

Access to College education e-portfolios for SAS doctors

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Background

SAS doctors make up 20% of the medical workforce but many lack workplace support, find it difficult to move between specialties, have limited access to training and some have reported bullying.

In February 2019 Health Education England (HEE) and NHS Improvement, in collaboration with the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and NHS England, published a paper titled *Maximising the Potential: essential measures to support SAS doctors*. New measures outlined in this document set out how HEE, NHS Improvement, NHS Employers and other partners would work together to support and develop SAS doctors.

There are 11 commitments in Maximising the potential which relate to the development of the SAS workforce. This document relates to Commitment 6: the Academy will work with the Royal Colleges to encourage access to e-portfolios for SAS doctors who require it.

There is no formally recognised development opportunity for SAS doctors within the specialty doctor grade. Some SAS doctors choose to enhance their careers by following the CESR/CEGPR pathway to join the specialist register.

When applying for CESR/CEGPR certification, access to their relevant College e-portfolio to record and match competence against a curriculum is essential. There is variation in how different Colleges allow SAS doctors to access their e-portfolios, some easier than others.

Access to e-portfolios is also useful for doctors collecting evidence for appraisal and revalidation.

Some SAS doctors may choose to re-enter training via a formal national training programme. Currently the ease of stepping in and out of a training programme depends on individual College policy regarding access to the e-portfolio to gain recognition for their experience and competence while out of training. This pathway needs streamlining with more uniformity, ease of access and better facilitation.

The Academy SAS Committee obtained data via SAS College leads about Colleges' criteria and policies governing access to e-portfolios. The information was obtained through asking the following questions:

1. Does your College give access to its e-portfolio for doctors not in training posts?
2. If yes, what are the requirement criteria?
3. Do SAS doctors need to be members to access your e-portfolio?
4. If yes, is the membership cost the same as for trainees?

The responses are featured below:



SAS access to College e-portfolios

College	Access for doctors not in official training posts	Requirement	Comment	Do SAS doctors need to be members to access the e-portfolio?	Is the cost of e-portfolio or membership same as for trainees?
Colleges of Physicians [Royal College of Physicians London, Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeon Glasgow] Managed through Joint Royal College of Physicians Training Board	Yes Access to SAS and Trust grade doctors, details are at: https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/eportfolio-information/accessing-eportfolio	Annual Fee		No The e-portfolio is available irrespective of whether the doctor is a member or non-member of any of the physician Colleges.	Yes The cost is the same whether a member or trainee or SAS/LED.
Colleges of Surgeons [Royal College of Surgeons of England, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeon Glasgow] Managed through Joint Committee for Surgical Training	Yes Open to all via: https://www.iscp.ac.uk/home/contactus.aspx	Annual Fee	Registration no longer requires SAS or LED surgeon to contact helpdesk for workaround. Further modifications to the format are being made to reflect that SAS doctors do not have educational supervisors. RCSEd surgical eLogbook open to all and free.	No Doctors do not need to be members of any surgical college. It is an intercollegiate portfolio accessible to all trainees and SAS doctors.	Yes The cost of the portfolio is same as for trainees. It is a non-profit portfolio and the cost is to cover administrative costs.
Royal College of Ophthalmologists	Yes	Becoming College Affiliate Member	Slightly reduced functionality.		



Royal College of Radiologists	Yes	College membership	For associated health professionals such as breast clinician or a nuclear medicine physician with specialist registration with GMC the membership fee is slightly less than for trainees.	Yes	Yes SAS doctors have access to either Associate Member status (with a subscription comparable to trainees) or Member status (with a higher fee than trainees) depending on qualifications in our specialties.
Royal College of Emergency Medicine	Yes Also for Physician Associates, ACPs	Associate membership or fee			
Royal College of Psychiatrists	Yes To support SAS CESR applications	College membership	Functionality being improved this year.		
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health	Yes	Appropriate College membership	You have to be a College member to have access to e-portfolio and both the trainees and SAS doctors have to request access. Trainees pay slightly more which pays towards their START (Similar to Exit) assessment whereas SAS doctors have to pay the full amount for the assessment. This assessment is compulsory for trainees and is not mandatory for CESR applicants.	Yes	Yes RCPCH charges an annual fee which is common to both trainees and SAS and is not dependent on type of membership.



Royal College of Anaesthetists	Yes Open to all	College membership	https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/membership/become-member/membership-categories-subscriptions	Yes	No Trainees are heavily subsidised by all other members, but associate members and members (which essentially applies to most SAS) pay less than Fellows.
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist	Yes	Fee for either Associate membership or pre-membership to access e-portfolio.	Full membership fees same for all doctors with MRCOG. Associate Membership option available for those that are not trainees and don't have MRCOG.	No Full membership is not required	No Minimal cost to non-trainees
Royal College of Pathologists	No They do have access to CPD for annual fee				
Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive and Healthcare	No Currently procuring new system with plan for SAS members to have access to CPD but not to e-portfolio		An exception was made for one SAS doctor who was given access to e-portfolio for CESR application.		
Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine	No Currently procuring new system				
Faculty of Occupational Medicine	No Under consideration				
Faculty of Dental Surgery	Yes Open to all via, https://www.iscp.ac.uk/home/contactus.aspx	Annual Fee		No	Yes



Discussion

The Colleges where SAS doctors have access to education portfolios have been highlighted in the table.

The data table suggests that in most Colleges SAS doctors have access to the e-portfolio. However, the policy, requirement criteria and the level of access vary between Colleges. Some Colleges have a membership requirement with a fee structure either equivalent to consultants or trainees or a separate non-trainee associate membership category. The ease of access is also variable between different Colleges. Lack of e-portfolio access may be due to practical issues such as costs to extend the licensing agreement.

A few Colleges still do not have policies in place to provide access to education e-portfolios for SAS doctors. Some of them are working on it. Colleges such as the physician and surgical Colleges, RCOG and FDS do not have membership requirements and provide easy access.

Actions

College SAS leads should circulate this report to individual Colleges to work with them towards:

- All Colleges having SAS access to e-portfolios
- Making the process and access policy simplistic, standardised and uniform
- Guidance and mentoring being made available from individual Colleges for SAS doctors going through CESR application and those returning to training

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