

Student Anaesthesia Associates – Funding and Expressions of Interest (EOI) guidance document

Funding to support Student Anaesthesia Associates in London

This guidance document provides information relating to [NHSE funding to support new Anaesthesia Associate \(AA\) pre-qualification training posts](#) in 2023/24.

Expressions of interest are welcome from NHS trusts that currently employ AAs as well as those seeking to introduce the role to their services. London trusts will be notified via email when the EOI process is open.

Context

[Anaesthesia Associates](#) are highly skilled professionals trained to safely deliver anaesthesia under the direction and supervision of a consultant anaesthetist¹. AAs are a continuous and flexible workforce that can contribute to an anaesthetic department in many ways. Depending on local needs, AAs can play a part in a large variety of roles consistent with their scope of practice. Some of these include:

- preoperative assessment
- sedation provision
- assistance in high turnover operating lists and major complex case anaesthesia
- Two-to-one working
- regional anaesthesia services.

In July 2019, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), with the support of the four UK governments, asked the General Medical Council (GMC) to regulate Physician Associates (PAs) and AAs. The GMC is currently designing the processes and policies needed to make this possible, including [information and guidance for employers, education providers and practitioners](#).

NHS England (NHSE) is working to:

- support a sustainable increase in the AA training pipeline to 2025
- support the development of more AA training programmes across England
- develop a sustainable funding model, to include an apprenticeship training route
- develop the educational capacity and infrastructure to support AA workforce expansion.

¹ <https://rcoa.ac.uk/training-careers/working-anaesthesia/anaesthesia-associates>

Funding available

Funding is available to support AA students. The funding offer per AA student in the London region is broken down as below:

- salary support 100 per cent in Year 1 and 50 per cent in Year 2 at the following rates (including on-costs):
 - £46,402 (Outer London)
 - £48,472 (Inner London)
- tuition fee contribution of up to £6,500 per trainee per annum
- contribution of up to £2,700 per trainee per annum, towards educational supervision.

Regional process (London)

All NHS trusts in London are eligible to apply and will be invited to submit EOI forms. The guidance notes below will help you to prepare and submit your EOI.

1. General

- 1.1. EOIs can be submitted by NHS trusts that both currently do / do not have an AA service.
- 1.2. EOIs should be submitted on behalf of an NHS trust rather than individual hospital site(s). If multiple EOIs are received from the same NHS trust (for example, individual EOIs from different specialisms or hospital sites), NHSE will ask you to consolidate them into one single organisational EOI.
- 1.3. EOIs should be authorised by a board-level sponsor. This should be the Medical Director, Human Resource (HR) Director and/or Director of Finance on behalf of the trust prior to being submitted.
- 1.4. Collaboration between NHS trusts is encouraged. In terms of collaborative submissions, point 1.3 still applies to the lead organisation, plus the addition of appropriate strategic-level sign-off from collaborating trusts.

2. Support to develop your EOI

- 2.1. Detailed information on the AA role and scope of practice is available from:
 - [Royal College of Anaesthetists](#)
 - [NHS Employers](#)
 - [Royal College of Surgeons of England](#)
 - [NHS Health Careers website](#)
 - [Association of Anaesthesia Associates.](#)
- 2.2. Please email the [London AA ambassador](#) if you would like further guidance.

3. Funding

- 3.1. **This funding is available to support new AA students only.** It cannot be utilised for existing AAs or AA students, or other theatre workforce education programmes.

- 3.2. EOIs should be for the funding outlined on page 1 – this can be for one or more AAs per organisation or collaboration.
- 3.3. If the total funding amount requested collectively across all submissions is likely to exceed the regional allocation for the year, the panel - London Head of School of Anaesthesia, London Anaesthesia Associate Training Programme Lead, London Anaesthesia Associate Ambassador and NHSE Workforce Transformation Lead - reserves the right to prioritise funding allocation, using the scoring criteria (section 5).
- 3.4. Payment arrangements will be under existing NHSE/NHS Education contract schedules and rules.

4. Content of EOI

- 4.1. Your EOI should focus on the successful and sustainable implementation of new AAs into your NHS Trust – this should include factors such as:
 - case of need
 - planning the introduction of new AA roles
 - supervision models for students and qualified AAs
 - training and tutorial sessions
 - quality of AA training
 - AA peer support and networks
 - ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) post-qualification
 - collaboration between departments, sites or with other employers.
- 4.2. The EOI should include the confirmation of a substantive post/employment on the completion of training.

5. Scoring criteria

- 5.1. EOIs will be scored and ranked by the panel members against the criteria provided in the appendix. NHS trusts should use this criteria to support the development of their submissions.
- 5.2. Section 6 Funding award is to help inform our future planning and will not be scored.

6. Funding award

- 6.1. All EOIs will be reviewed by a panel and scored using set criteria.
- 6.2. The panel may wish to contact you post-submission and pre-confirmation of the outcome to discuss your EOI further.

Appendix: EOI scoring criteria

	Area	Criteria	EOI section	Max. score
1	Organisational planning and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is clearly identified support for introducing new AA roles to the Trust, including medical director and clinical directors(s). A board-level sponsor has been identified and supports the EOI. Formal agreement is in place to fund the AA post(s) substantively beyond 2024. The Trust has a track record of usefully introducing new roles (such as Physician Associates, Advanced Practitioners, and/or Surgical Care Practitioners). 	1 and 2	5
2	Clinical and workforce priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EOI is clearly aligned with local workforce shortages and theatre productivity targets. The benefits of introducing AAs to the Trust are clearly articulated, including quality of care and clinical productivity. There is a clear strategy for growing the AA workforce from science graduates as well as existing NHS staff. 	3	5
3	Implementing/ expanding AA roles	<p>The EOI demonstrates initial plans in terms of planning the introduction of new AA roles, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a local clinical lead for AA students Provision of an educational supervisor for each student AA Provision of weekly tutorials, as per university requirements (either in Trust or in collaboration with other Trusts) AA peer support and networks Local governance Readiness for GMC regulation Ongoing CPD post-qualification. <p>The EOI demonstrates a commitment to collaborate on the implementation of AA roles locally, regionally and at the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) level.</p> <p>Evidence of plans to grow the AA workforce from science graduates as well as existing NHS workforce.</p>	4	5
4	Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EOI contains details of how the quality of education and practice learning will be supported and acted on, consistent with HEE as was (now NHSE)'s quality framework. 	5	5

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence of there being enough capacity to train AAs alongside stage 1, 2 and 3 Anaesthetic trainees. 		
5	Overall level of confidence in the EOI	Overall, the EOI provides clear and realistic plans and arrangements for new AA student(s).	1-5	5