General Medical Council

National training survey 2027

Programme specific questions

This briefing note outlines our approach for the 2027 national training survey programme specific questions.

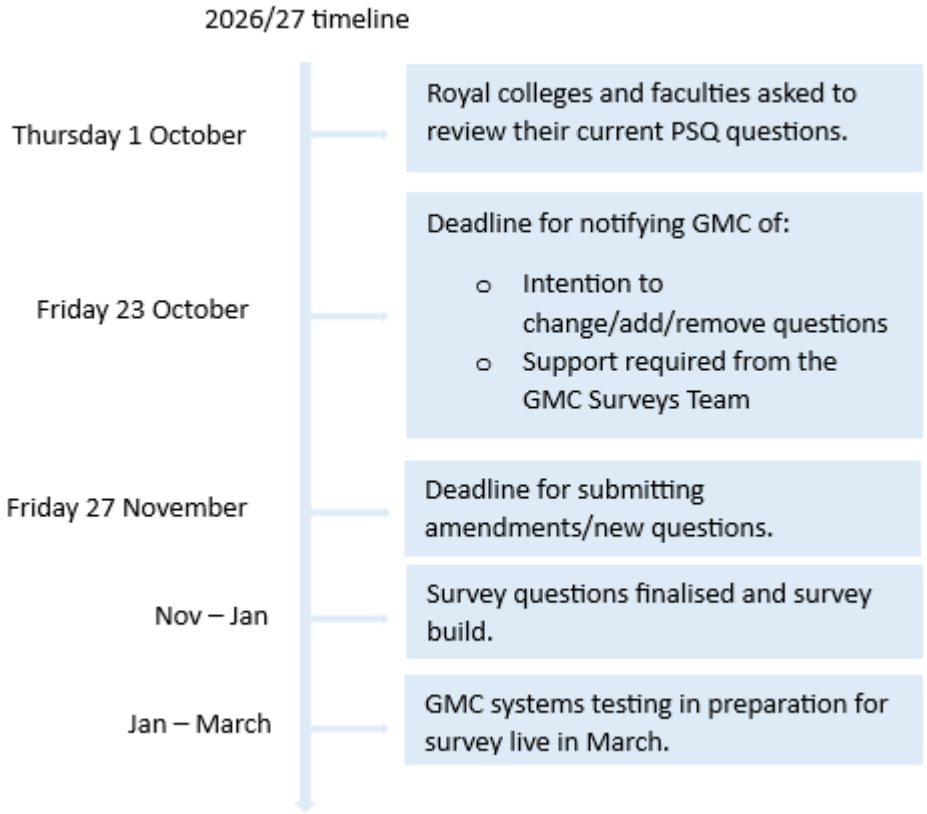
Background

This briefing note is for medical royal colleges, faculties, and the UK Foundation Programme Office. The national training survey (NTS) for resident doctors in postgraduate training contains programme specific questions (PSQs) in addition to a set of generic questions about their experience in a post. PSQs are included in the survey to help colleges and faculties understand how their curricula are being delivered and to explore issues specific to their specialty. Survey respondents complete the generic script and are then routed to the relevant PSQs.

What are the plans for the 2026 NTS?

- The NTS will run in March 2027 (date tbc).
- Each PSQ includes five mandatory questions: one on curriculum competency gaps and four questions on specialty exam feedback.
- There are six optional questions available for all specialties. There are a further three questions for the craft specialties only.

  You can select which, if any, of the optional questions you would like to include, depending on your script.
- We have space for up to



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You are welcome to contact us in Welsh. We will respond in Welsh, without this causing additional delay.

five additional questions designed by individual colleges/faculties. These can be new for 2027 or taken from your previous PSQs. **This is optional – you do not need to add any more questions if you don't need them**. We have set a limit of five so that each PSQ is a similar length and not burdensome for doctors. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule (for example if the PSQ is being used to monitor a significant curriculum change or quality assurance process), so do get in touch if you would like to discuss the specific needs for your specialty.

What do royal colleges/faculties need to do now?

1. Review your 2026 programme specific questions (PSQs) and the accompanying spreadsheet which shows the mandatory and optional questions for your specialty(ies) and is a template for you to amend your questions.

2. Please review the **optional** questions on the provided template (nine for the craft specialties and six for all other specialties). Indicate which of these you would like to include. Otherwise, the same questions you selected last year will be included for 2027.

3. Consider whether you would like to amend your five specialty-specific questions and let us know your intention to make changes by **Friday 23 October**.

4. Add your five specialty-specific questions to the rows highlighted in yellow on the template spreadsheet.

5. Return your template to the GMC surveys team by **Friday 27 November**.

6. Where possible, we encourage you to consult with your resident doctor 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

Please get in touch using the details below if you would like any support with this process.

If you decide to make changes to your PSQs we will review your request and provide feedback where:

1. A question is ambiguous.
2. The potential responses appear not to provide the required information.

3. The response scale isn't balanced.
4. A question is duplicated in the mandatory or optional questions (PSQs) or in the generic question set in the main NTS.
5. The terminology used isn't clear or doesn't match that used throughout the survey.
6. The question style greatly differs from that used in the generic NTS or in the rest of your question set.

What should I consider when amending or developing questions?

1. When choosing your optional questions, they should be important to the delivery of the curriculum and assessment system you have in place.

2. Colleges who have recently implemented a new curriculum may wish to include a question(s) to support the evaluation of the new version and implementation process which is required by colleagues in the GMC Medical Education Team.

3. Avoid asking questions that can be answered via other data sources (for example ARCP). We recommend focusing your questions on the quality of doctors' experiences.

4. Each question should be underpinned by a clear rationale and consideration should be given to how answers will be used.

5. You should avoid covering any of the generic NTS question themes in your PSQs so that doctors in your programmes don't have to answer similar questions multiple times. Please also avoid any overlaps with the mandatory or optional questions where possible.

6. 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.

Contact information

If you have a question or require support with designing your questions, please don't hesitate to contact the surveys and data collection team.

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Surveys and data collection team

General Medical Council

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