

# **The GMC guide for registering PA and AA students**

## **Guidance for administration staff at PA & AA course providers**

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## Introduction

**This guidance takes you through all the processes the Associate Professions Applications (APA) team are responsible for, starting with PA and AA students in their final year and ending at the award of qualifications, registration assessments and registration.**

For those new to these processes, this guide aims to give you an overview of the tasks you will need to undertake and when you need to complete them to ensure PA and AA students are registered in a timely manner.

We recommend you read our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as this outlines the principles, responsibilities and the service levels we have agreed with PA and AA course providers. The MOUs can be found published on our webpage for PA and AA course providers linked below.

The links below contain all the information you will need for PA and AA student registration process. You may find it helpful to save the links below in case you need to refer to them in the future:

- [Web page support for PA and AA course providers](#)
- [Log in to GMC Connect](#)
- [Fitness to Practise declaration guidance for PAs and AAs](#)
- [Our guidance on professional behaviours and fitness to practise for course providers](#)
- [GMC Connect user guide.](#)

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# The Associate Professions Applications (APA) Team

Your main points of contact for queries on PA & AA student registration will be those working in the APA Team, particularly the Registration Officer and our Team Coordinator.

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If your students need to get in touch with someone at the GMC, you should advise them to [contact us](#) or call 0161 923 6602. Please don't distribute the contact details above.

## Our purpose

To make sure that PA and AA students can apply for registration with us. We do this by:

- Creating their GMC reference numbers during their final year of studies.
- Inviting them to apply for registration after they have qualified (and where applicable passing the relevant registration assessments/national exam).
- Assessing their applications for registration.
- Inviting them to complete a digital ID check.
- Granting registration where applicants meet our standards.

We work closely with course providers and students to make sure this happens safely and effectively.

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## Section 1: Getting a GMC Connect account

An introduction to GMC Connect, what we use it for and who needs access.

### 1.1 What is GMC Connect?

GMC Connect is the secure file transfer system that we use to exchange sensitive information with course providers and other key partners. Each user has their own username and password.

Our team uses the '**Registration – PA & AA students**' group in GMC Connect. This is a specific group and area, you may already have access to other GMC Connect groups, but you will have to have specific approved access to access our group to allow you to:

- Upload information to share with us and download information from our registration team. This is where you'll share your student data and photos. All information you upload is stored in a shared central folder and all authorised users at your course provider will have access to it.
- View your student lists and see the GMC number we have allocated to them. You'll also be able to see when your students have passed the PA Registration Assessment (PARA) or the AA Registration Assessment (AARA).
- Make changes to your student lists when required, for example update their names, inform us when a students' award has been delayed or changed or where they've been withdrawn from the course.
- Submit your award lists. You'll need to tell us when your students have been officially awarded their qualifications, this will allow us to invite them to apply for registration (after they have also passed the relevant registration assessment where applicable).

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## 1.2 Who needs a GMC Connect user account?

You may designate as many GMC Connect users as you wish at your course provider. Though, to keep it simple, we recommend that you have no more than three as this should allow you to cater for most tasks and have cover in case of absence and leave.

Anyone who is responsible for sending us student information, making changes to student data and submitting award lists should have an account.

## 1.3 Requesting a GMC Connect user account

To request a new user, you need to complete an APA1 form if you are working at a PA course provider or an APA2 for AA course providers. Forms will be available on our [webpage for course providers](#) or can be requested from us at [PAARRegistration@gmc-uk.org](mailto:PAARRegistration@gmc-uk.org). Completed forms should be returned back to this email address.

There are a number of important roles and responsibilities listed on the forms:

- **Head of delegates.** This is the person at your organisation with overarching responsibility for your GMC Connect users. We will contact the head of delegates and keep them informed about who is getting access to your lists of students in GMC Connect, so they are aware.
- **Primary contact.** The person nominated as your primary contact will be our main point of contact for student registration processes. They will coordinate passing on relevant information/communications that our registration team sends to others at the course provider and supports other delegates with GMC registration processes.
- **Student data.** If this box is ticked against the delegates name, we'll give them responsibilities for keeping student data in GMC Connect up to date.
- **Award Submission.** If this box is ticked against the delegates name, we'll give them permission in the GMC Connect system to confirm when a student has been awarded a PA/AA qualification at the end of their course.
- **FTP contact.** If this box is ticked against the delegates name, the delegate will be responsible for submitting information about student's fitness to practice to us.
- **CCA submission (AA course providers only).** If this box is ticked against the delegates name, this marks them as a responsible contact for sharing with us the information and forms relating to the Clinical Capability Assessment for the AARA.

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Once we receive your completed APA1/2 form we will email you with instructions and a link to sign up and request access to the 'Registration – PA & AA students' group. You will need to follow the link and sign up; we'll then review this and approve your access if your details all match those provided on the APA1/2 form. We'll also let your head of school know.

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## Section 2: Submitting your student data

Why we need your student data, when we'll ask for it, how you should format it and how to get your students' GMC reference number.

### 2.1 Why do we need your student data?

Your student data allows us to generate GMC reference numbers for students in their final year. After regulation starts GMC numbers will be used as identifiers for the PARA and AARA processes.

Your student data also allows us to prepare your students' records. Once the records have been set up, they'll receive an email to confirm their GMC reference number that they also may need to apply to sit PARA/AARA.

### 2.2 When you should provide your student data

We'll be in touch by email and ask you to provide your student data and photos, we'll aim to give you plenty of notice. In most cases (and in a normal cycle after regulation starts) this will be around February each year; you'll provide data for all students due to qualify within the next 12 months (until the following February).

### 2.3 Making sure you have the correct student names

It's vitally important that you get your student's names correct in your system before you submit their data to us. This will make it easier for you once we've created their GMC records, as otherwise you'll need to update GMC Connect to tell us of any changes during their final year.

Many of the student records held by course providers are created from information from UCAS or early university records. We'd encourage you to talk to students before you submit their data to us, to ask them about the name they want reflecting on their degree certificate, and to ask them to gather the necessary documentation/evidence required for the school to be able to update their name. We will register your students in the name shown on GMC Connect at the point you submit confirmation of their awards.

### 2.4 The data we need

We'll tell you which set of students to include when we ask you to provide the data. In a normal cycle this will be students expected to qualify in the next 12 months. We will provide you with a student data upload form spreadsheet to complete, these will be found linked on our webpage for course providers and will be known as APA3 forms for PA students and APA4 forms for AA Students.

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The spreadsheet forms will ask you to provide the following data:

- Student ID number\*
- Title
- First name\*
- Other names\* (if applicable)
- Last name\*
- Date of birth\*
- Gender\*
- Mobile number
- Email address\*
- Expected PANE/PARA sitting\*\*
- Exempt from AARA\*\*\*

*\*Mandatory fields*

*\*\*PA course providers only – tell us which PANE/PARA sitting you expect the student to sit for the first time. This will help us to understand when we may see them applying for registration following the results release.*

*\*\*\* AA course providers only - tell us which students are exempt from taking AARA (students that started the course before September 2023).*

You can read more about our agreement on sharing this information in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#).

## 2.5 Sending us your student photos and formatting


You should also provide us with a passport style photo of the students listed in the APA3/4 spreadsheet form. These should be provided in jpg format and the file name for each photo must be the student ID given in the [APA3/4 spreadsheet form](#).

The photos must be in the right format so that we can assign them to your students' records. You should save your photo files with the following attributes:

- An individual file for each student
- Saved as their student ID number with the extension .jpg

Here is an example of how your photos should look and appear in your local folders.



Name	Date modified	Type	Size
 10234567.jpg	17/04/2015 11:14	JPEG image	831 KB

Once you have all your photos in the right format, you should compress them into a single zip file. In most Windows systems, to do this:

- Locate the file or folder that you want to compress.
- Right-click the file or folder, point to Send to, and then click Compressed (zipped) folder.

If you use a system other than Windows, or your version of Windows doesn't work the same way, you should get in touch with us before you upload your photo files.

There is a 20MB limit on uploading files to GMC Connect. So, if you have high quality photos you should group them smaller zip files up to the limit.

## 2.6 Uploading your student data upload form and photos

Once you're ready to submit your data and photos, ensure you have the latest version of the APA3/4 Student upload form spreadsheet. Before you add your data, familiarise yourself with the information on the 'Guidance page' tab on the spreadsheet.

Extract your student data from your system into table format. Align the fields in the correct order. Copy and paste your data into the corresponding fields on the APA3/4 form.

When you have added your data the spreadsheet it will highlight any potential errors with your data. Correct any problems you can. If there are any you can't resolve, you must speak to us before you submit your form.

Log in to GMC Connect and upload your data and photos folders to your shared folder. You should upload the photos and the data at the same time. We can't process one without the other.

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## 2.7 Viewing your student's GMC reference numbers

After we've received your data and photos, we'll create your student's GMC records and reference numbers within five working days. Once this is complete, you'll be able to log in and view this information on GMC Connect. You can export a list of your current students with their GMC numbers from GMC Connect at any time. See our [GMC Connect user guide](#) for how to export information.

All GMC Connect users for your course provider will be able to see the list of students and export the data.

We'll email your students once we've created their records to tell them their GMC reference number. We'll also tell them that having a GMC number does not mean that they hold registration.

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## Section 3: Keeping your student information up-to-date

Why keeping your data up to date is important, what you need to tell us about, and how.

### 3.1 Why keeping your data up to date is important

During the course of a students' final year their path may change. Reasons can include, re-sitting exams, taking time out, or leaving the course altogether.

It's important that you update GMC Connect with any changes as soon as you are aware. This means we can give your students accurate information about applying for registration. It also means students with sensitive circumstances don't get unnecessary emails from us. For example, if a student has failed exams or someone that has taken time out for health reasons.

### 3.2 Changing a student's expected award year

When we create your students' records, we'll load them as expecting to qualify within the next given year (e.g. showing expected qualification year as a 2025). If your student won't qualify in the expected timeframe, you should logon to GMC Connect and update your list to tell us this, we'll need to know:

- Reason for change.
- New expected award year.
- Comments (as necessary).

If you don't know exactly when the student is expected to qualify, then you can move them forward as expecting to qualify in the following year and then keep this up to date when further information is known about their qualification timeframe.

This screen pack shows you how to action this: [Change qualification year](#).

### 3.3 Changing the expected qualification type

Some course providers issue more than one award, for example offering both a PG Dip and an MSc. It is important that you ensure the correct award is recorded against each student, particularly before you submit your award list. The award shown against the student should be the first award given allowing the student to practice in their profession, we do not record top up awards on our system.

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If an expected award for your student changes you can update this from the 'current students' view by clicking on the award type, this will then take you to a screen where you can select the other awards that we know your course provider offers.

### 3.4 Withdrawing a student from studies

You should logon to GMC Connect and tell us if a student's studies have been terminated (either by themselves or by the course provider). See our [GMC Connect User Guide](#) for further details. You'll be able to view students that have been withdrawn from your 'withdrawn students' view.

### 3.5 Changing a student's name

During the course of a students' final year, they may wish to change their name. Some reasons include marriage, name change by deed poll or changing a middle name.

Once you are satisfied that the student has officially changed their name and have updated your course provider's records, you should let us know through GMC Connect. See our [GMC Connect User Guide](#) for further details on how to do this or we've created a screen pack to demonstrate the steps: [Change student name](#).

We will register students in the name that you confirm them to hold when you issue the award. If, after they qualify, they change their name and wants this to appear on the register, they must apply to change their name. See our [Updating your details on the register guidance](#) on our website for how a registered practitioners can do this.

We don't have a function to change titles, gender or dates of birth in GMC Connect. To change these, send an email to [paaaregistration@gmc-uk.org](mailto:paaaregistration@gmc-uk.org). In the email you should give us the following information:

- GMC number
- Full name
- Information to be changed

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## Section 4: The registration application process

Why it's important, when your students need to apply, and what they need to know.

### 4.1 Why the application process is important

After regulation starts, we'll encourage newly qualified PAs and AAs to register with us before they start work. Although there is no legal obligation to do so until the end of the transition (13 December 2026), we also think that employers will encourage all PAs and AAs to register as soon as possible, and it is likely to have registration as a contractual requirement for employment.

### 4.2 When we invite your students to apply

Once your students have been awarded their qualification and passed both parts of their registration assessment (if applicable for AAs), we'll send them an email inviting them to apply for registration. After the initial invitation, we'll send two additional reminder emails to students who haven't applied spaced 28 days after each other.

Once they have made their application for registration, we'll make checks on their fitness to practise, we have a legal obligation to make sure that we only register those whose fitness to practise isn't impaired.

If a student has a fitness to practise issue or health concern to declare, we'd advise them to apply as soon as possible after they have received our invitation to apply. We'll also ask course providers to flag concerns they are aware of relating to a student's FTP, allowing us to invite them to apply in some cases before they are due to be awarded their qualification. There will be a separate process for this, and we'll provide guidance to course providers on when to flag cases to us.

### 4.3 What we tell your students

Our invitation email provides students with some important guidance on registration (including these links to a [PA guidance webpage](#) and a separate [AA guidance webpage](#)), and instructions on how to make their application. As part of the application, we ask them to:

- Check and confirm their personal details on GMC Online – our secure online application portal.

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- Tell us if they have held registration and/or a license with any healthcare authority or regulator, in the UK or overseas, in the last five years.
  - Tell us about any fitness to practise (FtP) issues. This includes any aspects of their health that might impact on their ability to work safely with patients or to continue their training. We ask students to read our ['What to tell us when you apply' guidance](#), before they tell us about any issues, and advise them to apply as soon as possible if they do need to declare something.

## 4.4 Dealing with your students' fitness to practise issues

Our ['What to tell us when you apply' guide](#) explains what types of FtP and health matters students need to declare as part of their application for registration.

We realise that some students may worry about declaring a fitness to practise issue or health concern and may be concerned about the eventual outcome of their application. It's important to understand that we must make an impartial assessment of their fitness to practise before we register them.

In our guidance, we highlight that only a small proportion of the most serious cases result in refusal each year. We also talk about the importance of being open and honest, and that demonstrating insight after a significant event is very important.

## 4.5 What are the application timeframes

Once we've received a student's application for registration, we'll check to see if they've declared a fitness to practise issue or health concern or if they've held registration/license elsewhere.

If a student declares a FTP issue or registration elsewhere, we'll assess this and contact them within five working days to let them know what the next steps are. There are three possible outcomes:

- We don't need any further information in relation to the FTP issue – if this is the case, we'll approve the application. We'll normally complete these applications and let the student know within five working days.
- We need some further information in relation to the issue(s) – this could be a written statement from the student, or a document relating to the issue (for example, a copy of a course provider disciplinary outcome letter or penalty notice). If they have held

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registration with another healthcare authority, we will also ask the student to provide a certificate of good standing from that regulatory authority.

- We need to refer the application to our Registration Investigation Team so that they can gather additional information and consider the application. If this is the case, we'll let the student know within 5 working days of receipt of their application. The time it takes to issue a decision on such applications depends on how long it takes the student, or any third party, to provide information, and the complexity of the matter(s) involved. We will keep in touch with the student regarding progress and to let them know if we are having any difficulties getting the information we need.

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## Section 5: Submitting your award list

Why your award list is important, what it is, as well as how and when to submit it.

### 5.1 Why your award list is important

By submitting your award list on GMC Connect, you are telling us the names of your students who have successfully been awarded their qualification. We can't send your students invitations to apply for registration until you've submitted this information and confirmed the award to us. In most cases we'll also need confirmation of them passing both parts of the registration assessment.

### 5.2 When should you submit your list?

You cannot submit this until the day the award has been given or after this date, the system will not allow you to submit it before the date of the award has been given. You should do this as soon as possible after the awards have been confirmed as to not delay the application process for your students.

### 5.3 Who should send the list?

The team at your course provider must decide who the most appropriate person is to submit your award list. You'll have to confirm this on the APA1/2 contact confirmation form and we'll ensure they have responsibilities to do this in the system when we grant them access.

It is the head of school's responsibility, listed on your APA1/2 form, to ensure that only delegates with the correct experience and authority submit an award list on GMC Connect.

### 5.4 Confirming the correct award type

Some course providers issue more than one award, for example both a PG Dip and an MSc. It is important that you ensure the correct award given is confirmed, this must be the first award given allowing the student to practice in their profession, we do not record top up awards on our system.

You should make checks on your main student lists to confirm all students have the award type correctly recorded before you submit your list. You'll be asked to select the expected award year and expected qualification when you submit your lists, this will show all students recorded with this information. If any students are missing, check the current student list to see if they are listed with a different award/year before proceeding.

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## 5.5 Tell us the award date

As part of the submission process, you'll have to confirm the students' qualification award date. This is the date that your students are awarded their qualification and are legally entitled to hold it. This date isn't always the same day as the graduation ceremony.

From the award date, your students will be eligible to apply for registration as PA or AA, if they have also passed any relevant registration assessments. Students whose award has been delayed for any reason (for example an outstanding fee) shouldn't be included on your award list, you must wait until the issue has been resolved before confirming their award.

## 5.6 How to submit your award list on GMC Connect

When you submit your award list it's important you follow the instructions set out in our [GMC Connect user guide](#).

Once you are ready to submit your list and have selected the correct award and award date, you'll be shown a list of students that our system recognises as expecting to qualify with these details. You should first check the list properly to ensure that you:

- Remove any students who have withdrawn from the course. Select the relevant student and click the 'remove' button.
- Check all students will be awarded their qualification on the 'award date' listed. If a student will get their award at a later date, select the student and remove them from the list.
- Check the qualification shown for each student is correct. If a student is getting a different award, navigate to your current student list and change the relevant student's details before proceeding.
- Check that students' names match the details on their award certificate. If you need to make any changes, navigate to your current student list and change the relevant student's details before proceeding.

If you notice any of the above changes that need to be made you must update the list before you submit it and confirm the awards for the students listed.

If you have any queries about the list or concerns about anyone on the list, you should call us as soon as you can before you submit it.

You must follow your internal processes to ensure the data is accurate before you submit your

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list. Follow the steps in the [GMC Connect user guide](#) for submitting your list. Alternatively, please see our [screen pack](#) which shows you how to action this.