

## SAS doctors

The term 'SAS doctor' includes staff grade, associate specialist and specialty doctors\* with at least four years of postgraduate training, two of which are in a relevant specialty.

SAS doctors are a diverse group with a wide range of skills, experience and specialties. They are an essential part of the medical workforce.



A career as a SAS doctor can be a very satisfying and rewarding alternative to becoming a consultant or GP and there are many different reasons for choosing it as a long or short term career option.

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SAS doctor posts usually offer the opportunity to focus predominantly on providing direct patient care and less on the other clinical and non-clinical responsibilities required of a consultant or trainee. Depending on their personal interests and experience - and the available opportunities in their trust and specialty - SAS doctors can be involved in teaching, service development, research or management and leadership.

Becoming a SAS doctor may allow you to:

- work more flexibly without having to meet the requirements of a formal training programme
- work in a specific geographical location without having to rotate to different units
- work in a subspecialty which suits you
- optimise your work-life balance, as the hours may be more regular than for trainees or consultants
- gain experience to enhance your application for a specialty training post
- have more time to study for membership exams
- achieve a portfolio career, with several distinct roles
- develop your skills and competencies to apply to join the GMC Specialist Register via the CESR (Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration)

\* Prior to 2008, SAS doctors were appointed to staff grade or associate specialist posts. Since 2008 these grades have been closed to new entrants, with all new SAS doctor appointments being specialty doctors. A copy of the contract for specialty doctors is available in NHS Employers' NHS terms and conditions of service handbook <sup>[1]</sup>. There are also posts that have some similarities to SAS doctor roles but may not have the same entry criteria or terms and conditions of service. These posts include job titles such as trust grade, trust doctor, clinical fellow and senior clinical fellow.

## Career progression for SAS doctors

Specialty doctors and associate specialists (SAS doctors) have opportunities to access an increasing number of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities through different national initiatives. They're regularly involved in teaching, leading service development, and research.

Contact your local Health Education England office <sup>[2]</sup> or deanery for guidance on funding for CPD.

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**Getting into  
specialty  
training**

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collapse**

The main aim of medical training is to ensure that doctors are capable of fulfilling the role of a hospital consultant or a general practitioner. Once doctors have completed their training programme, they are awarded a [Certificate of Completion of Training](#) <sup>[3]</sup> ([CCT](#) <sup>[4]</sup>). Holding a [CCT](#) <sup>[4]</sup> means that your name is put onto a specialist register (for consultants), or the general practice register (for GPs) which are held by the General Medical Council (GMC).

Specialty tutors in many local HEE offices or deaneries provide specific advice and guidance to give SAS doctors the chance to gain a place on specialty training programmes. Each specialty has a nationally agreed person specification, detailing the required competencies. You can look at the person specification for training in your specialty on the specialty training website or the GP recruitment website which will give you guidance as to what stage you should enter such a programme.

- **CESR (article 14) and CEGPR (article 11)**

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The conventional route towards attaining your [CCT](#) <sup>[4]</sup> is to complete training approved by the GMC, however if you are an SAS doctor who has not followed an approved training programme, but think that you have gained the same level of knowledge, skills and higher-level competencies as [Certificate of Completion of Training](#) <sup>[3]</sup> ([CCT](#) <sup>[4]</sup>)-holders, you can apply to the GMC via Article 14 or Article 11. Article 14 is also known as Certification of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR). Doctors who are successful in meeting CESR requirements, also qualify for entry onto the Specialist Register of the GMC. In the same way as [CCT](#) <sup>[4]</sup>-holders, they are eligible for appointment to a consultant post in their specialty. Article 11 is also known as Certification confirming Eligibility for General Practice Registration (CEGPR).

Specialty tutors in local NHS trusts can support SAS doctors through these processes. In addition, the GMC has made considerable efforts to guide potential applicants through the process of Article 14 and Article 11 application and have nominated officers to whom applicants are allocated during the application process.

See the GMC website for further information. <sup>[5]</sup>

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## The SAS tutor role

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Specialty tutors are appointed by many HEE local offices and deaneries, and often sit on a local SAS doctor committee. They can:

- support you through the CESR and CEGPR process
- offer support whilst you are preparing for your appraisal
- circulate communications, eg information on funding available for CPD and development opportunities

Look on your local HEE office <sup>[2]</sup> or deanery website for details of how to contact your local SAS tutor.

## Resources for SAS doctors

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- GMC guidance for CESR or CEGPR route <sup>[5]</sup>
- UK SAS doctors committee meeting information <sup>[6]</sup>
- BMA resources for SAS doctors <sup>[7]</sup>
- BMA SAS doctors development guide <sup>[8]</sup>
- The terms and conditions of service for specialty doctors and associate specialists <sup>[9]</sup> are available from the BMA website
- The BMA Careers Guide <sup>[10]</sup>
- FAQs regarding SAS doctors contract (NHS Employers) <sup>[11]</sup>
- There are many articles on the BMJ Careers website <sup>[12]</sup> - use search term 'SAS'
- NHS Employers 'What are SAS doctors?' <sup>[13]</sup>

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors>

### Links

- [1] <https://www.nhsemployers.org/pay-pensions-and-reward/agenda-for-change/nhs-terms-and-conditions-of-service-handbook>
- [2] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about/how-we-work/your-area>
- [3] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate\\_of\\_completion\\_of\\_training](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate_of_completion_of_training)
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CCT>
- [5] [http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration\\_applications/ssg.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/ssg.asp)
- [6] <https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/staff-associate-specialists-and-specialty-doctors->

committee

[7] <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/job-planning/job-planning-for-sas>

[8] <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/progress-your-career/sas-doctor-development>

[9] <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/contracts/sas-contracts>

[10] <http://bma.org.uk/developing-your-career>

[11] <http://www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2011/10/faqs-specialty--associate-specialist-contracts>

[12] <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/advice-overview.html>

[13] <https://www.nhsemployers.org/pay-pensions-and-reward/medical-staff/sas-doctors/what-are-sas-doctors>