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 Staff Grade, Associate Specialist and Specialty Doctors and Dentists 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.

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 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 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 called Specialty Doctors. A model copy of the contract for Specialty Doctors is available on [the BMA website](https://www.bma.org.uk/media/1112/bma-terms-and-conditions-of-service-for-specialty-doctors-in-scotland.pdf). 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 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. In Scotland, this is through [the SAS Development Programme](https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/specialist-and-associate-specialist-doctors-and-dentists/sas-development-fund-application-process/sas-online-courses/).

* [Terms and Conditions for Specialty Doctors in Scotland](https://www.bma.org.uk/media/1112/bma-terms-and-conditions-of-service-for-specialty-doctors-in-scotland.pdf), including entry criteria to the grade (via BMA website)
* [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)

Although [new 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 these are ‘non-training’ posts. However, the skills and knowledge acquired may enhance an application into a training post.

Please see [this webpage](https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/specialist-and-associate-specialist-doctors-and-dentists/guidance-for-new-sas-doctors-and-dentists/) for support available to SAS in Scotland