Our publication policy for research

Our publication policy is made up of five key principles.

1. We publish all final research reports unless they meet any of the exceptions set out in principle 2.

2. We do not publish research if we have decided not to do so prior to commissioning, or if at the conclusion of the research the deliverables fail to meet set legal, ethical or quality standards.

Before we invite tenders for research we assess the risks and benefits of publication. We plan to publish final reports unless there is a specific benefit to the research of not doing so. This is not usually the case and if it applies it is made clear in the tender document. An example of a situation where we may decide prior to commissioning not to publish would be that we are planning to research fellow regulators’ or similar organisations’ views about a challenging topic and we believe we will get more open and honest answers if we are able to explain to participants that the results will only be used to inform our work.

Our tender documents include a statement as to whether or not it is our intention to publish.

We will publish final reports unless the research meets any of the following legal, ethical or quality issues:

- the report includes personal data that could identify individuals
- the information cannot be published for legal reasons – for example, the report includes confidential and/or commercially sensitive information
- the research was not done in an ethical way – for example, researchers did not get informed consent from participants
- the report does not address the aims and objectives that we set out at the start of the research project
- the findings are not credible – ie conclusions and key findings are not fully supported by evidence
- the report is factually incorrect (for example, with specific reference to the function and working of the GMC)
In practice we would always discuss any concerns we have and would try to work with researchers to address these. Not publishing for any of these reasons would be a last resort which we would actively try to avoid.

3. **We publish research within three months of receiving the final report.**

The only exceptions to this are when the research is part of a wider review or programme of work, in which case we would defer publication until we have completed the review or programme, or when we agree with the researchers that the impact of the research would be greater if published at a specific time beyond this period.

4. **We support publication of research in peer reviewed journals.**

If you’d like to publish an article based on the research we’ve commissioned, we will grant permission for you to do so only if it will be published in a peer reviewed journal. The final report from the research has to be published on our website before a journal article based on it is published elsewhere, unless we agree an exception to this.

At least 30 days before researchers submit an article to a peer reviewed journal, they have to give us a copy to review. If any substantive changes to an article are proposed as a result of the peer review process, you should these should be shared with the GMC in advance of submission on the same basis. We will not grant permission to submit the article if it is factually incorrect (with specific reference to the function and working of the GMC), or if it misinterprets or contradicts the research findings set out in the final report submitted to us (and there is no additional new evidence included explicitly to justify this). Again, in practice we would always discuss any concerns we have and would try to work with the researchers to address these concerns. Not granting permission to publish would be a last resort which we would actively try to avoid.

For research that we have not commissioned, but where we have given you access to our data as part of your research, you also have to give the GMC a copy of the article 30 days before publication. And, as with research we have commissioned, we will not grant permission to submit the article if it is factually incorrect, or if it misinterprets or contradicts the data. We also require the GMC to be cited as the data source.

We would not expect to publish any journal articles on our website, irrespective of whether they were based on research we have commissioned or not.

5. **We support open-access publication.**

Where possible, we recommend that you publish in an open-access journal. If you choose to publish in a restricted access journal, please ask the publisher for permission to publish a final version of your article on an open-access basis within 12 months of publication in the journal.