

# SAS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

## Funding Principles and Guidelines Updated January 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

These principles explain the process by which applications to the SAS Development Fund are considered and ensure an honest, transparent and consistent system which is fair and equitable across the NHS England North West footprint.

It is the responsibility of the Employing Trust to ensure that SAS doctors have access to CPD, study leave and funding according to the Terms of Service. SAS doctors should have a minimum of one (1) PA per week in their job plan to support professional development in accordance with the Department of Health Guidance.

The SAS Development Fund is available to support career progression and professional development of SAS doctors over and above the maintenance of current professional practice. It should not be used as an alternative to Trusts and other employers of SAS doctors providing appropriate study leave funding to support CPD requirements for appraisal and revalidation.

The SAS Development Fund can provide support for the development of extended roles e.g. clinical, educational or leadership roles, ultimately allowing SAS doctors to maximise their contribution to the delivery of excellent patient care.

## 2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

- Please ensure you read and follow this guidance carefully.
- Please provide all the information requested on the application form.
- Please submit your application as far in advance of the course date as possible.
- Please be aware that it will take 4 to 6 weeks from the date you submit your application before you are notified of the outcome.
- Retrospective applications will not be accepted.
- Individual applications **must** be supported by the SAS Tutor/ Lead of your trust. (For SAS doctors working in hospices, your application must be supported by the relevant Palliative Medicine SAS Specialty Lead for your area.)
- SAS Tutors / Leads applying for funding to attend an activity should obtain approval from the DME or another supervising doctor. If you have any issues with getting the relevant approval, please contact [england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net).

## 3. ELIGIBILITY

The SAS Development Fund can only be used to support the development of SAS doctors employed in the NW region on national Terms and Conditions of service. This includes Specialty Doctors, Associate Specialists, Specialists and Staff Grade doctors.

SAS doctors working as locum consultants or seconded to work as acting consultants will not be eligible to apply to the SAS Development Fund. Applications from other grades of doctors (e.g. Clinical Fellows, Trust Grade doctors) and other health professionals (e.g. Physician Associates, Advanced Clinical Practitioners), can also not be considered.

## 4. WHAT COURSES CAN BE FUNDED?

### Educational activities that can be supported by the SAS Professional Development Fund include:

1. Generic skills, including leadership and management training, communication skills, coaching and mentoring skills, medical ethics and education.
2. Top-up training and revision courses to meet requirements for CESR (Portfolio pathway).
3. Postgraduate university qualifications e.g. PG Certificates, Diplomas or Masters degrees.
4. Educational and supervisory skills courses.
5. Courses to help build a portfolio towards career progression.
6. Specialty-specific training opportunities or requirements that can be shown to be an important part of career development may be supported.

### Activities that will not be supported by the SAS Professional Development Fund:

1. Mandatory courses e.g. Advanced Life Support.
2. Courses to support appraisal, such as appraisee or appraiser skills courses.
3. Examination fees.
4. CESR (Portfolio pathway) application fees.
5. Books, journals, library services, computer equipment and software.
6. Funding for backfilling, Locum costs or Trust Grade costs when SAS doctors are seconded for training purposes.

## 5. APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications are accepted from Trusts or individuals, using the application forms available on the website: <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sas-doctors/applying-sas-development-fund>
- All applications must be typed. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.
- Completed application forms, with all supporting documents, should be sent to [england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net).
- They must be submitted a minimum of four weeks before the start of the course, though earlier application is encouraged if possible. Retrospective applications will not be considered.

### Application forms:

There are 3 different application forms. Please ensure that the correct form is completed.

- **Application Form A** – application for trusts to host an event
- **Application Form B** – application for an individual to attend a short course or conference
- **Application Form C** – application for an individual to undertake a postgraduate university qualification e.g. PG Certificate, PG Diploma or Masters degree.

### Funding Panel Review of Applications:

- The funding panel will review applications on a monthly basis.
- Applications will be assessed as to whether they meet the criteria outlined in this guidance and whether the expected learning outcomes justify the level of funding requested.
- Submission deadlines and panel review dates can be found on the website: <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sas-doctors/applying-sas-development-fund>.
- Any applications received after the submission deadline will be reviewed the following month.
- The applicant will be notified in writing of the panel decision, usually within 2 to 3 weeks of the panel review date.

## Applications for trusts to host an event:

1. The application should give full details of the proposed event, including detailed costings.
2. Any other sources of funding for the event should be included.
3. Trusts are expected to choose course providers and venues which offer good value for money. Consideration should be given to obtaining quotes from different providers/ venues.
  - Provider cost should not normally exceed £2000+VAT per day.
  - Additional facilitator expenses, such as travel and accommodation costs, would not normally be approved.
  - Venue costs for a one day course for 15-20 delegates should not exceed £500 per day.
  - Catering costs should not exceed £20 per head.
4. A copy of the course programme should be included in the application.
5. Details must be provided of how the event is expected to contribute to the career development of SAS doctors in the region.
6. Courses must be aimed primarily at the development of SAS doctors, who should be given priority for attendance. Any unfilled places which would not otherwise be used may be offered to other staff for whom the course could be beneficial e.g. Locally Employed Doctors.

## Applications for individuals to attend a short course or conference, or to undertake a postgraduate university qualification:

1. Applicants must be working currently as a SAS doctor (specialty doctor, staff grade, associate specialist or specialist grade) in the area covered by NHS England NW.
2. Applicants must have utilized their Trust study leave budget fully, and the SAS Development Fund should not be used as an alternative to the Trust providing appropriate study leave funding to support CPD requirements for appraisal and revalidation.
3. SAS doctors who wish to undertake training in areas such as leadership and management, clinical or educational supervision, communication skills etc. should attend the courses arranged by trusts or by the NHSE SAS Development Team, which are funded by the SAS Development Fund. Details can be found on the monthly SAS course emails or the SAS course calendar (see [https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sas\\_calendar](https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sas_calendar)). Applications for external courses on these topics will only be funded if there are no places available on the regional SAS courses.
4. A maximum of £2000 will be funded for any individual SAS doctor per financial year. If applying for funding for a course which costs more than £2000, the SAS doctor must ensure their application includes how the remaining course costs will be met.
5. The application form should identify how funding will contribute to an individual's personal development plan (PDP) and how it will improve patient care.
6. The application must have the approval of the Department and Trust. The applicant's Clinical Director or supporting clinician and the Trust SAS Lead/ Tutor must sign the form to provide evidence of their support. (For SAS doctors working in hospices, the application must be supported by the relevant Palliative Medicine SAS Specialty Lead for your area.)
7. Confirmation of study leave approval should be submitted with the application.
8. A copy of the course programme with a full breakdown of the funding requested must be included in the application.
9. **When applying for funding for a postgraduate university qualification:**
  - A maximum of £2000 in total can be approved towards the cost of a postgraduate university qualification, even if the course extends over more than one year.
  - Information should be provided about each module, including the dates these will be undertaken.

- Funding can only be approved for one year at a time. Where funding is required for a course extending over more than one year, a fresh application must be submitted annually, stating clearly the financial year(s) in which the funding will be required.

### Courses outside of the NW region:

- Applications to attend courses outside the region will only be approved if no suitable course exists locally.
- Travel and accommodation costs will not be funded for courses in the NW region.
- **Travel** – a maximum of 50% of the following costs may be applied for:
  - Rail: Standard rate travel only (unless first class is cheaper).
  - Taxi: Reimbursed for short journeys where deemed necessary, i.e. from train station to course venue.
  - Air: Only funded for overseas courses, except where it is cheaper than travel by train or car.
  - Car: The shortest practicable route should be taken and payment will be at public transport rate, which is currently 56p per mile. Car parking fees will be reimbursed on production of receipts.
- **Accommodation** – a maximum of 50% of the cost may be applied for:
  - For accommodation within London or overseas, a maximum amount of £75 per night (i.e. 50% of £150) will be remunerated.
  - For accommodation in the UK but outside of London, a maximum amount of £60 per night (i.e. 50% of £120) will be remunerated.
- Applicants are expected to make their travel and accommodation arrangements based on optimum value for money.
- **Subsistence costs will not be funded.**

## 6. EVALUATION AND REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Successful applicants to the SAS Development Fund are required to complete an evaluation form following completion of the course before the funding can be released. Forms are available on the website: <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sas-doctors/applying-sas-development-fund>

Reimbursement for both Trust and individual applications will be made on a quarterly basis through the Education Contract Schedule following the completion of the course and submission of an evaluation form. For modular courses, such as postgraduate diplomas and Masters degrees, reimbursement can be made after each module subject to the completion of a separate evaluation form for each module.

The educational impact of courses and educational events will be discussed annually at the SAS Education Committee Meetings.

## 7. SAS DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PANEL

1. The Funding Panel will consist of the Associate Dean for SAS Doctors, the SAS Development Programme Lead, SAS Tutors / Leads selected from the members of the SAS Education Committee and representatives from the BMA regional Specialty and Specialist Doctors' Committees.
2. The term of office for each panel member will be for three years at a time and may be renewed for a further period of three years. When a panel member is demitting from the funding panel, an overlap period with their replacement of at least 3 months should occur where possible.
3. Administrative support will be provided by the Programme Support Administrator for SAS Doctors, who will collate applications and send them to the funding panel members for review on a monthly basis.
4. Funding Panel meetings will be held approximately three times per year, usually via MS Teams.
5. An Administrative Manager (currently Frances McLaughlin) will be responsible for ensuring that due process is followed.

## 8. QUERIES ABOUT THE SAS DEVELOPMENT FUND

For any queries about the SAS Development Fund, please contact the Programme Support Administrator for SAS Doctors by email to [england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net)

## 9. RIGHT OF APPEAL

Applicants wishing to appeal against an unsuccessful outcome should submit their appeal via email to [england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.sasdoctors.nw@nhs.net) marked for the attention of:

Dr Tamsin Dunn  
Deputy Postgraduate Dean  
NHS England NW