SAS doctors

Specialty and associate specialist (SAS) doctors* are non-training roles where the doctor has at least four years of postgraduate training, two of those being in a relevant specialty.

SAS doctors are usually more focused on meeting NHS service requirements, compared to trainee or consultant roles. For example, they often have considerably fewer administrative functions compared to consultants.

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This may suit some doctors, and in fact there are many reasons why doctors might decide to take on a SAS doctor role.

For example:
• they may be overseas doctors that have difficulty getting a training post
• they may prefer the work–life balance in this role as the hours are usually more regular
• they may have a portfolio career, ie they may have several distinct roles
• doctors that do not get a specialty training post (because of high competition) may apply to become specialty doctors for a period
• doctors who have yet to obtain their membership exam and are not working within a training programme may also apply to become a specialty doctor

*Not all non-training medical roles are SAS doctors – It depends on the contract that the doctor is on as to whether or not they are a SAS doctor. When the term was introduced there were specifics in the contract, including details of the amount of experience they needed to hold in the specialty before entering the role. Staff grade and associate specialists are amongst the grades included as SAS doctors, however these grades are now closed to new entrants. New recruits are named ‘Specialty Doctors’. A copy of the contract for Specialty Doctors is available on the NHS Employers website [1].

Career progression for SAS doctors

There are now an increasing number of national initiatives that have given staff grade, specialty doctors and associate specialists (SAS doctors) the opportunity to access resources for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). SAS doctors are regularly involved with teaching, leading service development and research. Local guidance on funding for CPD can be obtained from your local HEE office or deanery.

Find out more by watching a video about a SAS doctor:

• who has achieved variety in his career [2]
• who is able to have a balanced family life [3]

• Getting into specialty training Expand / 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 [4] (CCT [5]). Holding a CCT [5] 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)

The conventional route towards attaining your **CCT** [5] 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 (CCT) [5] -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 [5]-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.

Further information can be found on the GMC website [6].

**The SAS Tutor role**

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 or deanery website for details of how to contact your local SAS Tutor.

**Resources for SAS doctors**

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

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

Links