

Health Education England | London

Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) – Information Guide

The future of the anaesthesia workforce and Anaesthesia Associates

Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) are highly skilled professionals, trained to safely deliver anaesthesia under the direction and supervision of a consultant anaesthetist. AAs are a continuous, flexible and reliable workforce that can contribute to an anaesthetic department in many different ways.

There is currently a significant shortage of anaesthetists in the UK, and this shortage is set to grow considerably in coming years. Without effective workforce planning, the NHS will be unable to cope with the current backlog of operations and growing waiting lists.

One solution to this problem is the expansion of the Anaesthesia Associate workforce. In the wake of the current HEE funding model for training of AAs (details below) – this solution is more desirable than ever.

Important information

HEE funding model

Health Education England are currently working to support a sustainable increase in the training of Anaesthesia Associates. As it stands, HEE are providing a national funding offer for up to 120 students per year across HEE regions until April 2024. If Anaesthesia Associates are part of your future workforce planning, the time to recruit is now. For more information see our HEE funding offer information sheet and visit the HEE website:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/anaesthesia-associates>

HEE Anaesthesia Associate role impact case study:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/medical-associate-professions/impact-case-studies/anaesthesia-associate-role-impact-case-study>

The Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA) and AAs

The RCoA hold the AA Managed Voluntary Register (MVR). All qualified AAs are encouraged to maintain their presence on the AA MVR. Alongside this, AAs are eligible to become affiliate members of the RCoA, and have access to the RCoA Lifelong Learning Platform.

Together with the General Medical Council, the RCoA have developed the Anaesthesia Associate Curriculum to ensure quality of knowledge and training, and align professional standards.

The RCoA have developed an AA scope of practice document to outline supervision standards and appropriate ways of working.

To find out more about the RCoA and AAs, please visit the website:

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

Interesting article published by the RCoA:

Time to get serious about anaesthesia associates

<https://rcoa.ac.uk/bulletin/january-2023/time-get-serious-about-anaesthesia-associates>

The General Medical Council (GMC) and AAs

The GMC are currently designing the processes and policies required to regulate Anaesthesia Associates. Regulation with the GMC is expected to begin in the second half of 2024. For more information, please visit the GMC website:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/pa-and-aa-regulation-hub>

Anaesthesia Associate Training – University College London

In September 2021, University College London launched the Anaesthesia and Perioperative Science Masters Programme. This equips student AAs with the academic and professional qualities to undertake the role of an Anaesthesia Associate. This is a two-year blended learning programme taught by experts in the perioperative field. To find out more please visit the website:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught-degrees/anaesthesia-and-perioperative-science-msc>

Association of Anaesthesia Associates

The Association of Anaesthesia Associates is the representative body of the Anaesthesia Associate role in the UK.

The aims of the Association are to ensure the highest standards of patient care through the education and registration of Anaesthesia Associates and to promote the interests of the profession nationally.

For more information visit:

<https://anaesthesiaassociates.org>