

Specialist Doctor appointments in Emergency Medicine March 2022

In September 2018 Royal College of Emergency Medicine produced a position statement regarding the reinstatement of the Associate Specialist grade or equivalent¹.

Following negotiations with the NHS Employers and the BMA the Specialist grade was introduced in April 2021 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The new grade is designed to provide a senior level for SAS doctors i.e. a step up from the Specialty Doctor grade.

The aim of introducing the new grade is to give SAS doctors the opportunity to have progression in their careers with recognition and reward for their additional experience and contribution to their work. This should also lead to increased recruitment and retention of these valuable doctors.

As this is a newly introduced grade, doctors and employers may not be familiar with the role and requirements of the grade in the specialty. The Royal College of Physicians² and Royal College of Anaesthetists³ have produced guidance and generic person specific specifications.

Much of the content of these documents is applicable to Emergency Medicine but there is a need for some specialty specific advice. The aim of this document is to provide some guidance regarding job descriptions for the Specialist doctor role. The specialist grade introduced in April 2021 requires employers to use the generic capabilities framework and template person specification, (see below) which they will develop based on the requirements of the service.

A doctor in this grade shall have:

- Full registration with the General Medical Council.
- Completed a minimum of 12 years medical work (either continuous period or in aggregate) since obtaining a primary medical qualification, of which a minimum of 6 years should have been in a relevant specialty.
- Meets the criteria set out in the generic capabilities' framework for the specialist grade which has been developed by AoMRC, BMA and NHS Employers^{4,5}.

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine works to ensure high quality care for patients by setting and monitoring standards of care in emergency departments, as well as providing expert guidance on policy to relevant bodies on matters relating to Emergency Medicine.

The aims of RCEM

- Promotion of patient safety.
- Advocate for professional and educational standards.
- Provide expert guidance on policy to relevant bodies on matters relating to Emergency Medicine.

While the College promotes the above and sets recognised standards in its membership and fellowship examinations, it does recognise that doctors who may not have obtained evidence

of achieving these standards by obtaining the above-mentioned examinations may still have the appropriate skills and knowledge.

The requirement to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and qualities required to work at a senior level in Emergency Medicine highlights the need for all Speciality doctors to be supported in recording their professional development throughout their careers. This includes annual appraisal and regular educational supervisor meetings. Support as is best practice advocated in the BMA SAS Charter and Maximising the Potential: essential measures to support SAS doctors^{6,7}.

There are several ways that evidence can be supplied, to protect the individual and the organisation when employing doctors at a senior level who are not on the Specialist Register.

Examples of this include:

1. WPBA's and population of the RCEM e-portfolio in a similar manner to ACP credentialling.
2. Supporting assessments and testimony from seniors/supervisors within the SAS Doctors department.

The role of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine in this process is limited to giving advice on the person specification and providing a representative for interview.

Regional advisers play an important role in reviewing job descriptions against national standards and criteria; to consider whether the post represents a satisfactory specialist doctor post within the local circumstances of the trust and in line with relevant terms and conditions of service.

References

1. https://rcem.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/RCEM_Position_Statement_on_the_AS_Grade.pdf
2. <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/file/29046/download>
3. <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2021-08/PS%20for%20specialist%20posts.pdf>
4. <https://www.nhsemployers.org/articles/terms-and-conditions-and-resources-sas-contract-reform-2021>
5. <https://www.nhsemployers.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/SAS-Reform-Concordat-For-New-SpecialistGrade.pdf>
6. <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/career-progression/sas-development/the-sas-charter>
7. https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SAS_Report_Web.pdf

Appendix I - Generic Person Specification for Specialist Doctor in Emergency Medicine

	Essential	Desirable
Professional values and behaviours, skills and knowledge	<p>Full registration and a Licence to Practice with the General Medical Council</p> <p>Minimum of 12 years medical experience since primary medical qualification</p> <p>Minimum of 6 years as SAS grade or equivalent in emergency medicine and relevant acute specialties (a minimum of 4 years in EM)</p> <p>Adheres to professional requirements of annual appraisal, job planning and reviews of performance and progression</p> <p>Demonstrates the professional values and behaviours set out in Good Medical Practice</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to manage patients with complex needs whilst remaining aware of their own limitations</p> <p>Provides safe and effective care for critically ill patients for all ages with specialist help and guidance</p> <p>Ability to lead resuscitation teams and safely transfer critically ill patients</p> <p>Communicates effectively with patients, relatives and carers, placing them at the centre of the care pathway</p>	<p>Post-graduate professional qualification</p> <p>Previous experience working in the NHS.</p>
Leadership and teamworking	<p>Ability to lead diverse teams</p> <p>Understands own leadership style and its impact on others</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to develop effective relationships across teams, contributing to their successful working</p> <p>Demonstrates ability to challenge others, escalating concerns when necessary</p> <p>Critically reflects on decision-making explaining them effectively to others</p>	<p>Undertaken training in management and / or teamworking.</p>
Patient safety and quality improvement	<p>Takes prompt action to ensure a high standard of safety and quality of patient care</p> <p>Ability to collaborate with hospital teams to manage risk</p> <p>Understanding of clinical governance systems</p> <p>Active and consistent engagement with local quality improvement projects</p>	<p>Participates in regional or national quality improvement projects</p> <p>Implements evidence-based change to improve patient care</p> <p>Undertaken training in quality improvement methodology</p>
Safeguarding	<p>Evaluates and instigates initial management of safeguarding concerns</p>	
Education and training	<p>Critically assesses learning requirements for self and others</p> <p>Evaluates, reflects and acts on the effectiveness of education and learning -</p> <p>Creates effective learning opportunities for medical and paramedical colleagues</p>	<p>Plans and provides effective teaching and training activities</p> <p>Meets the requirements of a clinical/educational supervisor, as defined by the GMC</p> <p>Formal educational qualification</p> <p>Life support instructor.</p>

Research and scholarship	Keeps up-to-date with current research and best practice Locates and uses clinical guidelines appropriately Supports any research activities being undertaken within the Trust as required	Undertakes significant involvement in clinical research Presentations at regional and national meetings Publications in peer reviewed journal Undertaken training in research methodology
---------------------------------	--	--

Appendix II - FAQ

FAQs for senior Emergency Medicine doctors and for Clinical Leads:

How are specialist doctor posts created?

Specialist doctor posts are designed to allow departments to employ doctors in a senior role and allow recognition of specialty doctors who are working at this level.

Employers will decide if they have a need for such posts but Clinical Leads should encourage potential candidates and ensure that they have the opportunity to acquire the broad skills that they would require.

Who should apply for a specialist doctor post?

A specialist doctor post would be appropriate for an experienced practitioner (being a minimum of 12 years post primary medical qualification) who has the skills to act as a senior decision maker. They should have the associated generic professional capabilities as well as specialty specific capabilities.

Can these doctors act on consultant rotas?

Doctors in specialist doctor posts will be expected to have the skills of a senior decision maker and have satisfied the stated requirements and as such should be qualified to act in a senior role. The exact details of how specialist doctors work within their local teams a matter for individual departments to decide.

What should be considered by specialty doctors thinking of applying for a specialist post?

The decision to pursue a career as a specialist doctor will be a personal one and its suitability will depend on what a candidate's intentions and needs are. Other options to consider are whether to enter a training post with the aim of becoming a consultant or whether to pursue the CESR route.

What additional support is available for development of SAS Doctors?

It is important that SAS Doctors in Emergency Medicine and those supporting SAS doctors in their development are aware that there should be SAS tutors in their trusts who are employed by their deanery through HEE. These doctors have access to development funds, some with bursaries etc that can help with additional support for career development. Each trust should also have an SAS representative on their Local Negotiating Committee who can assist with terms and conditions within the trust and regionally.

What else should candidates to consider when taking on a specialist doctor post?

It is of vital importance to establish a satisfactory working job plan and to consider the implications of moving onto a different contract with different conditions and pay scales.

Personal job plans should be negotiated with clinical leads before starting in post.

It is not the role of RCEM or EMSAS to advise on this but details can be found on the HEE website (link available earlier in this document) and BMA SAS contracts web pages.
(<https://www.bma.org.uk/pay-andcontracts/contracts/sas-doctor-contract/sas-contract>)