

## GMC Assessment collection

# FAQs 2022/23

Updated: November 15 2023

### How will we submit data for this collection?

In this year of the collection, your return will consist of a single Microsoft Excel workbook, using a template provided by HESA. You will populate this template using your examinations data held in exam board spreadsheets, registry systems, and/or other similar documents and systems. Full guidance for completing this template, including an e-learning package from HESA, will be available.

The [data collection system](#) will be open from early September until late November, and access to this will be managed by your institution's nominated HESA contact.

### How will these data be processed once collected?

Following the end of the collection window, the GMC team will download the submitted data from the HESA platform and following a process of quality assurance the data will be loaded into the UKMED database held on GMC servers. We will derive some variables, including Z-scores within year, school and assessment and a classification of assessments into groups, such as "first year written exam". The approach to classifying assessment and calculating Z-scores was decided with statistical input from the UKMED research sub-group.

We will provide each school with a load report that will include the following information:

- For each assessment, the proportion of cases in the main HESA Student records that have a record for that assessment
- Details of derived variables
- Exception report – details of any cases that did not load, for example linkage failures

### How will these data be used?

These data are being collected for inclusion in the [UK Medical Education Database](#), which provides collated data on the performance of UK medical students and trainee doctors across their education and careers, for research and planning purposes.

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UKMED data is accessible only via a rigorous application and review process, with data being provided in the form of research extracts tailored to meet the specific requirements of each application. Information on data security and anonymity can be found in another FAQ below.

The GMC is a charity registered in  
England and Wales (1089278)  
and Scotland  
(SC037750).

Data will be used to update an interactive Tableau report looking at the award gap in assessments UK-wide and within schools, this will show differences in Z-scores by protected characteristics such as ethnicity. This will be published under password to schools for comment and review. At some point in the future the report may be included with the other GMC progression reports - [online reporting tool](#).

## How will anonymity and data protection be ensured?

Any data released through UKMED are subject to strict controls on how the data is accessed, including procedures to prevent identification of individuals. In brief, approved researchers are provided with a pseudonymised dataset which can only be accessed through a Safe Haven based at the University of Dundee. This ensures that users are not able to identify individuals within the data or use the data for other purposes. In addition to these technical arrangements, data users are also required to sign a legal agreement with the General Medical Council, which sets out acceptable use of the data. Research outputs are also reviewed against a set of statistical disclosure controls.

Further information can be found on the [UKMED FAQs webpage](#) and full details are available in the [UKMED research process document](#).

## There is important contextual information about our data that we think you should know when processing our return. How can we provide this to you?

Providers are encouraged to provide commentary on their submission by email to [HESA\\_Collection@gmc-uk.org](mailto:HESA_Collection@gmc-uk.org). Any information that will aid us in interpreting and understanding your submission will be gratefully received.

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## Can we include formative assessments in our submission?

Formative assessments are outside of the scope of this collection, which is focused on summative assessments that have an impact on student progression. However, we will include formative assessments in the dataset at the request of medical schools, if they think that having these assessments in the dataset could be of use to them in future.

If you would like to include formative assessments in your submission, please let colleagues at the GMC know by emailing [HESA\\_Collection@gmc-uk.org](mailto:HESA_Collection@gmc-uk.org). They will then confirm the details of this with you.

## Are assessments from intercalated years included in this collection?

No. We have agreed with schools that these will not be included, due to the variety and complexity of assessments possible across intercalated degrees, and the difficulty in obtaining this data from other schools or departments.

## Should we include students at overseas affiliate schools in our return?

No. HESA does not yet collect person-level data on overseas students, so there would be no student or demographic data to link assessment data to for overseas students. This limits the usefulness of overseas data currently.

Please note that HESA is currently consulting on collecting person-level data on overseas students. If this does happen, in future years the HESA GMC Assessment record may change to include assessment data for overseas students. For now, however, any overseas data we do receive will be discounted and not included in the dataset.

## Why does this return require student HUSIDs?

HUSID is the unique identifier assigned to an individual that follows them throughout their time in higher education. It is therefore the best data item to use as a key to link datasets about students, whether provided by HESA or other data providers. We use HUSID to validate the data we receive and link to other tables in the UKMED database, thereby allowing researchers the greatest degree of flexibility and utility when performing statistical analysis of UKMED data.

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We appreciate that HUSIDs may not be commonly used or held by medical school staff. Your local registry or equivalent department will be able to help with obtaining HUSIDs for your students.

## How does this collection relate to GMC's Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) project?

Starting in 2024-25, medical students will be required to pass the MLA prior to graduating from medical school (more information on the MLA [here](#)). The MLA will consist of two assessments, which will be included in this dataset – however, due to differences in how these assessments are delivered, the data will be collected differently:

- ▣ **Clinical and professional skills assessment (CPSA):** this component will consist of one or more of your existing clinical skills assessments, agreed with and quality assured by the GMC.

Data for CPSA assessments will be collected as part of the HESA GMC Assessment record. There is a data item in the ASSESSMENT table called MLACPSA – this allows schools to flag which assessments contribute to the CPSA. If you already know which assessments will comprise the CPSA at your school, please include this in this year's ASSESSMENT table.

- ▣ **Applied knowledge test (AKT):** this component will consist of an online exam delivered by the Medical Schools Council in partnership with a third-party provider.

The GMC will receive AKT data for all schools directly from the MSC, so this data will not need to be included in the HESA GMC Assessment return. Any AKT data we do receive from schools will be excluded to prevent duplication.

## Why are you interested in adjustments students receive for extenuating circumstances such as disabilities?

There is ongoing research interest in specific learning disabilities, and knowing which students received extra time or other adjustments is an important data point for that research. It is difficult to interpret the relationship between Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and student performance without knowing if the student had extra time. It is with this in mind that we are requesting information on reasonable adjustments received by individual students – this will complement data we receive on SLDs from the main HESA student record which includes the field [DISABLE](#).

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## **Will the GMC and HESA review the collection processes?**

At the end of the year's collection cycle, we will seek feedback from medical schools on the collection process, and we will take this into account when planning the subsequent year's collection.

## **We have students who have had some of or all their attempts at an assessment nullified or deferred, for example as the result of an appeals process. As such, these attempts do not count against their academic record. How will these be handled?**

In cases such as these, where a student did not sit the assessment and there is no score associated with the deferred/nullified attempt, please do not include that row of data in your return. Where an attempt was made, please include this row of data, with an ATTEMPTNUMBER of zero and choosing 'Deferred' or 'Nullified' for the STUDENTRESULT column as required.

## **We have students who have taken some assessments, but then left or suspended their studies part way through the year. Should we include their data for the assessments they did sit?**

Yes, please include the data for these assessment attempts. The rationale here is that the attainment of students leaving a programme without graduating could be of use from a research perspective (particularly when linked to reason for ending studies from the main HESA Student return), so such data would be useful to include in the dataset.

## **Why are you asking for information on the EPM weighting of assessments? The Education Performance Measure has been removed as a component of the Foundation Programme application process.**

This decision was made after we finalised the data model and template for the 2022/23 return – as such, the EPMWEIGHT column remains in the ASSESSMENT table. Please feel free to leave this column blank, or return all rows as zero. This data item will be removed from the data model in 2023/24.

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## Will the GMC provide any reporting on this dataset?

In addition to this dataset being available to researchers via application for a UKMED project, the GMC also intends to provide some standard reporting. The first Tableau product from this dataset is a visualisation reporting on assessment outcomes against protected characteristics and demographics. This uses z-scores of score relative to pass mark and a grouping of assessments into broad categories (e.g. 'First year written exam', 'Final year clinical exam' – exact categories to be confirmed).

A first draft of this report using only data from the first year of the collection (2020/21) has been devised. Timelines for updating this with the data from 2021/22 are still being decided. Going forward this report will be updated on a yearly basis at the end of the collection cycle.

## How will this collection evolve over the next few years?

In the first year of the collection, we agreed to undertake a 'soft launch', and as such we only collected data on assessments in the first and final years of your PMQ programmes. From the 2021/22 collection onwards, we began collecting data on assessments in all years of your PMQ programmes.

We also envision changes in how data will be submitted in future years, that are in line with HESA's [Data Futures project](#). It is intended that the tables included in the [GMC Assessment data model](#) will be incorporated into the Data Futures model – further details are provided in the 'Resolved specification items' section of [this webpage](#). Prior to this, this year we are introducing an intermediate step where data is collected using a standardised template. The proposed timescales for this are as follows:

- 2020/21 (collected Sep-Nov 2021): spreadsheet return, first and final years only
- 2021/22 (collected Sep-Nov 2022): spreadsheet return, all years of study
- 2022/23 (collected Sep-Nov 2023): spreadsheet return using standardised template
- 2023/24 (collected Sep-Nov 2024): spreadsheet return using standardised template
- 2024/25 – first potential collection of GMC Assessment data within Data Futures (to be confirmed)

