

**Office for  
Students**



# **Medical and Dental Students survey 2020 (MDS20)**

**Survey for the Office for Students, the  
Department of Health and Social Care,  
Health Education England and  
UK higher education funding bodies**

**Reference** OfS 2020.43

**Enquiries to** [MDS@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:MDS@officeforstudents.org.uk)

**Publication date** 24 September 2020

# Contents

Summary	3
Changes and clarifications since the Medical and Dental Students survey 2019 (MDS19)	4
Survey details	5
Definitions and guidance	7
Examples	10
<b>Annex A: Higher education providers with joint medical schools</b>	<b>11</b>
Joint medical schools	11
Other collaborative arrangements	11
<b>Annex B: Examples of tables</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Annex C: Example summary table (providers in England only)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Explanation of abbreviations</b>	<b>15</b>

## Summary

### Purpose

1. The Medical and Dental Students survey 2020 (MDS20) asks higher education providers in the UK to provide data on the intake of medical and dental students in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years.

### Key points

2. This is an annual, UK-wide survey. The Office for Students (OfS) is conducting it on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Health Education England (HEE), the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland.
3. Data from this survey is used by the OfS, DHSC and HEE as an early indicator of medical and dental intakes, to inform DHSC and HEE workforce planning. The OfS will also be using the data to monitor the 2019-20 medical and dental intake targets and to inform funding allocations for providers in England.
4. The census date for the 2020-21 intake data is **Friday 9 October 2020**.
5. Higher education providers with joint medical schools or other collaborative arrangements (see Annex A) are expected to submit a single joint return.
6. As part of the government's commitment to transparency, the OfS intends to publish data on both the confirmed 2019-20 and initial 2020-21 intakes on our website.<sup>1</sup> We intend to publish this data for all providers completing MDS20 as official statistics.<sup>2</sup>

### Action required

7. MDS workbooks will be available to eligible providers via the OfS portal in late September 2020.
8. Completed workbooks must be submitted through the OfS portal no later than **noon on Wednesday 21 October 2020**.
9. **By Tuesday 10 November 2020:**
  - i. All data verification queries must be resolved
  - ii. The data should be signed off by the provider's accountable officer.

---

<sup>1</sup> For the equivalent 2019 data on the OfS website, see [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/funding-for-providers/health-education-funding/medical-and-dental-intakes/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/funding-for-providers/health-education-funding/medical-and-dental-intakes/).

<sup>2</sup> For the OfS official statistics release schedule, see [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/producing-statistics/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/producing-statistics/).

## Changes and clarifications since the Medical and Dental Students survey 2019 (MDS19)

### Changes and clarifications

10. Following the decision by the Government to lift the cap on intake targets for medical and dental courses in 2020-21,<sup>3</sup> we have made the following updates to the tables:
  - a. On the Medical initial intake and Dental initial intake tables, the 2020-21 intake target will show as 'Not applicable for 2020-21'
  - b. (Only applicable for providers in England) On the MDS20Summary worksheet the 2020-21 intake target columns will show as N/A for both medical and dental intakes.
11. Additionally, we will not be utilising the 2020-21 data to calculate formulaic grant adjustments arising from recruitment against the 2020-21 medical and dental intake targets, as there is no target against which to assess.
12. However, 2019-20 medical and dental intake targets still apply, and as such grant adjustments may be required for any over-recruitment against those targets.

---

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-agreed-to-support-students-into-preferred-universities>.

## Survey details

### Outline timetable for the MDS20 return

13. The timetable for MDS20, and the grant adjustments appeal process for English providers, are summarised in Table 1. **Actions for providers are in bold.**

**Table 1: Provisional timetable for MDS20 and grant adjustments appeal process**

Date	Action	Action applies to
Late September 2020	MDS workbooks available to providers via the OfS portal.	All providers
9 October 2020	Census date for 2020-21 intake data.	All providers
<b>21 October 2020</b>	<b>MDS20 submission deadline. A valid MDS20 workbook must be submitted through the OfS portal (no later than noon).</b>	<b>All providers</b>
21 October 2020 to 10 November 2020	Data verification phase.	All providers
<b>10 November 2020</b>	<b>Sign-off deadline. Final MDS20 data must be signed off as correct by the accountable officer as at the census date.<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>All providers</b>
By late November 2020	After verification, providers notified of provisional formulaic grant adjustments (where applicable) arising from recruitment against their medical and dental intake targets, and invited to submit appeals.	English providers only
13 January 2021	<b>Deadline for submission of appeals against grant adjustments arising from over-recruitment against medical and dental intake targets.</b>	<b>English providers only</b>
By end of February 2021	Providers notified of final grant adjustments arising from recruitment against medical and dental intake targets, including the outcome of appeals.	English providers only

### Data preparation and submission

14. Contacts in the medical and dental schools will be able to access their provider's workbook via the OfS portal in late September 2020. A provider's portal user administrator can create an account for the data contact and give them access to the survey when it is live in September. Guidance for user administrators can be found on the login page for the OfS portal (<https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data>). Once the data contact has access, they can download the blank MDS workbook which is individually prepared for each provider and saved

---

<sup>4</sup> For English providers only, see 'Regulatory advice 10: Accountable officers. Guidance for providers on the responsibilities of accountable officers' (OfS 2018.29), available at: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-10-accountable-officers-guidance-for-providers-on-the-responsibilities-of-accountable-officers/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-10-accountable-officers-guidance-for-providers-on-the-responsibilities-of-accountable-officers/).

in Excel. The completed workbook can then be uploaded via the OfS portal. Once the data has successfully uploaded, a results package workbook can be retrieved which will contain the data in our systems that was previously uploaded.

15. The name of the workbook will be MDS20XXXXXXXXX.xlsx (where XXXXXXXXX denotes the UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)). Do not attempt to rename or reformat the workbook, because our systems for loading providers' returns depend on the file-naming convention and file formats.
16. All totals, labels and table formats will be locked using Excel's cell protection facilities. Do not attempt to change the contents of the protected cells, or the structure of tables by adding or deleting any rows or columns. Only cells where data is required should be altered. If a password warning appears, this means a protected cell has been selected or an attempt made to 'paste' over a protected cell. Worksheets contain information critical to accurate loading of the data; it is essential that this is preserved. We will refuse to accept any workbooks which have been unprotected as we cannot be certain of our ability to load the data contained in them correctly. We are aware that certain software packages remove the saved passwords; please let us know if you think you may have removed the password in error in this way.
17. The Excel workbook contains the following four worksheets (see Annex B for examples):
  - a. Medical confirmed intake – Medical students intake during the academic year 2019-20
  - b. Medical initial intake – Medical students intake for the academic year 2020-21 as at 9 October 2020
  - c. Dental confirmed intake – Dental students intake during the academic year 2019-20
  - d. Dental initial intake – Dental students intake for the academic year 2020-21 as at 9 October 2020.

For providers in England there is an additional worksheet (see Annex C):

- e. MDS20Summary – A read-only summary that shows for each MDS table the provider's intake target and maximum overseas number, the reported total intake, and the number and percentage of overseas students from the reported intake. This table will be populated automatically when data is entered in the survey tables (Medical confirmed intake, Medical initial intake, Dental confirmed intake and Dental initial intake).
18. All worksheets in the original workbook should be returned even if they contain no data. This will be applicable for new medical schools that have no data for the 2019-20 academic year (although the Medical confirmed intake and Dental confirmed intake tables will usually be hidden for new medical schools). Providers should keep a back-up copy of the tables that they return to the OfS.
19. A completed valid workbook must be uploaded to the OfS portal by **noon on Wednesday 21 October 2020**.

## Data verification and sign-off

20. After the survey is successfully submitted to the OfS portal, providers should check the data in the results package to ensure that it is consistent with what has been submitted and that the 'date loaded' field has the date of the latest upload. The OfS will check the data for all providers against previous years' returns, and for providers in England against the intake targets set for the year. Any discrepancies will be queried with the provider (or, in the case of a joint submission, with the provider that has submitted the data).
21. The OfS requires all providers to sign off their MDS data as fit for purpose by **Tuesday 10 November 2020**. We require the accountable officer (normally the head of provider) to sign off the finalised MDS return. This requires them to understand our data collection requirements, so that they can ensure that the provider has systems capable of producing an accurate, complete return and that the preparer of the return has compiled it competently. If it is anticipated that the accountable officer will be unavailable to sign off the data by the deadline, the delegated authority can sign off the data.
22. If an English provider fails to meet the deadline for signing off data, or we believe the data to be inaccurate, we reserve the right to use our own estimates of data to inform OfS funding allocations (see the Terms and conditions of funding for higher education institutions<sup>5</sup>). For providers in England, we cannot guarantee that any amendments to data after 8 November 2019 will be taken into account. For providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, any amendments to data would be subject to the agreement of the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales or the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland respectively
23. The verification sign-off form will be available in the results package (as well as via email upon request). Once the OfS has completed the data verification process, all providers will be asked to have this form signed by the accountable officer. This signed verification form should either be uploaded to the OfS portal, or returned by email to [mds@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:mds@officeforstudents.org.uk) by 10 November 2020.
24. We will only accept amendments after this point in exceptional circumstances, where errors are genuine, widespread, significant, and make a material difference to our use of the data. Amendments will be required to pass an assessment process, as described fully on our website.<sup>6</sup>
25. The OfS may use the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record to monitor parts of the MDS return and will query providers if there are significant discrepancies.

## Definitions and guidance

### Coverage of tables

26. The intakes in all tables should be the headcount of students starting a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification programme (discounting those who already hold such a qualification). This will include students starting a 'graduate-entry course' (defined as one

---

<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/terms-and-conditions-of-funding-for-2020-21/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/terms-and-conditions-of-funding-for-2020-21/) (paragraph 22).

<sup>6</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/amendments-to-data/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/amendments-to-data/).

whose entry requirement is a first degree in a subject other than medicine or dentistry).

Students who join a programme in the second or later year should also be included, unless they are transferring (see paragraph 37) or already hold a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification. All students included in the MDS should be included in the individualised HESA student record for the relevant academic year.

27. International students who are entering after the first year of a medical or dental programme and intend to complete their first UK registrable medical or dental qualification, resulting in full registration with the General Medical Council or General Dental Council, are to be reported as intakes. For example, students from the International Medical University of Malaysia joining Year 3 should be included.
28. All international students should be included in the MDS survey unless an explicit exemption has been granted by the Department of Health and Social Care to exclude certain students from the intake control. The procedure for reporting international students may change in future years.
29. Where a student is studying for a medical or dental specialism that requires dual qualifications in both medicine and dentistry, such as oral and maxillofacial surgery, that student should only be reported for their first qualification. The intake on the second medical or dental programme and subsequent qualification should not be reported on this survey.
30. Students on courses preceding a course leading to a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification (such as foundation 'year 0' or gateway courses) should not be included in the reported intake figures, until they start year 1 of a programme leading to a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification. Where providers have fully integrated programmes that include the equivalent of a 'year 0' foundation year as the first year of the programme, the student should be reported as an intake when they start year 1 of the programme leading to a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification, rather than in 'year 0'.
31. Students who intend to take an intercalating non-medical or non-dental degree should be included as intakes when they first register with the provider where they intend to obtain a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification. This includes intakes to any six-year medical or dental programme that includes a non-medical or non-dental degree as part of the programme.
32. For the Medical initial intake and Dental initial intake tables, intakes should be reported as at 9 October 2020. Additional intakes after 9 October 2020 but before the end of the academic year, who have not withdrawn before the end of the academic year, should be reported the following year, in column 1 of the Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake tables on MDS21.
33. Intakes reported on Medical confirmed intake and Dental confirmed intake on MDS20 are an update of the Medical initial intake and Dental initial intake collected on MDS19. Students who withdrew from the programme between 10 October 2019 and 31 July 2020 inclusive should be reported in column 3 of Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake, but not in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake on MDS20. Students who withdraw after the end of the 2019-20 academic year, 31 July 2020, should be reported in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake on MDS20.

34. Students should be treated as having withdrawn for the purposes of this survey when they cease studying towards a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification. A date recorded in the ENDDATE field on the HESA student record indicates that a student has withdrawn.
35. Students who transfer to a programme that is not a first UK registrable medical or dental qualification should be reported as having withdrawn even if their ENDDATE field is blank.
36. Students who transfer from a programme leading to a first UK registrable medical qualification to a programme leading to the equivalent dental qualification, or vice versa, should be reported as withdrawn on the first programme and as an intake on the second.
37. Students transferring between medical programmes leading to a first UK registrable medical qualification should not be reported as intakes for the programme they transfer to, even when they change providers, unless they are transferring from a provider not subject to intake controls<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, students transferring between dental programmes leading to a first UK registrable dental qualification should not be reported as intakes, unless they are transferring from a provider not subject to intake controls. However, students who transfer from a medical programme to a dental programme, or vice versa, should be reported as an intake for the programme they transfer to.
38. Students who suspend their studies should only be reported as having withdrawn when they have a value in their ENDDATE field; otherwise they should be reported in the survey in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake on MDS20.

### **Row and column descriptions**

39. For all tables, student numbers should be reported by sex, fee eligibility and domicile.
40. Sex should be recorded on the MDS as coded on the HESA student record field SEXID.
41. Fee eligibility, as coded on the HESA student record, indicates for the purposes of this survey whether a student is eligible to pay home or other fees. Students charged home fees are coded 1 in the fee eligibility field (FEEELIG) and those charged other fees are coded 2.
42. Domicile columns refer to the country of the student's permanent or home address prior to entry to the programme. EU and overseas students are those not domiciled in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. For English providers, for the purposes of the caps on overseas medical intake and overseas dental intake, only intakes recorded as subject to 'other' fees in column 1d will be counted.
43. Column 2 on all tables records students on a graduate-entry course. Students entered in this column should also be included in columns 1a to 1d on each table as appropriate.
44. Column 3 on the Medical confirmed intake and Dental confirmed intake tables record intakes who have withdrawn from the programme between 10 October 2019 and 31 July 2020 inclusive, by fee eligibility. Intakes who have withdrawn from the programme by 31 July 2020 should be reported in column 3 of Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake on

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Intake controls' means: for providers in England or Scotland, those subject to medical or dental intake targets; for providers in Wales, those subject to limits on commissioned places; or for providers in Northern Ireland, those subject to a Medical and Dental CFTE.

MDS20 and not included in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake or Dental confirmed intake on MDS20.

## Examples

### Example 1: Registration, withdrawal

45. A student started a first UK registrable medical programme on 3 October 2019 but suspended studies on 6 January 2020. They notified the provider on 20 June 2020 that they do not intend to return and an ENDDATE was recorded in the 2019-20 HESA student record. As the student has withdrawn from the first UK registrable medical programme by 31 July 2020, they should be reported in column 3 and not in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake on MDS20.

### Example 2: Transfer to a programme that is not a first UK registrable medical or dental programme

46. student started a first UK registrable medical programme on 3 October 2019 but transferred to a biosciences degree on 6 January 2020. As the student had withdrawn from the first UK registrable medical programme by 31 July 2020, they should be reported in column 3 and not in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake on MDS20.

### Example 3: Transfer from a medical to a dental programme

47. A student started a first UK registrable medical programme on 3 October 2019 but on 6 January 2020 transferred to a first UK registrable dental programme. As the student had withdrawn from the first UK registrable medical programme by 31 July 2020, they should be reported in column 3 and not in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake on MDS20. However, as they started a first UK registrable dental qualification programme on 6 January 2020 they should be included as an intake in column 1 of Dental confirmed intake on MDS20.

### Example 4: Student retaking year 1

48. A student started a first UK registrable medical programme on 3 October 2019. On 3 October 2020 they return to retake year 1 of the first UK registrable medical programme:

- a. If the student withdrew (or was withdrawn) during 2019-20, they should be reported in column 3 and not column 1 of Medical confirmed intake on MDS20.
- b. If the student is retaking year 1 for any other reason, they should be reported in column 1 of Medical confirmed intake on MDS20.

47. In both cases above, the student should not be reported in the Medical initial intake table on MDS20 (as they would have been reported against the intake year in MDS19).

# Annex A: Higher education providers with joint medical schools

## Joint medical schools

We expect the following higher education providers with joint medical schools to submit a medical return this year:

- University of Brighton and University of Sussex
- University of Hull and University of York
- University of Kent and Canterbury Christchurch University.

There should be a single joint return from each joint medical school.

## Other collaborative arrangements

We also expect the following higher education providers with collaborative arrangements around their medical provision to submit a joint medical return from the lead medical school this year:

- University of Leeds and University of Bradford
- University of Nottingham<sup>8</sup> and University of Lincoln.

---

<sup>8</sup> For the University of Nottingham, the collaborative provision at Lincoln should be reported in a separate return to their own medical provision.



<b>Headcount of dental students</b>																	
Intake during the academic year 2019-20																	
Dental students - Confirmed																	
UKPRN:																	
Please upload the survey by noon Wednesday 21 October 2020																	
Survey contact: mds@officeforstudents.org.uk																	
Date loaded:																	
Intake target:																	
Fee eligibility	1 Total intake of students not withdrawn from the programme			1a Domiciled in Great Britain			1b Domiciled in Northern Ireland			1c Domiciled in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man			1d Domiciled in EU and overseas			2 Intake to 'graduate entry' courses (included in column 1)	3 Intake of students withdrawn from the programme (not included in column 1)
	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other		
Home fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

<b>Headcount of dental students</b>																
Intake for the academic year 2020-21 as of 9 October 2020																
Dental students - Initial																
UKPRN:																
Please upload the survey by noon Wednesday 21 October 2020																
Survey contact: mds@officeforstudents.org.uk																
Date loaded:																
Intake target: Not applicable for 2020-21																
Fee eligibility	1 Total intake of students not withdrawn from the programme			1a Domiciled in Great Britain			1b Domiciled in Northern Ireland			1c Domiciled in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man			1d Domiciled in EU and overseas			2 Intake to 'graduate entry' courses (included in column 1)
	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	
Home fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

# Annex C: Example summary table (providers in England only)

This annex provides an example of the MDS20Summary table, which appears in the Excel workbook for the MDS20 for providers in England only.

## 2020 Medical and dental students survey summary (read-only)

Survey contact: [mds@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:mds@officeforstudents.org.uk)

Information taken from MDS20 worksheets Medical confirmed intake, Medical initial intake, Dental confirmed intake and Dental initial intake

**Provider:**  
**UKPRN:**

**This summary is for information only and the OfS will notify providers of any adjustments to grant arising from over-recruitment later this year.**

### 2019-20 Intakes

Table	2019-20 Intake target	Of which maximum overseas numbers	Total intake	Overseas intake	Percentage overseas
Medical confirmed intake	0	0	0	0	0%
Dental confirmed intake	0	0	0	0	0%

'Total intake' is the sum of columns 1 and 3 of Confirmed Medical Intake or Confirmed Dental Intake.

'Overseas intake' is the total number of students returned as domiciled EU and overseas (column 1d) subject to other fees.

'Percentage overseas' is 'Overseas intake' divided by 'Total intake' expressed as a percentage.

### 2020-21 Intakes

Table	2020-21 Intake Target	Maximum overseas numbers	Total intake	Overseas intake	Percentage overseas
Medical initial intake	N/A	0	0	0	0%
Dental initial intake	N/A	0	0	0	0%

'Total intake' is the sum of column 1 of Medical Initial Intake or Dental Initial Intake.

'Overseas intake' is the total number of students returned as domiciled EU and overseas (column 1d) subject to other fees.

'Percentage overseas' is 'Overseas intake' expressed as a percentage of 'Total intake'.

## Explanation of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
HEE	Health Education England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
MDS	Medical and Dental Students survey
OfS	Office for Students
UKPRN	UK Provider Reference Number



© The Office for Students copyright 2020

This publication is available under the Open Government Licence 3.0.

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/)