

# Student Anaesthesia Associates Expression of Interest Guidance Document

April 2023

## Funding to support Anaesthesia Associate students

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

Organisations should read the following guidance in full before submitting an expression of interest (EOI).

## Context

Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) are highly trained, skilled practitioners that work within an anaesthetic team under the direct supervision of a consultant anaesthetist<sup>1</sup>.

AAs can be utilised to reduce operating theatre downtime, leading to increased theatre utilisation and efficiency<sup>2</sup>. Depending on local needs, AAs can play a part in a large variation of roles including preoperative assessment, sedation provision, cardiac arrest teams and a range of different perioperative and non-perioperative support consistent with their scope of practice<sup>3</sup>. Some of these include:

- Preoperative assessment
- Sedation provision
- Assistance in high turnover operation lists and major complex case anaesthesia
- 2:1 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 anaesthesia associates (AAs). The GMC are currently designing the processes and policies needed to make this possible, including [information and guidance for employers, education providers and practitioners](#).

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-02/Planning-introduction-training-PAA-2016.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/training-careers/working-anaesthesia/anaesthesia-associates>

## Funding available

A national model of funding is now available to support students who commence on courses from 01 April 2023 – 01 April 2024. The funding offer per AA student is broken down below:

- A consistent salary support offer for all students, of 100% in Year 1 and 50% in Year 2 at the following rates (including on-costs):
  - £40,190 (national rate)
  - £42,261 (Fringe)
  - £46,402 (Outer London)
  - £48,472 (Inner London)
- A tuition fee contribution of £6,500 per annum.
- A contribution of £2,700 towards education supervision per annum.

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. Expressions of interest are welcome from organisations that currently employ AAs as well as those seeking to introduce the role to their services.

## Anaesthesia Associate Education programmes

Alongside a funding offer, Health Education England commissioned the development of additional, new AA education programmes which have increased the education capacity in England. There are three providers of the AA post-graduate course.

Further information of each of them can be found at the following:

1. [Birmingham University](#)
2. [Lancaster Medical School](#)
3. [University College London](#)

## Expressions of Interest Process (EOI)

Organisations in England should contact an appropriate representative within NHSE to discuss the EOI process within their region. The following detail provides guidance to support your EOI:

### 1. General

- 1.1. EOIs can be submitted by organisations that currently have an AA service and those that do not currently have one.
- 1.2. All EOIs should be made via the online form. This should be on behalf of an NHS trust rather than an individual hospital site. If multiple EOIs are received

from the same organisation (for example different hospital sites), you will be asked to consolidate the EOI into one organisational bid.

- 1.3. EOIs should be authorised by a board level sponsor. This should ideally be the Medical Director, HR Director and/or a Director of Finance on behalf of the organisation prior to being submitted.
- 1.4. The EOI should also have been discussed with the Anaesthetic department and have Clinical Director approval.
- 1.5. Collaboration between NHS trusts is encouraged. In terms of collaborative submissions, point 1.3 applies for the lead organisation, plus the additional strategic level sign off from collaborating organisations.
- 1.6. The outcome of EOIs will be communicated via email.

## 2. Support to develop your EOI

- 2.1. Detailed information on AA roles and scope of practice, including the newly developed curriculum are available from:  
[Royal College of Anaesthetists](#)  
[NHS Employers](#)  
[Royal College of Surgeons of England](#)  
[NHS Health Careers website](#)  
[Association of Anaesthesia Associates](#)
- 2.2. NHSE have commissioned an [awareness campaign](#) and materials to raise the profile of the role. A number of useful resources and documents can also be found at this page, including example business case, job description and funding information.
- 2.3. If you would like to discuss the funding offer and EOI process in more detail, please contact [maps@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:maps@hee.nhs.uk) who will be able to direct your query to the appropriate NHSE colleague within your region.

## 3. Funding

- 3.1. The funding is available to support **new** student AAs only. It cannot be utilised on existing AAs or other theatre education workforce programmes.
- 3.2. EOIs should be for the full funding as outlined on page 2, this can be for a minimum of one AA per organisation or collaboration.
- 3.3. If the total funding amount requested collectively across all submissions exceeds the regional allocation for the year, the panel reserves the right to prioritise funding allocation, using the scoring provided in section 5.
- 3.4. Funding will be provisionally ringfenced per ICS, based on a weighted allocation. Should the total number of EOIs within an ICS not utilise all funding available this may be offered to trust(s) from a different ICS.

- 3.5. Funding provided in the financial year 2023/2024 must be utilised on a HEI programme starting between September 2023 and March 2024.
- 3.6. Payment arrangements will be under the existing NHS education contract schedules and rules.

#### **4. Content of EOI**

- 4.1. Your expression of interest should focus on successful and sustainable implementation of new AAs into your organisation, this should include factors such as:
  - Case of need
  - Planning the introduction of new AA roles
  - Supervision models for students and qualified AAs
  - Strategic development of a new workforce
  - Oversight of inclusive, open and fair recruitment process
  - Training and tutorial sessions – Including participation in regional tutorials
  - Quality of AA training
  - AA peer support and networks
  - Ongoing CPD post-qualification
  - Collaboration with other employers
- 4.2. The EOI should include the intended employment of AA post qualification.

#### **5. Scoring Criteria**

- 5.1. EOIs will be assured by the panel members against the criteria provided in appendix 1.

#### **6. Funding award/decision**

- 6.1. All EOIs will be reviewed by a panel from the appropriate NHSE region.
- 6.2. EOIs will be provided to NHSE colleagues for prior consideration and scoring before moderation and decisions as a panel.
- 6.3. EOIs will be scored and ranked using the scoring criteria in appendix 1.
- 6.4. The panel may contact you further post submission and pre-confirmation of outcome for clarification on elements of the EOI submission.



## Appendix 2: EOI scoring criteria

	Area	Criteria	EOI section	Max. score
1.	Organisational planning and support	<p>There is clearly identified support for introducing new AA roles to the organisation, including medical director and clinical directors(s).</p> <p>A board level sponsor has been identified and supports the EOI.</p> <p>Formal agreement is in place to fund the AA post(s) substantively beyond 2025.</p> <p>The organisation has a track record in usefully introducing new roles (such as Physician Associates, Advanced Practitioners, and/or Surgical Care Practitioners).</p>	1 and 2	5
2.	Clinical and workforce priorities	<p>The EOI is clearly aligned with local workforce shortages and theatre productivity targets.</p> <p>The benefits of introducing AAs to the organisation are clearly articulated, including quality of care and clinical productivity.</p> <p>There is a clear strategy for growing the AA workforce from science graduates as well as existing NHS staff in line with the NHS People Plan and NHSE national aims.</p>	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"> <li>Proposed supervision models for trainees and qualified AAs</li> <li>Training and tutorial sessions</li> <li>AA peer support and networks</li> <li>Local governance</li> <li>Readiness for GMC regulation</li> <li>Ongoing CPD post-qualification.</li> </ul> <p>The EOI demonstrates a commitment to collaborate on the implementation of AA roles locally, regionally and at ICS level.</p> <p>Consideration of HEI blended learning programme.</p> <p>Evidence of plans to grow the AA workforce from science graduates as well as existing NHS workforce</p>	3 - 4	5

4.	Quality	The EOI contains details of how the quality of education and practice learning will be supported and acted on, consistent with <a href="#">HEE's quality framework</a>	5	5
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