

Freedom of Information and the MS AKT

We recognise the value of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in supporting transparency and accountability. However, we are aware that medical schools have recently seen an increase in FOI requests for detailed candidate data from the Medical School Applied Knowledge Test (MS AKT).

While individuals and researchers have a legal right to request public information, before submitting it is important to note:

- The General Medical Council (GMC) will be publishing national-level MS AKT data in 2026. This will include appropriate context and explanation to support accurate interpretation. Many FOI requests for MS AKT data will be exempted by Section 22 for this reason.
- FOI requests can place significant administrative burdens on universities, which are often managing these requests through central services, leading to delays and resource pressures.
- FOI requests are not always the most effective or appropriate tool for research purposes and can risk bypassing normal ethical review and oversight processes that help ensure scientific integrity and protect participant interests.

We encourage researchers and others seeking data to engage through established and collaborative routes, such as UK Medical Education Database (UKMED), which is well placed to support access to high-quality data for research purposes, with appropriate safeguards and ethical review.

Wherever possible, FOI should be considered a last resort after more collaborative and constructive routes have been explored. If you are considering submitting an FOI request for MS AKT data, we strongly recommend contacting UKMED once the GMC has published the data.

By doing so, we can collectively help reduce unnecessary administrative burden while supporting high-quality, responsible research.

For further information on national MS AKT data publication, please refer to the GMC's website. For research data access, please visit [UKMED](https://ukmed.ac.uk).