

Logbooks

Advice to trainees and trainers

July 2015

The Royal College of Anaesthetists' Training Committee is aware of problems caused as a result of a third party logbook provider ceasing to update their software.

We understand that trainees have experienced data loss and subsequent difficulties gathering evidence for ARCP panels.

The RCoA is currently investigating logbooks as part of a wider review of all technology solutions in use at the College.

The CCT curriculum states: 'Trainees should record, in a suitable paper or electronic logbook, the details of anaesthetics given by them: this is mandatory. The only stipulation that the College makes is that the Logbook Summary section of the personal portfolio must be in the format shown in [Appendix 10](#).'

All those who are keeping a logbook may wish to consider these guiding principles.



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SOFTWARE SELECTION

The RCoA makes no specific recommendations as to which Logbook software to use.

[The College's logbook software](#) has been in use since 1996, is free to use and remains supported by the developers.

In deciding which software to use, criteria by which logbook software can be assessed are:

- 1 Data format** – If the logged cases are stored in a format that is recognisable to other logbook software, then the likelihood of total data loss is reduced.
- 2 Features** – It is essential to ensure there is a method of exporting a summary in the RCoA CCT approved format as described in Appendix 10. Other desirable features include a means of backing up logbook data and the ability to import and export data to allow the user to change logbook provider.
- 3 Cost** – This may be a one off payment or recurring charge/ subscription. Be aware that charges can change, even for allegedly free software!
- 4 Data handling transparency** – Ensuring the security of data held 'in the cloud' is important. Likewise data is a commodity and by using some logbook software you may be granting permission for your data to be used for commercial purposes.
- 5 Support** – Particularly where a fee has been paid, ensure timely support is offered.



DATA BACKUP

What to backup

Backup mitigates:

- 1** Data loss
- 2** Software failure (e.g. not compatible with updated iOS)

Where possible, backup logbook data in a format which can be imported back into its software and a format which can be imported into different logbook software.

When to backup

As often as possible! Many advocate making an incremental backup each time new data is added. Automated backup systems may help this but are beyond the scope of this statement.

Onsite and offsite

Keeping one copy of data backups in an 'offsite' location (for example, using Dropbox or web-based email storage) prevents against data loss due to hardware damage or failure, for example where both the original data and the 'onsite' backup is destroyed e.g. due to fire or flood.

Verification

It is sensible to periodically verify that the backup system works as expected.



DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Data protection and [GMC confidentiality guidelines](#) require careful adherence.

Patients must not be individually identifiable from the patient ID used. The GMC Confidentiality Guidelines define anonymised data as 'Data from which the patient cannot be identified by the recipient of the information. The name, address and full postcode must be removed together with any other information which, in conjunction with other data held by or disclosed to the recipient, could identify the patient.'

This is covered in section 9.2 of the CCT Curriculum which states: 'The RCoA recommends that trainees only record the age [not date of birth], sex and ASA grade of patients and that no other unique numbers are retained.'

It is vital that any patient-related data you store is held securely.