

# National training survey 2021

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## Programme specific questions

This briefing note sets out our proposed approach for reviewing programme specific questions for the 2021 national trainee survey.

## Background

This briefing note is for medical royal colleges, faculties and the UK Foundation Programme Office. Programme Specific Questions (PSQs) are included in the trainee survey each year to help colleges understand how their curricula are being delivered and explore issues specific to their specialty.

This year we ran a shorter, modified version of the national training survey in July/August 2020 to reduce the pressure on doctors during the 1st wave of the pandemic. The survey included a selection of existing NTS questions, together with some new questions exploring the impact of the pandemic on training experiences. The PSQs were not included in the modified version.

## What are the plans for the 2021 NTS?

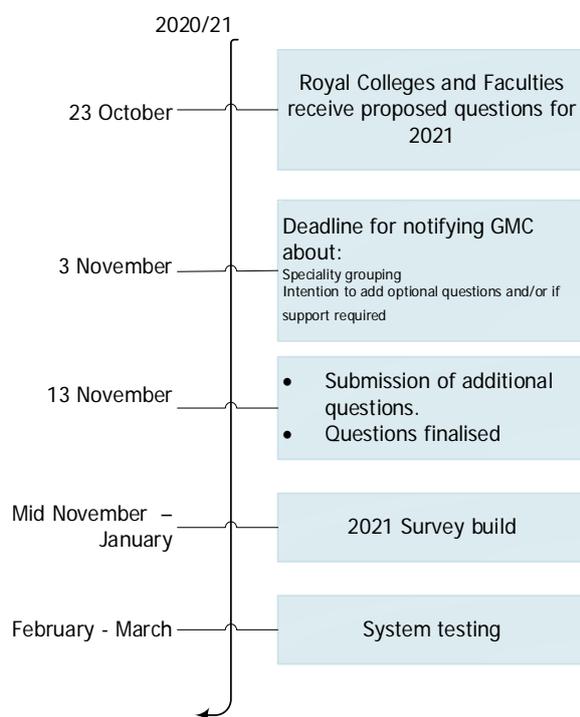
We intend to return to the usual NTS in March 2021 with doctors completing the generic questions and then being routed to their PSQ. However, we know the impact of the pandemic on training has been significant and that groups of specialities have been affected in different ways. We are therefore introducing a different approach to the development of the PSQs for 2021. This is to capture the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, as well as identify any positive approaches to support trainees with their return to training.

We know that trainees across many specialities have missed similar types of training opportunities or their training has slowed down. Therefore, instead of colleges/faculties using their existing PSQ; we are proposing that all specialities receive a similar questionnaire with some specific questions tailored to larger groups of specialities. This incorporates:

- A **priority** set of questions: these questions are **required** i.e. they will be included, and once finalised, the format/phrasing cannot be changed.

- A **secondary** set of questions: a small number of secondary questions for colleges to select from, depending on what you consider to be relevant for your speciality. These questions are **optional**; however the format/phrasing cannot be changed.
- Space for **up to five** additional questions designed by the individual college/faculty. These can be new for 2021 or taken from your existing PSQ. This is optional – you do not need to add any more questions if you don't need them. We are limiting it to five so that each PSQ is a similar length and not burdensome for doctors.

## Timescales



## What do Royal Colleges/Faculties need to do now?

1. Review the attached spreadsheet. Please review the **speciality grouping** (first tab) and then review the priority (required) and secondary (optional) questions. The priority questions are highlighted in yellow.
2. Please select the grouping you consider to be the best fit for your speciality.

3. We welcome your feedback on the priority question set – please make notes in the final column on the spreadsheet. We will only make changes that are relevant for the larger speciality grouping.
4. Please provide any additional relevant competencies / procedures you would like for Q3 if these don't cover everything.
5. Please indicate on the spreadsheet which of the **optional** questions you would like to include in your PSQ.
6. Consider if you would like to include any further questions specific to your speciality (no more than five). We have attached your 2020 programme specific questions alongside this briefing note for your reference. Please insert rows and add the questions you would like at the end of the spreadsheet.
7. Return your completed spreadsheet to the GMC surveys team (details are at the end of this document).

## Key points

1. When choosing your optional questions, they should be important to the delivery of the curriculum and assessment system you have in place.
2. Avoid asking questions that can be answered via other data sources (for example ARCP). We recommend you aim for questions about the quality of trainees' experience.
3. Each question should be underpinned by a clear rationale and consideration should be given to how answers will be used.
4. You should avoid covering any of the generic NTS question themes in your PSQ so that trainees in your programmes don't have to answer similar questions multiple times. Please also avoid any overlaps with the priority or secondary questions in the spreadsheet.
5. We cannot support the analysis of free text responses due to the level of resources required to read and categorise them. Colleges/faculties would be expected to resource the review of, and response to, free text answers should you choose to include them.
6. Where possible, we encourage you to consult with your trainee network about any new additional questions or use recent feedback you have received.
7. Please find attached to this note some general guidance on question setting best practice (annex A).

## Support available

We will provide support for you during this process. We will also review your requests for new questions and provide feedback where:

1. A question is ambiguous.
2. The potential responses appear not to provide the required information.
3. Where a question is duplicated in the priority question set (PSQ) or in the generic or demographic question set in the main NTS.
4. Where the terminology used doesn't match that used throughout the survey.
5. Where the question style greatly differs from that used in the main NTS or in the rest of your question set.

Should you wish to obtain any additional advice or support please contact us for further information and guidance.

### Contact information

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