Adapted from

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

Interested in SAS as a career?

**SAS doctors**

The term 'SAS doctor' includes Specialty Doctors and Dentists, Associate Specialist and Specialists.

SAS doctors are a diverse group with a wide range of skills, experience and specialties, and 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, either as a long or short-term career option.

SAS doctor posts traditionally offered 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. However, depending on their personal interests and experience - and the available opportunities in their Health Board 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 Portfolio route (previously CESR).

With the new SAS contracts in 2022, new SAS doctors are appointed as **Specialty Doctors**, with a requirement for at least four years of postgraduate training, two of which are in a relevant specialty.

For those with significant experience, the new **Specialist** grade allows the opportunity for SAS career progression. In Scotland, this requires a minimum of 10 years medical work since obtaining Primary Medical Qualification (either continuous or in aggregate) of which a minimum of six years should have been in a relevant specialty in the Specialty Doctor and/or closed SAS grades; or equivalent in a relevant specialty from other medical grades including from overseas will also be accepted; and meet the criteria set out in [Generic-capabilities-framework-for-new-specialist-grade.pdf](https://www.nhsemployers.org/system/files/2022-09/Generic-capabilities-framework-for-new-specialist-grade.pdf)

Model copies of these contracts:

[FINAL\_SAS Specialty Doctor Contract\_28 Oct 2022.pdf](https://www.bma.org.uk/media/6337/bma-sas-specialty-doctor-contract_29-oct-22.pdf)

[FINAL\_SAS Specialist Doctor Contract\_28 Oct 2022.pdf](https://www.bma.org.uk/media/6338/bma-sas-specialist-doctor-contract_29-oct-22.pdf).

[Pay scales for SAS doctors in Scotland](https://www.bma.org.uk/pay-and-contracts/pay/specialty-and-associate-staff-doctors-pay-scales/pay-scales-for-sas-doctors-in-scotland) (via BMA website)

There are other posts that have some similarities to SAS doctor roles, but these will not have the same entry criteria or terms and conditions of service, including job titles such as Clinical Fellow and Senior Clinical Fellow.

Many SAS, in both in Specialty Doctor and Specialist posts, may take on management and leadership roles, have additional responsibilities, and get involved in formal teaching and academic work.

SAS doctors have opportunities to access an increasing number of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities through different national initiatives. In Scotland, this is through [Scotland Deanery SAS Development programme](https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/specialist-and-associate-specialist-doctors-and-dentists/) which enables the development of skills relevant for clinical teams, with funding available for SAS though the [SAS Development Fund](https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/specialist-and-associate-specialist-doctors-and-dentists/sas-development-fund-application-process/) .

Although [guidance from the GMC](https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/registration-applications/specialist-application-guides/retrospective-cct-for-doctors-with-cesr-combined-programme) may potentially allow recognition of some of the training and experience gained whilst employed as a SAS grade towards the entry level at which an individual can enter formal training, it is generally considered that SAS posts are ‘non-training’ posts. However, the skills and knowledge acquired may enhance an application into a training post.

There may be some SAS who wish to undertake the “alternative route” or [Portfolio pathway to Specialist registration](https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/registration-applications/specialist-application-guides/specialist-registration-portfolio).

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