

Collection of Medical Royal College and Faculty exam outcomes in 2017/18 – Briefing note 1

Introduction

The GMC undertakes an annual project to report on the exam outcomes which could contribute to the award of a CCT or CESR to doctors at the end of their training.

This note covers:

- The reporting period that this briefing note covers includes the outcomes from exams taken between **1st August 2017** and **31st July 2018**.
- Royal colleges, faculties and any other organisation administering an exam that is required for a CCT will be referred to as 'colleges' throughout this note.

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Exam data collection 2017/18 project timelines

Deadline date	Who	Action
24 August 2018	Colleges	<p>Confirm names and contact details of individuals who will be sharing data with the GMC, as well as those who will be reviewing the data in the stakeholder review.</p> <p>People on this list will receive all the relevant communications.</p> <p>Our Information Governance policies require access to GMC Connect to be withdrawn for those who do not confirm they require access in 2018.</p>
7 September 2018	Colleges	<p>Colleges to submit the 'list of returned exams' file and exam checklist to the GMC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the exam data checklist in Appendix A for what to check Answer questions regarding data fields Confirm if there are any exams which will not have data submitted in 2018
14 September 2018	Colleges	Deadline for submitting candidate demographic data via GMC Connect.
12 October 2018	GMC	Return 'output' files (Appendix B) to colleges identifying which candidates are or have been on the UK medical register and for whom colleges should provide exam results by the end of October.
End of October 2018	Colleges	Deadline for submission of exam outcomes for all candidates who are or have been registered with the GMC.
November 2018	GMC	<p>Initial checks of exam data includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A check against the 'list of returned exams' file to ensure that each exam listed has results Number of exam results expected based on previous year's returns and candidate demographic data submission Missing data from the data sharing agreement or

Deadline date	Who	Action
		gaps in the data Feedback will be given to colleges if any issues are identified
Early December 2018	Colleges	Colleges to respond to any queries from the initial checks within two weeks of GMC feedback
January 2019	GMC	Briefing note 2 for the exam data stakeholder review sent out along with exam data for final checks
Q1 2019	GMC	Reports available under password on the GMC reporting platform for testing and feedback
Q1 2019	GMC	Exam 2017/2018 data included in UKMED database

Exam data collection: what data should be submitted?

Colleges provide the GMC with exam outcomes for all doctors who are now or who were ever on the UK medical register and who sat an exam which could contribute towards their CCT or CESR within the reporting period **1st August 2017 to 31st July 2018**.

Data sharing agreements

Data sharing agreements (DSAs) were produced and signed by both the colleges and the GMC to agree and list the data fields which will be shared by the two parties for the candidate demographic data and exam outcomes data for each exam. You should have a copy of the DSA but if you do not please email educationdata@gmc-uk.org and we will share the most up to date version with you. Below is an example of data fields listed for each exam in the DSAs:

Fields Shared with the GMC for exam name
Candidate ID
GMC reference no
Candidate first name
Candidate surname
Date of birth
Exam date
Attempt
Score
Pass mark
Pass/fail

Please check the DSA to make sure that it reflects the exams and the data fields you are able to share with us. Please let us know if the DSA needs to be amended.

If your systems have been updated and it is now possible for you to provide total scores, sections scores, pass marks or attempts we would be very interested in discussing this with you and amending your DSA.

Amendments to the DSA will be collated and agreed with both parties via email. The emails will be stored alongside the DSA. Every two years, from 2018, if any changes have been made we will review the content of the DSA and update them, acquiring signatures from both parties. The DSAs will be reviewed and updated again in August 2020.

Candidate demographic data return

To check whether the candidates who sat the exams are now or were ever on the UK medical register, colleges are first asked to share basic demographic data of all candidates with the GMC. You can submit files in Excel or SPSS format and all files should be submitted using the secure portal GMC Connect. Unfortunately we cannot accept Word or PDF files.

Candidate demographic data files can be submitted to the GMC as soon as exam diets are finished and you have a complete data set available.

To ensure we can accurately match the candidate data with the UK medical register it is important to include at least:

- Candidate first name
- Candidate last name
- Candidate date of birth
- GMC reference number (if available)
- College ID (a unique ID provided by the college to each candidate if available)

We encourage colleges to submit unique IDs used for candidates as this allows us to do an additional data validation check to ensure that all unique college IDs are correctly matched to a unique GMC reference number. Please refer to the DSA for a list of demographic data fields your college has agreed to provide.

Within four weeks of submitting the candidate demographic data, the GMC will return an 'output' file to you identifying candidates who are or were on the UK medical register and for whom their exam results should be shared with the GMC. You will find more information about the data which is returned in the 'output' file in [Appendix B](#). There is also a brief explanation of the matching process that the GMC uses to identify those on the UK medical register in [Appendix C](#).

Please note: It is important to complete the candidate data check before you submit your exam data so that the GMC does not hold exam results for people who are not or have

never been on the UK medical register. In order to ensure that the demographic data for people who are not on the UK medical register is not held by the GMC all candidates are removed from GMC Connect and deleted from local folders. The unmatched cases are deleted from the tables in the GMC database.

Exam outcomes data return

The final return of data to the GMC includes the exam outcomes for all candidates who are or were ever on the UK medical register, as indicated in the 'output' file, for any exams sat during the reporting period which could contribute towards the CCT or CESR. This may include exams which do not directly contribute towards the CCT, but if passed, exempt the doctor from passing an exam which is required for their CCT.

If you are unsure whether an exam contributes towards the CCT or CESR you will find assessment information in the curricula documents on the [GMC website](#).

A list of all of the exams that are currently shared with the GMC as part of the exam data collection can be found in the 'list of returned exams' file which is attached to the email along with this briefing note. You will find more information about what is included in the 'list of returned exams' file in [Appendix D](#).

For each exam the data sharing agreement (DSA) lists all of the data fields that your college agreed to return to the GMC. The DSA was tailored for some colleges that were unable to provide the level of detail originally requested, such as examination scores. The GMC is keen to collect the following data fields for each exam in order to increase the use of the data for UKMED research projects:

- Scores (section and/or total scores)
- Pass mark/score
- Attempts

If you don't currently return these data fields, but might be in a position to do so, please [email us](#) and we can discuss adding these data fields to the return and updating the DSA.

Once the exam outcomes are returned the GMC will use the information that you have provided in the DSA, the 'list of returned exams' file and any information you have returned from the exam data checklist to check the data and ensure data quality. You can find out more about what those checks include in [Appendix E](#).

Exam data collection: step by step guide to submitting the data

Below are the guidelines for submitting the candidate demographic data and the exam outcomes data. Please [email us](#) if you have any queries about the process.

- 1** Email the GMC confirming the college contacts who will be returning the candidate demographic data and the exam outcomes data by the **24th August 2018**. The GMC will check that you have access to GMC Connect – the secure portal through which all data are to be submitted.
- 2** Use the [exam data checklist](#) to go through the DSA and 'list of returned exams' file and amend as appropriate. If you need a copy of the DSA or you have not received the 'list of returned exams' file please [email the GMC](#).
- 3** Return the 'list of returned exams' file and respond to the questions in the exam data checklist via [email to the GMC](#) by **7th September 2018**.
- 4** Log in to [GMC Connect](#), in the Royal college/faculty – education group you will have access to a document folder for your college called, 'Exam data collection 2018 – College name' where you will be able to upload the candidate demographic data. Please submit the candidate demographic data by **14th September 2018**.
- 5** You will receive an email from the GMC when an 'output' file is ready for you to download from your college document folder in GMC Connect.
- 6** Use the 'output' file to prepare the exam outcomes data return for the candidates who are/were on the UK medical register.
- 7** Upload the exam outcomes data to your college document folder in GMC Connect.
- 8** Should the GMC raise any issues with you following the initial checks of the exam outcomes data, please feedback to the GMC within 2 weeks of the query being raised.

Exam data collection: what are the data used for?

Progression reports

The exam data provided are used as part of the online [progression reports](#) to create the specialty examinations report. These reports highlight the variation in pass rates for various cohorts of doctors in postgraduate training. The purpose of these reports is to help medical schools and postgraduate training bodies to understand the journey of their medical students and trainees.

UK Medical Education Database

The UK Medical Education Database (UKMED) brings together different undergraduate and postgraduate data relating to UK medical education. It provides a platform for collating data on the performance of UK medical students and trainee doctors across their education and future career. UKMED aims to highlight the paths of doctors through school, university and their career and create a unique environment in which new research can be

undertaken. Data extracts are made available to researchers via a formal application process which is described on the [UKMED website](#).

All colleges have a signed Data Sharing Agreement with the GMC that permit the inclusion of their exam data in UKMED. At the Academy Assessment Committee in June 2017 each college was asked to nominate a contact to consider UKMED research projects using their data and indicate their preferred level of involvement in such projects. Colleges interested in applying for a UKMED Research extract should note that the next application window will be in [October 2018](#).

Contact the GMC

If you have any queries in relation to the data collection process of the exam outcomes please contact the GMC by email at educationdata@gmc-uk.org.

Your contact at the GMC regarding the exam data collection is:

Jennifer Redman-Tootell
Surveys Reporting Coordinator

All briefing notes from previous collections and this briefing note will be published on the [GMC website](#).

Appendix A – Exam Data Checklist

Data quality is important to all of us and we want to make sure that we do the appropriate checks to ensure that the data you share with us is fit for purpose. This checklist asks you questions which guide you through reviewing and updating the 'list of returned exams' file and describing some of the data fields returned so that we can check the completeness of the data.

Checking the 'list of returned exams' file attached to the briefing note email		
<p>1. Were there any exams, not listed on the 'list of returned exams', which were sat during the reporting period and contribute towards a doctor's CCT? If yes, please add the details of the exam to the 'list of returned exams' file and return to the GMC.</p>		
<p>2. Are there any exams listed on the 'list of returned exams' which are no longer being sat at the college/faculty? If yes, please make a note in an email to the GMC about which exam this is and any new exam which replaces it. Please provide the relevant dates: last date of old exam and first date of new exam</p>		
<p>3. Are there any exams listed in the 'list of returned exams' which were not sat during the reporting period? If yes, please let the GMC know which exams will not be returned.</p>		
<p>4. Are there any changes to any of the details of the exams? If yes, please update the 'list of returned exams' file with the details of the changes and return to the GMC or include in the email to the GMC.</p>		
<p>5. Are there any changes to the data recorded by your database that impacts on your ability to supply exam outcomes?</p>		

Please describe your data fields and email your responses to educationdata@gmc-uk.org		
1. Exam date	Is this the date the exam was sat or the date the results were published?	Please delete an option: Date the exam was sat OR Date the results were out
2. Attempts	Is the attempt number the number of attempts including the attempt recorded on that row of the spreadsheet or the number of	Please delete an option: Attempt is number of attempts

	attempts by the candidate up to the attempt recorded on that row of the spreadsheet? i.e. if it was the candidate's second time sitting the exam would the attempt number be 2 or 1.	including that recorded OR Attempt is number of attempts up to that recorded
3. College ID	Is the code you give to a candidate unique to the candidate or to the exam result? If the college ID is unique to a candidate we will check the integrity of the data by checking that each college ID is only associated with one GMC number as it can only refer to one person. If you have a College ID that is unique and don't currently include it in your data return, please do so this year.	Please delete an option: College ID is unique OR College ID is not unique

Describing your candidate data informs the checks we will do on your exam data	
1. Will your candidate demographic data include candidate level or attempt level data?	Candidate level data is where a candidate's demographic data is provided once even when the candidate will be included in the exam data more than once due to them sitting more than one exam or an exam multiple times. Attempt level data is where a candidate's demographic data is provided for each exam result that will be submitted against their name. If you are providing candidate level data please email educationdata@gmc-uk.org to tell us how many records you intend to return exam data for.
2. Are there any data fields you included in the candidate demographic data which should be added to your 'output' file?	Please tell us which, if any of the fields you submit in your candidate demographic data help you to submit the exam data and should be added to the output file returned to you after the candidate matching, e.g. exam date, college ID, attempts etc.

Appendix B – Table of fields included in the 'output' file

Excel column	Column name	Description of data included
A	EXAM_MATCH_ID	Added by the GMC this number is unique to each record
B	COLLEGE ID	If you supply us with a College ID which is unique to a candidate in the demographic data this will be in this column. We will use this to ensure that only one GMC reference number is provided against each unique college ID
C	EXAM_NAME	If provided in the candidate demographic data the exam name will be included in this column
D	COLLEGE	Abbreviation of the college name
E	GMC_PROVIDED	GMC reference number as provided in the candidate demographic data by the college
F	GMC_ASSIGNED	The GMC reference number which is assigned to the candidate from the match test
G	COLLEGE_FIRST_NAME	First name of the candidate as provided in the candidate demographic data by the college
H	COLLEGE_LAST_NAME	Last name of the candidate as provided in the candidate demographic data by the college

I	COLLEGE_DOB	Date of birth of the candidate as provided in the candidate demographic data by the college
J	LRMP_FIRST_NAME	First name of the candidate as it appears on the List of Recognised Medical Practitioners (LRMP)
K	LRMP_LAST_NAME	Last name of the candidate as it appears on the LRMP
L	LRMP_DOB	Date of birth of the candidate as it appears on the LRMP
M	PRIMARY_PMQ_WORLD_REGION	The region in which the candidate took their primary medical qualification (PMQ) Possible values include EEA, IMG, UK
N	LRMP_MEDSCHOOL	The medical school from which the candidate was awarded their (PMQ) as it appears on the LRMP
O	LRMP_DATEOFPMQ	Date that the candidate was awarded their PMQ
P	GMC_VALID	Identifies whether a candidate is/was on the UK medical register. Possible values include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 = on or have been on the register ▪ 0 = not on the register
Q	MATCH_TEST	There are a number match tests applied to the data to check against the UK medical register. This column will tell you which match test resulted in a valid GMC reference number for this record. Possible values currently include: <p style="text-align: center;">1 - GMC_Validation - matching both names and DOB</p>

		<p>2 - GMC_Validation - matching last name and DOB</p> <p>3 - GMC_Validation - matching previous last name and DOB</p> <p>4 - GMC_Validation - matching lastname OR DOB</p> <p>7 - Reverse find on both names and DOB (hard matched)</p> <p>8 - Reverse find on last name and DOB (hard matched)</p> <p>9 - Reverse find on both names switched and DOB (hard matched)</p> <p>12 - Reverse find on both names transposed DOB DAY AND MONTH</p> <p>13 - Reverse find on lastname and transposed DOB DAY AND MONTH</p> <p>14 - Reverse find on previous last name and DOB (hard matched)</p> <p>15 - Reverse find on both names distance >70 * and DOB (hard matched)</p>
R	GMC_NUMBER_MATCH	<p>Flag to indicate whether the GMC_PROVIDED = GMC_ASSIGNED.</p> <p>1 = GMC numbers match</p> <p>0 = GMC number provided does not match number obtained via matching process</p>
S	SURVEY_YEAR	Year that the candidate completed the national training survey (NTS)
T	ORG_NAME	Deanery/LETB/Local office the candidate was training under when they took the NTS in March 2018
U	PROGRAMME_SPECIALTY	The training programme specialty a candidate was on when they took the NTS
V	TRAINING_LEVEL	The level that the candidate was training at when they took the NTS

W	MANUAL_REVIEW	Outcome of a review done by the GMC on candidates which have 1 in GMC_valid but were matched on a test which could result in a false match (tests 9 and above are manually reviewed)
X	COMMENT	Any comments made about the records during manual review
Y	FINAL_CORRECT_GMC_NUMBER	The GMC reference number which is corrected and final
Z	Provide exam data?	Indicates if a candidate has a 1 in GMC_Valid, please provide the exam data. Possible values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (provide exam data) ▪ No (Do not provide exam data)

Appendix C – Exam data collection: how is the candidate data matched to the medical register?

Using the demographic data that you provide we will match candidates to our list of registered medical practitioners, known as 'the medical register'.

Where it has been provided, we will check if the GMC reference number is valid by matching candidates to the medical register using the GMC reference number and date of birth and last name to confirm if it is the correct number for the candidate.

For candidates with no GMC reference number or one we cannot validate as above, we will attempt to match them to the medical register using a combination of date of birth, first name and last name.

We will return the results of the matching exercise in an 'output' file within four weeks of receiving your candidate demographic data. Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for a list and description of the data fields included in the output file.

Appendix D – Table of fields included in the 'list of returned exams'

If these are all correct please confirm; if not please amend as required.

Excel column	Column name	Description of data included	What to check
A	CollegeName	Abbreviation of the college name	Please check this is correct for your college
B	CollegeNameLabel	Full college name	Please check this is correct for your college
C	AbbreviatedExamName	Abbreviation of the exam name	Are there any exams missing? Please add a new row for any exam missing
D	ExamName	Full exam name	Are there any exams missing? Please add a new row for any exam missing
E	DataYearIntroduced	The first year that data from this exam was provided to the GMC	Please check the year is correct for this exam
F	ExamCloseDate	If an exam is no longer running at the college this will be the last year the data was returned to the GMC for this exam	Please fill this in if an exam will not be returned and is no longer running
G	ExamType	The format of the exam e.g. Multiple choice or Single Best Answer etc.	Please check this is correct and update if changed
H	LevelTaken	The level of training that the exam is sat at	Please check this is correct and update if changed

I	Eligibility	Eligibility criteria for taking this exam	Please check this is correct and update if changed
J	RequiredForProgressionTo	The level of training that the exam provides progression to	Please check this is correct and update if changed
K	SourceURL	The web page which has the exam information on	Please check this is correct and update if changed
L	SectionScoreAvailable	If section scores are available please put a Yes in this box or a No if there are no section scores for this exam	Please check this is correct and update if changed
M	TotalScoreAvailable	If a total score is available please put a Yes in this box or a No if there are no section scores for this exam	Please check this is correct and update if changed
N	TypeOfTotalScore	Whether the total score is a percentage (Percent) or a raw score (Total score)	Please check this is correct and update if changed
O	PassMarkAvailable	If a pass mark is available please put a Yes in this box or a No if this is not available. An NA has been included for any closed exams.	This has been derived from last year's data collection please check this is correct and update if changed
P	Notes	This is a section for you to add any notes about the exam or future of the exam	Please add a comment if required

Appendix E – Exam data collection: what are the data quality checks?

To help improve the data quality we will complete some checks when you return your candidate demographic data and exam data to us. If we think there are any issues with the data you submit we will email you and ask you to check the data or provide clarification. Checks will include:

- Number of records returned - this will be compared to last year's data return for any large discrepancies
- Matched candidates have exam outcomes – we will check that all candidates submitted in the demographic data and matched to a GMC number (i.e. GMC_VALID =1) have a record in the exam data and if there any candidates in the exam data not in the 'output' file
- Missing exams – unless you let us know that data will not be supplied for an exam we will check that data is returned for every exam listed in the 'list of returned exams' file and the data sharing agreement (DSA)
- Blanks within columns – we will check for any blank cells in columns where data is expected
- Duplicate records – we will check for exact duplicate results for exams i.e. a record for the same candidate that has an identical exam date, exam name and result.
- Missing data fields – we use the DSA to check if there are any data fields listed in the DSA which have not been returned

Please note: Some data fields are more important to the UKMED and progression reports projects and these will be the only fields chased up with colleges unless we are made aware that they are not available:

Candidate data
Candidate first name
Candidate last name
Candidate date of birth
GMC reference number

Exam data
Exam date
Attempts
Section/total scores
Pass marks
Pass/fail