



Royal College of Surgeons England Educational Bursaries 2026

Instructions, Eligibility, Application Guidance, FAQs, Terms and Conditions

Thanks to generous contributions from our donors, including Margaret Witt, Alban Barros D'Sa, and the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers, we are able to offer a range of educational bursaries every year.

Please ensure you read this document in full.

Instructions

1. Complete the form as accurately and concisely as possible.
2. Make sure all sections have been completed.
3. Due to the volume of applications we receive we are unable to provide individual feedback.
4. We aim to inform applicants of the results the week commencing **13 April 2026**.
5. The application is submitted via Microsoft Forms, please note that the application cannot be saved halfway through. We encourage you to plan your application in a separate document and paste responses into the form.

Eligibility criteria

In order to apply, you must:

- be a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, **and**
- have completed at least 1 full year of post-graduate clinical work within a hospital environment (including FY2-ST8, SAS surgeons and LEDs)
- meet the participant eligibility requirements for the selected course

People who are on a consultant contract (or equivalent), fellows and surgical team members are not eligible to apply for an educational bursary due to the conditions of the bursary donations.

Application guidance

There are five sections within the Clinical Criteria on the application form; one for your personal statement and one each for the four domains you need to cover. You should group your achievements according to the most relevant domain and avoid repetition.

The following paragraphs explain what you **could** include in each box. You may also choose to refer to the Generic Professional Capabilities Framework.

1. Personal statement (max 150 words): please explain why you wish to attend your chosen course and the benefits it would bring to your professional development and patient safety.

2. Leadership and team working (max 100 words): give evidence of how you have made a personal contribution to leadership and management. This does not have to be restricted to your surgical work and can be demonstrated with non-medical activities. Please feel free to provide evidence of 'distributed leadership'. If you list particular roles in your application, describe the impact that you have had in these roles. We recognise many different aspects of leadership which could include but are not limited to:

- evidence of positive outcomes as a result of effective leadership inputs and processes
- improvements to service effectiveness, productivity or efficiency for the benefit of patients, the public or staff
- development of individuals or a team. You should give specific examples (e.g. of mentoring or coaching)
- demonstrating your contribution to removing barriers and positively promoting diversity in the workplace or in non-medical activities
- working across organisational or professional boundaries
- membership of a committee along with evidence of outcomes and your role in these
- excellence in team leadership for which you take sole, rotational or shared responsibility
- qualifications in leadership / management



3. Teaching, training and education (max 100 words): for some applicants, teaching, training and education will form a major part of their contribution to the NHS. If applicable you may list key educational papers that you have published.

Examples could be:

- acting as faculty on RCS courses
- leadership and innovation in teaching
- authorship of teaching media
- contributions to postgraduate education and lifelong learning
- contributions to teaching in other UK centres or abroad
- developing innovative training methods
- presentations
- invitations to lecture
- teaching and education of the public, eg health promotion and disease prevention
- evidence of personal commitment to developing teaching skills, such as a Certificate in Education
- academic qualifications in education, e.g. MEd

4. Research and scholarship (max 100 words): outline your contribution to research and how you have supported innovation including quality improvement. If applicable you may list key papers that you have published. Areas covered could include:

- actual or potential impact of your research, including its relevance to the health of patients and the public
- new techniques or service models that you have developed and which have been adopted by others
- how you have encouraged the systematic uptake of innovation to improve the quality of patient care
- membership of research groups
- grants that you hold
- peer-reviewed publications, chapters or books written or edited (please indicate editorial activity)
- academic qualifications in basic science or clinical research

Applicants must exceed the pass-mark for the clinical criteria in order for the values-based question to be considered.

Assessed question

Applicants will be assessed on the following question in addition to their personal statement.

What potential conflicts of interest is a surgeon in training likely to encounter – and how do you deal with them? (max 500 words)

Applicants who declare a primary carer role will receive additional points in recognition of the time that this requires and takes them away from their clinical development.

Frequently asked questions

How and when will I hear if I have been successful?

Following the closing date, applications will be reviewed against eligibility criteria, anonymised and sent to a judging panel. Notification will be sent by email within a month after the closing date.

Can I use the educational bursary for courses at a regional centre?

This educational bursary can only be used for courses administered directly by RCS England (including digital products) and not regional centres.

Can I use the educational bursary on any RCS England course?

The bursary is only valid for specific eligible courses managed by RCS England, subject to meeting course specific eligibility criteria. Applicants for the bursary award must apply for a course they are eligible for either at the time of their bursary application or within the specified bursary timeframe (June 2026 - June 2027)
If a course is chosen that you are not eligible for then your application will not be considered.

Can I use the rest of the educational bursary for a second course?

The bursary is for a single course. Any remaining funds are not carried over or usable for another course..

Can I use the rest of the educational bursary for travel and accommodation?



Unused funds can be claimed for travel or accommodation expenses, subject to certain restrictions and submission of an expense claim form after the course. Please note that we are not able to cover international travel expenses.

My educational bursary does not cover the whole of my course fees; what should I do?

You will be required to cover any remaining fees. You will not have your place confirmed on the course until any balance has been paid, so this should be done as soon as possible to avoid losing your course place.

The course I want to go on is only running before the closing date for the educational bursary; can I still apply?

No, the educational bursary can only be used on new course bookings made after the educational bursary has been given. It cannot be used to refund bookings already made or courses attended previously.

The course I want to go on is already fully booked; can I go on the next one?

If your nominated course is already fully booked by the time of awarding, you must inform us within two weeks if you would like to hold the educational bursary until the next time the course runs (given that this will be within one year) or if you would like to nominate a different course from the same portfolio. If your chosen course will not be running within one year of the awarding you will need to choose a different course.

My chosen course has been cancelled; can I use my educational bursary for an alternative course in the same academic year?

If your nominated course is cancelled, you will have to choose a different course date within two weeks of notification that your course has been cancelled. Alternatively, you will also be permitted to choose a different course from the list, as long as you meet the eligibility requirements. Failure to notify us within two weeks may result in your educational bursary being forfeited.

I no longer wish to attend the course I specified on my application; can I switch to a different one?

If you change your mind and wish to attend a different course, **you must let us know within 2 weeks** of the awarding of the educational bursary. We will try but cannot guarantee to accommodate your request. You can only change courses once: if you change and then cannot attend the new course you will lose your educational bursary. You will not be allowed to change your course if it is scheduled to happen within one month of your request to change. Please note that some of the awards are linked to specific courses e.g. upper GI and these criteria must be maintained if you wish to change course.

I am no longer able to attend the course I'm booked on to, what should I do?

Educational bursaries are subject to our standard cancellation policy. If you can no longer attend and you inform us in good time, ie **greater than one month** before the start date of the course – we will book you on to the next available date or, if that is not possible, a suitable alternative. However, if you inform us **within** one month of the start date of the course you will forfeit your educational bursary unless in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the RCS England.

How long do I have to use my educational bursary?

It should be used between **June 2026 - June 2027**. If an educational bursary is not used within this timeframe, it will be withdrawn by the RCS England.

How will the educational bursary be paid?

The bursary is paid directly to RCS England for the chosen course; recipients do not receive the funds.

Terms and conditions

Bursary Award Criteria

Margaret Witt Scholarship Fund: Be RCS Member, hold a NTN or be a SAS doctor/LAT/CT.

The Worshipful Company of Needlemakers: Be a member, fellow or affiliate of RCS and be in stages CT1-2 or ST1-2 or SAS/LED.

Alban Barros D'Sa: Be RCS member and at FY2, CT1-2, ST3-8 and hold NTN or be SAS doctor.

Course Eligibility

Specifies eligible courses at the Bjorn Saven Centre or PGCert in Surgery e-learning modules, highlighting administration and payment processes.

Course Booking

Clarifies that the bursary is applicable only to new course bookings made after the bursary award and cannot be used for refunds or previously attended courses.

Single Course Use

Emphasises that the bursary can be used for a single course only and cannot be split among multiple courses.

Bursary Duration

Indicates the timeframe for bursary utilisation (June 2026 - June 2027) and withdrawal if not utilised within this period.

Cancellation Policy

Outlines cancellation policies concerning forfeiting the bursary based on the timeframe of cancellation and discretion of RCS England in exceptional circumstances.

Fully Booked Courses

Specifies actions to be taken if a nominated course is fully booked, including options and timeframes for alternate course selection.

Course Change Requests

Details conditions for changing the nominated course and the limitations on changing courses, emphasising a one-time change and associated restrictions.

Course Cancellations

Provides guidance on actions to be taken if the nominated course is cancelled, including timeframes for alternative course selection.

Previous Winners' Eligibility

States that previous bursary winners are ineligible to apply for the fund again.