

Collection of Medical Royal College and Faculty exam outcomes in 2025/26 – Briefing note 1

Introduction

The GMC reports annually on the exam outcomes which could contribute to the award of a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) to doctors in Postgraduate training. This includes exams required to progress through foundation training. This data is used for both the Progression reports and the UK Medical Education Database, which you can [read more about in Appendix A](#).

The reporting period that this briefing note includes the outcomes from exams taken between **1st August 2025** and **31st July 2026**.

- Royal colleges, faculties and any other organisation administering an exam that we receive data from as part of this collection will be referred to as 'colleges' throughout this note.
- Please ensure you complete the list of returned exams and supplementary information about the data collected so that we can consider how best to report the exam outcomes following any changes.

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Exam data collection 2025/26 project timelines

Deadline date	Who	Action
14 th August 2026	Colleges	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. Our Information Governance policies require access to GMC Connect, our secure file-sharing system, to be withdrawn for those who do not confirm they require access in 2026. Nominated contacts will receive all the relevant communications.
28 th August 2026	Colleges	Colleges to submit the 'List of returned exams' file sent with this briefing note and confirm any exams which will not have data returned this collection. See 'List of returned exams' section for more details. If your college has made any changes to their exam, please see 'Changes to exams' for how to record these.
4 th September 2026	Colleges	Deadline for submitting candidate demographic data via GMC Connect .
2 nd October 2026	GMC	Return candidate demographic data to colleges identifying which candidates are or have ever been on the UK medical register, and for whom colleges should provide exam results.
30 th October 2025	Colleges	Deadline for submission of exam outcomes candidates who are or have ever been on the UK medical register.
November 2026	GMC	Conduct data quality checks of exam data. See Appendix B for a list of checks. Feedback will be given to colleges if any issues are identified.
Early December 2026	Colleges	Colleges to respond to any queries from the initial checks within two weeks of GMC feedback.
2027	GMC	Stakeholder review of data and opportunity to view reports built from the data.

Deadline date	Who	Action
2027 (2 weeks after receiving data)	Colleges	Stakeholder return of reviewed data and any comments on the reports.
2027	GMC	2025/26 data included in UKMED database. Access for research projects is via an application to UKMED.

Exam data collection: quick guide to returning the data

Below are the steps for returning the candidate demographic data and the exam outcomes data. More detailed information about what the collection are found in [Exam data collection: what data should be returned](#). Please [email us](#) if you have any queries about the process.

- 1 Email the GMC by the **14th August 2026** confirming the college contact(s) who will return the candidate demographic data and the exam outcomes data. The GMC will check that contacts have access to GMC Connect, the secure portal through which all data are to be shared.
- 2 Update and return the 'List of returned exams' file and exam data checklist by [email to the GMC](#) by **28th August 2026**.
- 3 Log in to [GMC Connect](#). In the Royal college/faculty – education stakeholder group you will have access to a document folder for your college called, 'Exam data collection 2026 – College name' where you will be able to upload the candidate demographic data. Please return the candidate demographic data by **4th September 2026**.
- 4 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.
- 5 Use the output file to prepare the exam outcomes data return with reasonable adjustment data included where agreed for the candidates who are or were ever on the UK medical register.
- 6 Upload the exam outcomes data return to your college document folder in GMC Connect by **30th October 2026**.
- 7 If any issues are raised with you following the initial checks of the exam outcomes data, please feedback to the GMC within two weeks of the issue being raised.

Exam data collection: what data should be returned?

Colleges provide the GMC with exam outcomes for all doctors who are currently or were ever on the UK medical register and who sat an exam which could contribute towards progression or attainment of a CCT or CESR within the reporting period **1st August 2025 to 31st July 2026**. 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](#).

List of returned exams and exam data checklist

Attached to the email which includes this briefing note is an Excel spreadsheet called, 'List of returned exams'. The file includes a list of all the exams that are currently shared with the GMC by your college. You will find a [table of the fields included in the 'List of returned exams' file in Appendix C](#).

We ask you to review the 'List of returned exams' file and make any changes or additions to it before returning it to us [by email](#). If the details in the 'List of returned exams' file are all correct, you do not need to return the file, please confirm it is correct [by email](#).

This information is shared with UKMED researchers in the CR exam file. [Appendix D includes a table of fields in the CR exam file](#).

Exam data checklist

Attached to the email sent including this briefing note is a document called 'Exam data checklist'. This document has some questions to guide you through reviewing and updating the 'List of returned exams' file. It also asks you to describe some of the data fields returned so that we can check the completeness of the data.

Data sharing agreements

Data sharing agreements (DSAs), produced and signed by colleges and the GMC, agree and list the data fields shared by the two parties, including the candidate demographic data and outcomes for each exam. If you do not have a copy of the DSA, please email us at educationdata@gmc-uk.org and we will send you one. Below is an example of the data fields shared with the GMC:

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 it includes all of the exams taken for progression or attainment of a CCT or CESR and the data fields you will share with us. Please let us know [by email](#) if the DSA needs to be amended.

Candidate demographic data return

To check which of the candidates who sat the exams are or were ever on the UK medical register, colleges must share demographic data about the candidates with the GMC for matching.

To ensure we can accurately match the candidate data with the UK medical register, you must include the following in either an Excel or csv file [sent via GMC Connect](#):

- 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)

There is a brief explanation of [the matching process that the GMC uses to identify candidates on the UK medical register in Appendix E](#).

Advice on preparing the candidate data

The most efficient way to prepare the candidate demographic data is to extract the exam data from your system and then remove the exam results from the file. The data can then be sent to us to match against the UK medical register.

We encourage colleges to submit unique college IDs for each candidate, as this allows us to do additional validation and ensure that each unique college reference number only matches to one GMC number. Please refer to the DSA for a list of demographic data fields your college has agreed to provide.

Return of the candidate data to add exam outcomes

Within four weeks of submitting the candidate demographic data, the GMC will return an output file to you which will identify candidates who are or were ever on the UK medical register, and for whom their exam results should be returned to the GMC. You will find a [table of the fields included in the output file in Appendix F](#).

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 now, nor

have ever been on the UK medical register. If only those on the UK medical register can take the exams, you can return the candidate demographic data and the exam results at the same time.

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, i.e. the matched cases as indicated in the output file.

Once the exam outcomes are returned the GMC will use the information that you have provided in the List of returned exams file, the DSA 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 B](#).

Exam data collection: changes to exams and additional data returned

Changes to exams

When the format, content or method of delivery of an exam has changed significantly, it may need to be reported separately from the existing exam data.

Please let us know if an exam has had a significant change [by email](#) and update the List of returned exams with the new information. We also ask you to consider how you want these exams to be reported, as you may want to be able to compare exam results across years based on when changes were made. If you would like to discuss the changes made and if they are different enough to report separately, please [email us](#).

Reasonable adjustment data

Reasonable adjustment data does not need to include the reason that the adjustment was given, just what the reasonable adjustment was. Please make sure that no identifiable information or specific details of a disability or condition are returned in this field.

The reasonable adjustment data supports the GMC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) analysis and Action Plans, as it may pinpoint underlying inequalities which contribute to the attainment gap in exams. In sharing these data, colleges are also helping Postgraduate Deans ensure resident doctors have the support they need.

Duplicate pass results

There have been instances where colleges have provided us with data where a candidate has passed the same exam more than once. In many instances this was across years, for example, a pass in 2018 and another pass in 2019 for the same exam. For some exams,

this is acceptable and a note has been recorded in the CR exam file for those. In other exams, the overall pass/fail has been incorrectly recorded and requires an update to the data when more than one pass for a candidate has been returned.

Please check the overall pass/fail for the exam is provided and it is correct. A check has been included internally to look for duplicate results across years, and we aim to raise any duplicates with colleges and resolve them before the data is finalised for reporting.

Nullified results

There are instances where some attempts at an exam are nullified. In these instances, we ask colleges to still return the record containing the scores and pass marks; however, their attempt number and their overall pass/fail result should be marked as 'voided'. This enables us to maintain data consistency without it affecting the end reports.

Contact the GMC

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

Your contacts at the GMC are:

Jennifer Redman-Tootell
Education Data Officer

Tolu Olorode
Education Data Officer

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

Appendix A – What are the data used for?

Progression reports: Specialty Exam

The data provided are used to produce the specialty exam report, which forms part of the [progression reports](#). These reports help medical schools and postgraduate training bodies to better understand the journey of doctors through training. The specialty exam report highlights the variation in pass rates for different cohorts of doctors. The report is split into postgraduate and undergraduate visuals.

Following completion of the data collection, this report is refreshed for publication. Each year we aim to improve the report through developments to the data and visuals. If you have any suggestions on improvements or different visualisations you would like to see, please get in touch using the contact details below.

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 outcomes of UK medical students and resident 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 is 5th October 2026 – 26th October 2026.

Appendix B – 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:

- A check against the list of returned exams file to ensure that each exam listed has results returned
- Number of records returned - this will be compared to the number of candidates submitted in 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 one or more records in the exam data and if there are any candidates in the exam data not in the output file
- Exam marks – we will look at the data returned to confirm that the scores relate appropriately to their pass or fail
- Missing exams – unless you let us know that data will not be supplied for an exam, we will check that data are returned for every exam listed in the list of returned exams and the DSA
- Blanks within columns – we will check for any blank cells in columns where data are expected
- Data within columns – we will check that numbers match up where they should and that the correct data is in the correct columns
- 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
- Duplicate pass marks – we will check that there are no passes for candidates where we have previously recorded a pass for the same exam in another data collection year, unless it is possible for a candidate to sit the exam again to improve scores.

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

Appendix C – Table of fields included in the list of returned exams

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	If the exam name has changed but the exam itself hasn't changed enough to report separately, update the name
D	PreviousAbbreviatedExamName	Any previous abbreviations used and the year in which they changed	If the name of the exam has changed, update this to the previous name
E	ExamName	Full exam name	If the exam name has changed but the exam itself hasn't changed enough to report separately, update the name
F	ExamPreviousNames	Any previous names by which the exam has been known where there aren't significant changes to consider them an entirely new exam.	If the name of the exam has changed, update this to the previous name
G	DataYearIntroduced	The first year that data from this exam was provided to the GMC	Please check the year is correct for this exam

H	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
I	ExamKnowledgeOrClinical	This is a note on whether the Exam is a knowledge based exam for instance written exam or multiple choice, or if it is clinical based for instance with patients or actors	Please check this is correct, if it has changed this would be considered significant and would require a new row for the exam
J	ExamType	The format of the exam e.g. Multiple choice or Single Best Answer etc	Please check this is correct and update if changed. If it has changed this would be considered significant and would require a new row for the exam
K	Method of delivery	Method of delivery of the exam. If method of delivery changed, please record here whether this was done for all candidates in a given diet or whether it can only be reliably captured at the level of individual candidate <u>Please note:</u> If it can only be captured at the level of individual candidate, it will need to be included in the exam outcomes data	Please add the method of delivery or check and update the method of delivery recorded last year
L	LevelTaken	The level of postgraduate training that the exam is sat at	Please check this is correct and update if changed
M	Eligibility	Eligibility criteria for taking this exam	Please check this is correct and update if changed

N	RequiredForProgressionTo	The level of postgraduate training that the exam provides progression to	Please check this is correct and update if changed
O	SourceURL	The web page which has the exam information on	Please check this is correct and update if changed
P	SectionScoreAvailable	If section scores are available please put '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
S	TotalScoreAvailable	If a total score is available please put '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
T	TotalScoreAsPercent	If the total score shared is a percentage, please put '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
U	TotalScoreAsNumber	If the total score shared is a number, please put '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
V	PassMarkAvailable	If a pass mark is available please put 'Yes' in this box or 'No' if this is not available	Please check this is correct and update if changed
W	Exam sat within reporting period (yes/no)	If exam was sat within the reporting period please put 'Yes'. If exam was not sat in the reporting period put 'No'	Please check this is correct and/or update. If the exam will not be sat in the future please add the Exam close date in column H

Y	Contains Nullified Data	If an Exam has had any of its attempts nullified, put a X in this box so that we know to be aware of these when it comes to reports	Please add if the exam return contains nullified data
Z	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, this may include any additional information

Appendix D – Table of fields included in the CR_Exam research file

Excel column	Column name	Description of data included
A	CollegeName	Abbreviation of college name e.g. RCOEM
B	CollegeNameLabel	Full college name e.g. Faculty of Public Health
C	AbbreviatedExamName	Abbreviation of the exam name
D	PreviousAbbreviatedExamName	Any previous abbreviations used and the year in which they changed
E	ExamName	Exam name in full as provided by the college
F	ExamPreviousNames	Any previous names by which the exam has been known where there aren't significant changes to consider them an entirely new exam.
G	DataYearIntroduced	The year we started receiving the data
H	ExamCloseDate	The year the exam ended or was renamed
I	ExamKnowledgeOrClinical	This is a note on whether the Exam is a knowledge based exam for instance written exam or multiple choice, or if it is clinical based for instance with patients or actors.

J	ExamType	What kind of exam it is e.g. Multiple Choice Questions
K	Method of Delivery	The method of delivery of the exam e.g. face to face, online etc.
L	LevelTaken	The level of training that the exam is sat at
M	Eligibility	Eligibility criteria for taking this exam
N	RequiredForProgressionTo	The level of training that the exam provides progression to
O	SourceURL	The web page which has the exam information on
P	SectionScoreAvailable	If section scores are available
Q	TotalScoreAvailable	If a total score is available
R	TotalScoreAsPercent	Total Score is shown as a Percentage
S	TotalScoreAsNumber	Total Score is shown as a Number
T	PassMarkAvailable	If a pass mark is available
U	ExamTable	GMC database table name
V	CollegeIDprovided	College ID provided in data set

W	CollegeIDUniquetoCandidate	College ID is unique to the candidate or to the exam result
X	AttemptsProvided	How the candidates attempt information is provided to us
Y	EligibilityToPass	If we have been advised there is an alternative way to receive a pass on the Exam
Z	CandidateLevelOrAttemptLevelDataProvidedForMatching	Taken from AttemptsProvided for matching purposes
AA	ReasonableAdjustmentData	If the Exam data also includes information on Reasonable Adjustments
AB	2019_2020Cancellations	If the Exam was cancelled during this collection window due to COVID
AC	ContainsCOVIDNullifiedRecords	If the Exam had some candidates with nullified attempts due to COVID
AD	Notes	Any notes regarding the exam or data provided in addition to above details

Appendix E – How are the candidate data matched to the UK 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.

If available we can use medical school as an additional check on matches, we use this for other datasets such as ORIEL recruitment data.

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 A for a list and description of the data fields included in the output file.

To ensure that the GMC does not hold the demographic data for people who are not now nor have ever been on the UK medical register, candidate data are removed from GMC Connect and deleted from local folders. The data which is unmatched is also deleted from the tables in the GMC databases.

Appendix F – 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	This will be the ID you use against the record; in some cases it is a person ID in other cases it is an attempt 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: ▪ 1 = on or have been on the register ▪ 0 = not on the register
Q	MATCH_TEST	There are several 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: 1 - GMC_Validation - matching both names and DOB 2 - GMC_Validation - matching last name and DOB 3 - GMC_Validation - matching previous last name and DOB 4 - GMC_Validation - matching lastname OR DOB 7 - Reverse find on both names and DOB (hard matched) 8 - Reverse find on last name and DOB (hard matched) 9 - Reverse find on both names switched and DOB (hard matched) 12 - Reverse find on both names transposed DOB DAY AND MONTH 13 - Reverse find on lastname and transposed DOB DAY AND MONTH 14 - Reverse find on previous last name and DOB (hard matched) 15 - Reverse find on both names distance >70 * and DOB (hard matched)
R	GMC_NUMBER_NOT_MATCH	Flag to indicate whether the GMC_PROVIDED = GMC_ASSIGNED. 1 = GMC number provided does not match number obtained via matching process Blanks = GMC numbers match
S	SURVEY_YEAR	Year that the candidate completed the national training survey (NTS).
T	ORG_NAME	Deanery/LETB/NHSE Local office the candidate was training under in the last NTS census

U	PROGRAMME_SPECIALTY	The training programme specialty a candidate was returned under in the last NTS census.
V	TRAINING_LEVEL	The level that the candidate was training at as per the last NTS census.
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 correct and final
Z	Provide exam data?	Indicates if a candidate has a 1 in GMC_Valid, please provide the exam data. Possible values: ▪ Yes (provide exam data) ▪ No (do not provide exam data)