A - Attitude
K - Knowledge
T - Timing

Attitude - Think about why the exam is important, but don't let it overshadow and cause 'worry' unnecessarily. What is it trying to test? It is not a test of all possible knowledge related to working in General Practice - don't be alarmed ! As in general practice - there are likely to be questions which are novel, and learn to feel comfortable with that. Have a framework to deal with these questions is useful i.e eliminating less likely answers early. Don't waste too much time, as they are likely to make up a small percentage of the exam. Using the 'flag' tool during the exam to come back to them, if you have time at the end. I tried to leave 15minutes at the end to go back to these qs. Obviously , the aim of preparing for the exam is to try to reduce the number of such qs by looking at areas of your knowledge which may be lacking - I found using Passmedicine and onexamination useful to 'highlight' these areas. Don't get sucked into thinking that if you can then pass all the qs in that 'difficult area' using online q banks then you will be ok... from experience this can lull you into a false sense of security. It's important to use the q banks mainly as highlighting tricky areas , ones you perhaps didn't realise you found difficult, but don't rely on it as a 'marker' that you will pass ! It is likely you will need to do further reading around the topic rather than just memorising the correct answer for that 'particular' question. At first, preparation for the exam can seem vast and unmanageable. While in hospital placements, actively think what experience/knowledge will be helpful for the exam - try to attend outpatient's clinics as much as possible and revise current guidelines specific to that area for the exam while you are actually managing these patients - ie. during my GI job - I tried to get to grips with recent guidelines re. investigation and management of IBD, dyspepsia, diagnosis and management of alcoholic liver disease. This keeps the AKT 'in mind' during ST1 and start of ST2, prior to more focused study, and I find clinical scenarios to 'hang ' the knowledge on is much more enjoyable !

Knowledge - I used passmedicine and onexamination - and had an account for about 6months. I also attended a hot topic course about 6 weeks before the exam and really enjoyed it. I found that this 'mixed' up your learning, rather than just doing on screen work, and found the clinicians running it were engaging and good teachers. As it is definitely more lecture based learning, it isn't for everyone. Even so - the hot topic book is a great, succinct resource with up to date guidelines, referral criteria, and interestingly enough 'hot topics,' which can find their way into the exam. I also attended the statistics course run by RCGP, which was extremely useful, giving you enough background knowledge and confidence of stats and how to tackle the qs. I would say from my experience that is enough to just memorize the statistical terms and phrases a few days before the exam, but on the flip side, it is important to be able to remember, understand and apply the basic equations to work out the answers. Passmedicine and onexamination are ideal for testing your ability to do stats qs, and you won’t find much coming up in the exam which isn't covered there. Again - don't spend too long on a stats question if it just seems too complicated, or not like anything you have looked at - as you will only lose a mark or so. I didn't have a study group with peers, so can't comment on how effective this is. I did make lots of cue cards , which my partner tested me on. You are welcome to borrow them !

Timing - I decided to sit my AKT during ST2, as felt that in ST3 I would like to concentrate on getting back into practice, and preparing for the CSA. I decided that the start of ST2 seemed too soon for me, as I hadn't started studying at the end of ST1. Like many, I took into consideration which job I was in, and the likely time available for studying, on call commitments etc. I would warn against putting too much emphasis on picking an AKT time solely related to which hospital job you are likely to be in, as it is impossible to pre-empt how busy each job is , due to rota gaps changing constantly. Consider what may also be happening in your personal life/ planned holidays etc. There isn't a right time ! I sat the AKT in January, after around 2-3months of study, and then in April after 5-6months of study. I have peers who sat the AKT at various times, from october of ST2, until the October of ST3. My advice would be, whenever you choose to sit it, commit to that date and work towards it, starting early !