

GMC Assessment collection – FAQs

How will we submit data for this collection?

In this first year of the collection, your return will consist of your existing results or exam board spreadsheets (along with any supplementary materials, as discussed in another FAQ below). Colleagues at the GMC will review and process these files to populate the STUDENT_ASSESSMENT table described in:

https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c20055/data_items

The [data collection system](#) will be open from early September until November 30 2021, and access to this will be managed by your institution's nominated HESA contact. Further information on how this system works, along with other details regarding submissions for this collection, can be found in [this e-learning module](#).

How will these data be processed once collected?

The GMC team will load the submitted spreadsheets into the UKMED database held on GMC servers. We will derive some variables, including Z-scores within year, school and assessment and a classification of assessments into groups, such as "knowledge tests". The approach to classifying assessment and calculating Z-scores will be agreed with the UKMED research sub-group.

We will provide each school with a load report that will include the following information:

- For each assessment, the proportion of cases in the main HESA Student records that have a record for that assessment
- Details of derived variables
- Exception report – details of any cases that did not load, for example linkage failures

How will these data be used?

These data are being collected for inclusion in the [UK Medical Education Database](#), which provides collated data on the performance of UK medical students and trainee doctors across their education and careers, for research and planning purposes.

UKMED data is accessible only via a rigorous application and review process, with data being provided in the form of research extracts tailored to meet the specific requirements of each application. Information on data security and anonymity can be found in another FAQ below.

Data will be used to produce an interactive Tableau report looking at the award gap in assessments UK-wide and within schools, this will show differences in Z-scores by protected characteristics such as ethnicity. This will be published under password to schools for comment and review. We would then expect to publish a key-findings report on the award gap within UK medical schools. At some point in the future the report may be included with the other GMC progression reports - [online reporting tool](#).

How will anonymity and data protection be ensured?

Any data released through UKMED are subject to strict controls on how the data is accessed, including procedures to prevent identification of individuals. In brief, approved researchers are provided with a pseudonymised dataset which can only be accessed through a Safe Haven based at the University of Dundee. This ensures that users are not able to identify individuals within the data or use the data for other purposes. In addition to these technical arrangements, data users are also required to sign a legal agreement with the General Medical Council, which sets out acceptable use of the data. Research outputs are also reviewed against a set of statistical disclosure controls.

Further information can be found on the [UKMED FAQs webpage](#) and full details are available in the [UKMED research process document](#).

Can you provide more information on the legal basis for this collection?

The legal basis for this collection and the transfer of data is the GMC's role as the regulator of medical education as set out in the Medical Act 1983, in conjunction with HESA's statutory functions related to higher education statistics. Further detail about this basis and purpose is covered by the [Student collection notice on the HESA website](#), specifically Purpose 6, which refers to students taking a primary medical qualification. You

can find out more about how the GMC uses data on its website: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/privacy-and-cookies>

There are data items included in the collection data model that are not normally included in our results spreadsheets. How can we submit these?

You will be able to upload any number of files to the data collection system, so do not be concerned if all data items are not consolidated in one file. Providing supplemental files is acceptable, but please ensure they are clearly labelled, or explained in a readme file – this will assist us in collating the final dataset. GMC colleagues will review submitted files for completeness and follow up with queries if necessary.

There is important contextual information about our data that we think you should know when processing our return. How can we provide this to you?

Providers are encouraged to include commentary on their submission in a readme file accompanying their submission. Any information that will aid us in interpreting and understanding your submission will be gratefully received.

Can we include formative assessments in our submission?

Formative assessments are outside of the scope of this collection, which is focused on summative assessments that have an impact on student progression. However, we will include formative assessments in the dataset at the request of medical schools, if they think that having these assessments in the dataset could be of use to them in future.

If you would like to include formative assessments in your submission, please let our colleagues at the GMC know by emailing HESA_Collection@gmc-uk.org. They will then confirm the details of this with you. In either case, please submit your files as they are – there is no need to edit submitted spreadsheets to remove formative assessments if they are not included. GMC will only take the data relating to assessments specified in the ASSESSMENT table you have provided.

Why are you interested in adjustments students receive for extenuating circumstances such as disabilities?

There is ongoing research interest in specific learning disabilities, and knowing which students received extra time or other adjustments is an important data point for that

research. It is difficult to interpret the relationship between Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and student performance without knowing if the student had extra time. It is with this in mind that we are requesting information on reasonable adjustments received by individual students – this will complement data we receive on SLDs from the main HESA student record which includes the field [DISABLE](#)

Will the GMC and HESA review the collection processes?

We have undertaken to submit a report to the MSC Assessment Alliance detailing which aspects of the process were acceptable to providers and which were challenging. We would encourage you to feedback with comments at the end of the process and will invite you to do so upon submission of the data.

How will this collection evolve over the next few years?

In this first year of the collection, we have agreed to undertake a 'soft launch', and as such we are only collecting data on assessments in the first and final years of your PMQ programmes. From the 2021/22 collection onwards, we will be collecting data on assessments in all years of your PMQ programmes.

We also envision changes in how data will be submitted in future years, that are in line with HESA's [Data Futures project](#). It is intended that the tables included in the [GMC Assessment data model](#) will be incorporated into the Data Futures model – further details are provided in the 'Resolved specification items' section of [this webpage](#). Prior to this, there will also be an intermediate step where data is collected using a standardised template. The proposed timescales for this are as follows:

- *2020/21 (collected Sep-Nov 2021):* spreadsheet return, first and final years only
- *2021/22 (collected Sep-Nov 2022):* spreadsheet return, all years of study
- *2022/23 (collected Sep-Nov 2023):* spreadsheet return using standardised template
- *2023/24 (collected Sep-Nov 2024):* spreadsheet return using standardised template
- *2024/25* – first potential collection of GMC Assessment data within Data Futures

HESA plan to consult with providers after the first and second years of collecting these data to gain feedback from providers and make any necessary improvements.