & you can individually subscribe to this module, saving you money.
- **CSA ABC top tip #34:** sitting in with a female GP or nurse, can allow you to see a wide range of women's health consultations, so ask your practice manager to book you in.

Top Tip #35

- You need to have good clinical knowledge, it is called the **CLINICAL** skills exam for a reason.
- Make sure your up to date on the latest guidelines and the **GOLD** standards.



- **CSA ABC top tip #36:** Book onto our [CSA ABC Video Course](#) and we'll take you through the fastest way to bring your knowledge up to speed, with the least amount of reading.

Top Tip #37

- CSA Actors are there to play their roles, not to judge you as a person, so don't feel put off by their emotions.



- **CSA ABC top tip #38:** having worked with real CSA actors and incorporated professional medical actors into our [Online CSA videos](#), we can show you when you need to pay attention to certain acting cues and when you should probably not let it ruffle your feathers.

Top Tip #39

- Sometimes, you'll have CSA cases which deal with uncertainty, it is a key part of being a GP, so start getting use to navigating around them.
- Real life has lots of good examples, so start practising.



- **CSA ABC top tip #40:** On our [CSA ABC Video Course](#) & [Online videos consultations](#), we teach you how to deal with uncertainty, the key is usually being safe, but you don't want to miss genuine pathology at the same time.

Top Tip #41

- The CSA exam has difficult cases sprinkled into the mix, so that the best candidates can shine, a good knowledge base is the key here, so make sure that your AKT knowledge has not disappeared.



- **CSA ABC Top Tip #42:** Knowledge, combined with repetition of cases again and again, will make you smooth. The RCGP examiners love a candidate who is smooth. It is important to practice often and regularly.

Top Tip #43

- Common things are common: don't be fooled. Diabetes, asthma, hypertension: the list can go on; know these topics to the core, they are likely to come up.



“The red circles are your red blood cells.
The white circles are your white blood cells.
The brown circles are donuts. We need to talk.”

- **CSA ABC top tip #44:** If you go through the Royal College Curriculum, you can often pick out the topics that are common. Don't have the time, then book onto our [Online Video Course](#): we have already done this task and summarised key, high scoring topics to revise.

Top Tip #45

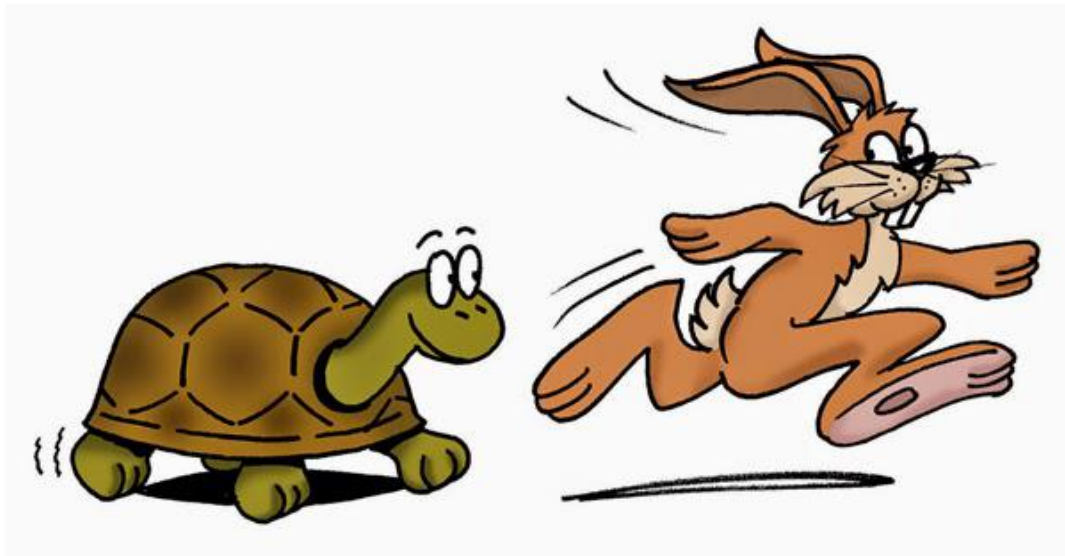
- Know how to explain common conditions in easy to understand terms to patients.
- This is all about saving time, when you do the real CSA exam, as you will only have 5 minutes for management (often less!)



- **CSA ABC Top Tip #46:** Book onto our [CSA ABC Video Course](#) and we'll show you exactly how to master this particular skill.
- Furthermore, coming to our [CSA ABC](#) website soon, will be a list of over 100+ conditions and how to explain them in laymans terms. Keep checking for the release in 2018!

Top Tip #47

- Management is the most difficult part of the *CSA* exam and the one that all trainees struggle with the most, as they simply run out of time.
- Having a good knowledge base is one thing, but time management is another.
- This requires practice, and lots of it. It is very obvious in the real *CSA* which candidates have seen/practised lots of cases and those that have not. The more you practice, the easier it is to finish on time.

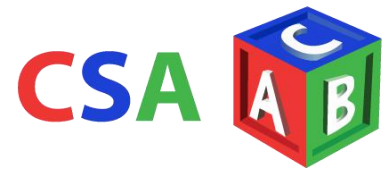


- **CSA ABC top tip: #48:** Management also involves a safety net and follow up, so try not to forget these.

Top Tip #49

- Results day: Here is one last gem for you, if you don't see us on the course, exam results come out the evening before the published CSA results dates.
- Why? We don't know the answer to that either!





Top Tip #50

- Finally, if you subscribe to our [Online CSA Course](#) or subscribe to our [Online Consultation Videos](#), then here are more areas we'll cover in-depth in addition to the above:
 - ◆ Red Flags explained
 - ◆ Psychosocial: how to explore properly
 - ◆ ICE: how to do these properly
 - ◆ Creating a good opening impression
 - ◆ Dealing with actor cues
 - ◆ Showing empathy/sympathy
 - ◆ Airtight Management Plans
 - ◆ What to do when you freeze!
 - ◆ How to develop a shared management plan
 - ◆ And lots, lots more!

See you soon and good luck with your CSA exam!

[CSA ABC](#)