

GMC Records Retention and Disposal Policy v1.3

Scope

This retention schedule applies to all GMC Directorates, MPTS and GMCSI.

The retention schedule

The GMC is required to retain certain records for operational and administrative purposes and to demonstrate compliance with our statutory or regulatory requirements. Some records may be automatically destroyed after a specified period. Other records, because of their nature, will be reviewed at intervals. The schedule gives details of how these records will be managed at the end of the retention period.

The GMC is required by statute to hold some records for prescribed periods of time. The key pieces of legislation which affect the retention of records at the GMC include but are not limited to:

- The Medical Act
- The Data Protection Act
- The Human Rights Act
- The Freedom of Information Act
- The Limitation Act
- The Equality Act
- The Disability and Discrimination Act - Added Acts to reflect legislation already considered.
- Health and Safety at Work Act
- Pensions Act
- Charities Act
- Companies Act
- Taxes Management Act
- HMRC regulations

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive has a duty to ensure that the GMC complies with legislation affecting the management of our records and with supporting regulations and codes.

The Head of Information Security and Records Management will work closely with Directors to ensure that there is consistency in the management of records, their retention and disposal. Directors and managers are responsible for ensuring that practices and systems in their areas comply with this policy and with related requirements.

All staff are accountable to their managers for compliance with this policy and with related policies, standards and guidance. All staff have a responsibility to manage records in a manner which is consistent with this retention schedule.

Policy implementation

In order to implement this policy, the GMC is undertaking a significant schedule of work which involves updates to our systems, processes and business as usual activities. It will take a number of years before all records are stored in alignment with this policy.

Policy review

The implementation of this schedule will be monitored closely. Post implementation, audits will be conducted to assess how the policy is being put into practice.

The audit will:

- Identify areas of operation that are not covered by the policy
- Provide a mechanism for revising the policy to cover missing areas if these are critical to the retention and disposal of records. The retention schedule will be reviewed at intervals to add new record types or to amend retention periods for legal or other reasons
- Identify areas where the procedures do not support the business operations of the GMC and revise the policy as appropriate
- Highlight parts of the GMC where non-conformity with the procedures is occurring and suggest an enhancement of controls and adjustment to related procedures.

Additional information categories

When an additional information category is identified; where data contains sensitive personal information, it will be reviewed against the relevant legislation whilst ensuring we have the relevant information available to enable us to ensure patient safety and satisfy our statutory duties.

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Governance			
Council and committee agendas, papers and minutes	Provides an audit trail of statutory compliance, a corporate memory of decisions and is of historical value to the organisation.	Permanent	Archive
Corporate business plans and annual reports	Provides an audit trail of statutory compliance, a corporate memory of decisions and is of historical value to the organisation.	Permanent	Archive
Media relations			
Press cuttings and media reports	Press cuttings and media reports featuring the GMC, a doctor or of specific interest.	6 months* * If FtP case or Registration related, these retention periods will apply.	Destroy
	Media statements made by the GMC.	Permanent	Archive
General			
Public consultations, surveys and feedback forms	Raw data (for research purposes only).	Indefinite (DPA exemption)	Archive
	Statistical analysis (anonymised).	Permanent	Archive
	Final report and associated decision documentation.	Permanent	Archive
Complaints	Complaints received about GMC operational processes and procedures.	10 years after last correspondence *and ** * If this relations to fitness to practise processes then fitness to practise retention dates will be applied. ** Consider permanent retention if this has historical value to the GMC.	Destroy
Call recordings	Registration recorded calls.	6 months	Destroy
	IS Helpdesk recorded calls.	6 months	Destroy
CCTV footage	Recorded footage from GMC office security cameras.	30 days	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Policies and procedures			
Policy	Organisational policies	Permanent	Archive
Procedure manuals	Operational procedures	When superseded (unless there is a business requirement to retain)	Destroy
Human Resources			
Employment and career			
Recruitment and promotion papers	Applications, recruitment campaign assessment papers, interview questions and papers, applicant ID number, role and score.	1 year	Archive
Associates	Contact details (current address), contract, joiner documents, emergency contact form, and conflict of interest form.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Temporary staff and contractors	Name, role, manager, recruitment agency, start and end dates.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Basic checks	Date sent, certificate number, date of next check, red or green indicator.	4 years	Destroy
Personnel files (job history)	Name, address, written particulars of employment, contracts of employment, changes to terms and conditions including change of hours letters, qualifications, references, department transfers.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Pay history	Personal payroll history, record of pay, performance pay, overtime pay, allowances, pay enhancements, other taxable allowances, payments for bought/sold annual leave, reduced pay, no pay, maternity leave.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Leave records	Annual leave, maternity leave, compassionate leave etc.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Human Resources continued			
Training history	Records of training attendance.	10 years	Destroy
Performance reviews and / or assessments	Reports or summary of performance papers for current staff.	5 years	Destroy
	Reports or summary of performance papers for last 5 years of service.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Notice of end of employment letter	Resignation, termination and / or retirement letter.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Leavers files		100 years from subjects date of birth..	Archive
Health			
Health declarations	Letters or notes from doctor.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Sickness absence	Dates and causes of sick leave.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Records relating to workplace injury	Accident reports, working accommodation requests.	100 years from subjects date of birth.	Archive
Finance			
Bank account records			
Monthly statements	Banking and other billing or financial statements.	Current year plus 1 year.	Destroy
Expenditure			
Petty cash records	Records, books, sheets and receipts.	Current year plus 2 years.	Destroy
Staff expenses	Reimbursement forms for travel etc.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Invoices	Invoices, debt notices (invoices paid, unpaid, registers of invoices and debtors ledgers etc.).	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Refunds	Records of unrecoverable revenue, debts and overpayments.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
VAT	VAT returns.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Finance continued			
Investments			
Investment statements		Current year plus 2 years after investments are liquidated or matured.	Destroy
Asset registers		Current year plus 6 years after item or asset is disposed of.	Destroy
Pension and Payroll			
Employee pay histories	(HR retains last 3 years of pay history for leavers).	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Staff loans		Current year plus 6 years after repayment.	Destroy
Budget and reports			
Financial statements	Statements prepared for inclusion in reports.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Budget and quarterly / annual reports		Permanent	Archive
Theft or fraud			
Theft or fraud	Records of theft, fraud, misappropriation, irrecoverable debts and overpayments, write offs and recovery of debt.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Financial audit records			
Audit investigations (external)		Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Audit reports	Audit reports and interim reports.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Finance continued			
Procurement			
Successful tenders	ITT and supplementary information provided or requested as part of the tender process.	Current year plus 6 years.	Destroy
Unsuccessful tenders	ITT and supplementary information provided or requested as part of the tender process including details of any challenge.	Current year plus 1 year.	Destroy
Contracts	Signed contract agreements.	Current year plus 6 years from end of contract.	Destroy
Contracts	Signed contract agreements relating to building maintenance and construction.	20 years from end of contract.	Destroy
Contract review	Notes from contract review and account management meetings.	Current year plus 2 years from end of contract.	Destroy
Credit card	Staff applications for GMC / GMCSI credit card.	Current year plus 2 years.	Destroy
Facilities			
Health and safety			
Accident and incident reports	Reports relating to accidents and incidents and accident books – no claim made.	5 years	Destroy
Accident and incident reports	Reports relating to accidents and incidents and accident books – claim made.	Current year plus 6 years after claim settled	Destroy
Health and safety inspection audit reports`	External / internal reports and risk assessment reports.	Current year plus 6 years	Destroy
Emergency procedures	Evacuation and contingency procedures and policies.	When superseded	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Facilities continued			
Maintenance			
Programmes or schedules		20 years after superseded	Destroy
Log of maintenance and repairs	Non building related.	5 years	Destroy
Log of maintenance repairs	Building related.	20 years after works completed.	Destroy
Document Services			
Special delivery	Records relating to items sent from GMC by special delivery, including dispatch requests and delivery receipts by dept.	3 years	Destroy
Courier	Records relating to items sent from GMC by courier including dispatch requests and delivery receipts by dept.	3 years	Destroy
Helpdesk			
Meeting room bookings		1 year	Destroy
Hearing attendance lists	List of visitors who attended a hearing.	3 years	Destroy
Visitor books		3 years	Destroy
Registration and Revalidation			
Applications			
Registration application file (leading to a doctor being added to the medical register, specialist register or GP register)	Application evidence including name, contact details, date of birth, copy of passport, PMQ certificate, FtP declaration. Complex casework and any Registration Appeals Panel material. CESR application evidence bundles including references and correspondence.	Permanent	Archive
Registration application file (not leading to a doctor being added to the medical register, specialist register or GP register)	Application evidence including name, contact details, date of birth, copy of passport, PMQ certificate, FtP declaration. Complex casework and any Registration Appeals Panel material.	Date of application plus 40 years from last correspondence. Retain a summary record.	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Registration and Revalidation continued			
Registration Application file (where a doctor has been erased under section 39 or 44B of the Medical Act)	Application evidence including name, contact details, date of birth, copy of passport. PMQ certificate, FtP declaration. Complex casework and any Registration Appeals Panel material.	Permanent	Archive
Administrative erasure (e.g. a doctor has no paid their annual retention fee)	Registration application file plus records of administrative erasure and supporting documentation used for decision making.	Permanent	Archive
Voluntary erasure (Doctors who no longer wish to practice medicine can apply to the GMC to have their names removed from the register). <i>*See also Fitness to Practise Administrative Erasure</i>	Voluntary erasure application form and supporting documents including name, address, date of birth, employment data, and possible details of convictions or health information.	Permanent	Archive
Notifications from third parties			
Notifications about existing registrants	Notifications about individuals who are on the medical register.	Refer to Fitness to Practise retention schedules.	N/A
Notifications about individuals not on the medical register (including FtP information from overseas regulators together with FtP action short of erasure)	Notifications about unsuccessful applicants.	40 years from last correspondence (applicant or third party – whichever is later).	Destroy
	Notifications about individuals who may apply for registration.	40 years from last correspondence (applicant or third party – whichever is later).	Destroy
	Notifications about individuals seeking to pass themselves off as registered practitioners.	40 years from last correspondence (applicant or third party – whichever is later)*. <i>*If the GMC receives satisfactory confirmation that this individual is unlikely to ever apply (no GMC interest) or that the information is incorrect (unfounded allegations), it will be removed immediately.</i>	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Registration and Revalidation continued			
Registration and Revalidation complaints			
Complaint from a doctor on the medical register	Complaint from an individual about their registration application or wider issues.	Permanent* <i>*If this relates to fitness to practise processes then fitness to practise retention dates will be applied.</i>	Archive
Complaint received through the European Commission's SOLVIT service	Complaint regarding application of EU law by public bodies including GMC.	Permanent	Archive
Revalidation			
Revalidation	Record of whether a doctor has successfully revalidated or if their Revalidation has been deferred.	Permanent	Archive
	Supporting Revalidation documentation.	10 years (where a significant concern is raised, the retention period is reset).	Destroy
	Records of doctor non-engagement with the revalidation process.	Permanent	Archive
	Scores from Revalidation assessments where a doctor does not have a connection to a Designated Body or Suitable Person.	10 years (where a significant concern is raised, the retention period is reset).	Destroy
Licence to practice is withdrawn	Records relating to a Licence to Practice being withdrawn and supporting documentation.	Permanent	Archive

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Registration and Revalidation continued			
Specialist Applications			
Legacy applications made to organisations for assessment of specialist training and experience	Historic databases from Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practitioners (JCPTGP – 1981-2005), Specialist Training Authority (STA – 1996-2005) and PMETB (2005-2010). Required to verify the certificates issued by these historic organisations.	Permanent	Archive
Legal advice	Advice relating to specific applications and appeals.	Permanent	Archive
PLAB			
PLAB test mark sheets	Completed answer sheets and examiners marking.	6 months	Destroy
Fitness to Practise			
Enquiries closed at triage (no further action)	The concern is either: a. not about a doctor b. could never lead to a finding of impaired fitness to practice c. it is more than five years old, or it is vexatious.	15 years after closure Retain a summary record.	Destroy
Provisional enquiry (closed, no further action)	The concern could never lead to a finding of impaired fitness to practise.	15 years after closure Retain a summary record.	Destroy
Notify RO (closed, no further action)	RO confirms they have no further concerns about the doctor.	15 years after closure Retain a summary record.	Destroy
Fitness to Practise continued			
Cases closed in Stream 2 (no further action)	A doctor's employer confirms that they have no further concerns about the doctor process.	15 years after closure Retain a summary record.	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Cases closed in Stream 1 following an investigation (no further action)	The case is closed as it does not meet the threshold to proceed to an MPTS hearing.	20 years after closure Retain a summary record.	Destroy
Cases closed following an MPTS hearing or Interim Orders Tribunal (no further action)	The MPTS panel concludes that the evidence does not prove that the doctor's fitness to practice is impaired or does not prove that there has been a significant breach of our guidance which warrants a warning being issued.	20 years after closure Retain a summary record.	Destroy
Cases that result in a warning, undertakings or a sanction imposed by Fitness to Practise, an MPTS panel or Interim Orders Tribunal	Case Examiners or Investigation Committee issue a warning. Case Examiners indicate that undertakings are appropriate and the doctor accepts them. An MPTS panel concludes a case following a hearing by issuing a warning, agreeing undertakings or imposing conditions, suspension or erasure.	Permanent	Archive
Legal proceedings	Fitness to Practise or MPTS decision is appealed.	10 years from end of legal proceedings including subsequent appeal. Retain a summary record.	Destroy
	Where a decision to close a case at any point in our procedures is subject to legal challenge such as judicial review procedures.	Extend retention date to cover the duration of such proceedings including time limits for further appeal or renewal of proceedings. Retain a summary record.	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Fitness to Practise continued			
Further complaints about a doctor	If we receive a further complaint about a doctor during the retention period, we would wish to retain both the original complaint and new information for a further retention period.	Reset the retention time of the original complaint and subsequent complaints. E.g. If the original complaint was to be retained for 5 years, another complaint is received in year 3; we retain the original complaint for a total of 8 years. If another complaint is received, it will be extended again. Retain a summary record.	Destroy
Administrative erasure	We will only administratively erase a doctor during a Fitness to Practice case for example, for not paying their annual retention fee or in similarly narrow circumstances.	Permanent	Archive
Voluntary erasure	Voluntary erasure is only granted in Fitness to Practise cases if a doctor is (a) too sick to take part in a Fitness to Practise investigation or (b) where there is very little likelihood that a doctor will seek restoration to the register or work again as a doctor.	Permanent	Archive
MPTS			
Legal proceedings	MPTS decision is appealed by the GMC.	10 years from end of legal proceedings including subsequent appeal. Retain a summary record.	Destroy
List of hearings	Lists of which hearings took place in which rooms.	1 year	Destroy
Hearing commentary	Commentary of events that occur throughout the hearing e.g. what time the hearing convened, what time they re-convened etc.	1 year	Destroy

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Education			
National Training Surveys	Raw data gathered for research purposes only.	Indefinite (DPA exemption).	Destroy
	Statistical analysis of data gathered.	Permanent	Archive
	National Training Survey Annual Report.	Permanent	Archive
Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP)	Raw data gathered for research purposes only.	Indefinite (DPA exemption).	Destroy
	Statistical analysis and reports of data gathered.	Permanent	Archive
Validation of Overseas Institutions	Validation decision and supporting documentation.	10 years from decision date.	Destroy
Data collected for research purposes relating to post-graduate and under-graduate education	Raw data gathered for research purposes only.	Indefinite (DPA exemption).	Destroy
	Statistical analysis and progression reports.	Permanent	Archive
Information Access			
FOI and DP requests			
Procedures	Procedures for handling FOI and DP requests.	Permanent	Archive
DP request and disclosure	Subject access requests relating to a specific individual.	Current year plus 2 years from date of last correspondence. Retain a summary record and a schedule of documents disclosed.	Destroy
FOI requests and responses	Requests for information under FoIA.	Current year plus 2 years from date of last correspondence. Retain a summary record and a schedule of documents disclosed.	Destroy
Cases that are referred to an Information Tribunal	Requests, related correspondence, legal advice received and outcome decision.	Permanent	Archive

Type	Description	Retention period	Action
Electronic records			
Most GMC system generated "previous versions" of electronic documents	The GMC's electronic records management system, Livelink, has the capacity to store multiple versions of electronic documents when a document is updated. When a document is superseded by a new version, the previous version will be retained for a period of seven days prior to deletion.	7 days from date of modification. We will not retain more than one previous version of any document.	Destroy
Summary record			
A record that is created to capture key information about a transaction	E.g. For a Fitness to Practise complaint, the summary record would comprise the complainants name, doctors' name, date of the complaint, a brief description of the issue and the reason for the closure.	Permanent	Archive
Scanned documents			
Paper documents that have been scanned	The GMC is certified to BS10008 the standard for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Electronic Information. All documents scanned to Siebel, Agresso and Livelink by the Central Scanning team and HR, are scanned subject to these controls and we regard the electronic version as the 'original'.	5 years (electronic 'original' retained in line with the retention categories above).* *Exemptions apply for Specialist Application material and original documents relating to Fitness to Practise forgery cases.	Destroy

NB. Our current approach to emails is that they are non-formal records until they are added to our systems such as Siebel or Livelink. Once added, they are subject to the retention categories above.

We are currently working to align our data retention with this policy. There may be cases where information is held for longer than stated until project completion.