

Anaesthesia associate

Anaesthesia associates (previously known as physicians' assistants (anaesthesia)) are part of the multi-disciplinary anaesthesia team, led by a [consultant anaesthetist](#) [1], that looks after patients undergoing many aspects of critical care.

You'll be trained to provide anaesthetic services, under supervision, in a variety of environments.



As an anaesthesia associate, you'll provide anaesthetic services to patients requiring anaesthesia, [respiratory](#) [2] care, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and/or other emergency, life sustaining services within the anaesthesia and wider theatre and critical care environments.

You will deputise for anaesthetists in a variety of situations

Although they have very similar names, the role of the anaesthesia associate and the physician associate [3] are very different.

Working life

As an anaesthesia associate, your work will be closely supervised by a consultant anaesthetist and there will be clear boundaries about what you can and cannot do. Typically, the range of duties will include:

- preoperative interviewing and physiological and psychological assessment of patients
- collecting patient information from the patients, taking a history, physical examination, laboratory, radiographic and other diagnostic data and identifying relevant problems
- implementing the anaesthesia care plan
- administering and/or participating in the planned administration of general anaesthetic for a variety of surgical and medically related procedures
- using a broad variety of techniques, anaesthesia agents, drugs and equipment in providing anaesthesia care
- administering drugs as prescribed
- interpreting and utilising data obtained from invasive and non-invasive monitoring equipment
- initiating and managing fluid and blood therapy within the plan of care
- positioning or supervising the positioning of patients to assure optimal physiologic function and patient safety
- identifying and taking appropriate actions related to:
 - anaesthesia equipment problems that might lead to patient problems
 - common postoperative problems
- record keeping
- participating in audit, complaints, compliments and clinical / non-clinical incidents with a view to improving patient care as part of the wider anaesthetic team
- risk management and health and safety recommendations
- monitoring and maintaining a safe, clean, and therapeutic environment for patients, staff and visitors
- teaching, supervising and assessing other team members

You will also deputise for anaesthetists in a variety of situations where your airway and venous cannulation skills will assist in patient care.

For further information about the role of anaesthesia associates please visit the Royal College of Anaesthetists website [4] and the Association of Anaesthesia Associates website [5]

Who will I work with?

As part of the anaesthetic team, you'll work as part of a larger team that will typically include anaesthetists [1], doctors specialising in emergency medicine [6], theatre nurses [7], operating department practitioners [8], surgeons [9] and clinical perfusion scientists [10].

- Pay and working conditions

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\)](#) ^[11] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Staff in the NHS will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. They may work a shift pattern.

Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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With further training and/or experience, you may be able to develop your career further and apply for vacancies in areas such as further specialisation and governance led local training (ie regional and local anaesthesia techniques), management, further academic education/research, or teaching.

- Job market and vacancies

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Presently in the UK, only doctors who have had specialist training in anaesthesia can administer anaesthetics. As an anaesthesia associate, you'll be a health professional who will expand the anaesthetic service and make operating theatres work more efficiently. In 2015, the number of physicians' assistants (anaesthesia) - the former title of the role of anaesthesia associate - working within the NHS totalled just over 120.

Finding and applying for jobs

You can search for vacancies for anaesthesia associates on the [NHS Jobs website](#) ^[12]

- [Find out more about applications and interviews](#) ^[13]

Volunteering is an excellent way of gaining experience (especially if you don't have enough for a specific paid job you're interested in) and also seeing whether you're suited to a particular type of work. It's also a great way to boost your confidence and you can give something back to the community!

- [Find out more about volunteering](#) ^[14]

- Further information

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For further information about working and training as a physicians' assistant (anaesthesia), please contact:

- [Association of Anaesthesia Associates](#) ^[5]
- [Royal College of Anaesthetists \(RCOA\)](#) ^[15]
- [University of Birmingham](#) ^[16]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Adult nurse](#) ^[17]
- [Emergency medicine](#) ^[6]
- [Operating department practitioner](#) ^[8]
- [Experienced paramedic](#) ^[18]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medical-associate-professions/roles-medical-associate-professions/anaesthesia-associates>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/anaesthesia>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Respiratory>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medical-associate-professions/roles-medical-associate-professions/physician-associate>
- [4] <http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/>
- [5] <https://www.anaesthesiaassociates.org/>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/emergency-medicine>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/theatre-nurse>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/operating-department-practitioner>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery>
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/physiological-sciences/clinical-perfusion-science>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [12] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>
- [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/applications-and-interviews>
- [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience>
- [15] <http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/261>
- [16] <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/med/physicians-assistant-anaesthesia.aspx>
- [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse>
- [18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/experienced-paramedic>