



ADVANCING SURGICAL STANDARDS

Registered Charity Number: 212808

SAS Terminology

Position Statement

1. The SAS (Staff Grade, Associate Specialist and Specialty Doctor) Committee at the Royal College of Surgeons of England recognises that the term “SAS” formally refers to Staff Grades, Associate Specialists and Specialty Doctors but has increasingly come to be used to encompass many other non-standard grades.
2. This growing group of “other” grades comprises surgeons working in the NHS who are not in the training grades and whose posts do not require their names to be on the Specialist Register.
3. There are nearly half as many of these SAS grade doctors and doctors working on temporary or short term contracts as there are consultants in acute Trusts¹.
4. The College’s SAS committee works to represent all of these surgeons.
5. The variety of terms used to refer to doctors can be confusing to patients. Titles given to roles need to be clear and unambiguous if they are to be meaningful for patients. Standardisation of titles and clear, unambiguous roles are needed².
6. Likewise, the variety of titles and contractual arrangements adds to confusion over the status of a particular doctor in relation to her/ his entitlement to CPD funding etc.
7. The SAS committee recognises the growing number of non-standard grades.
8. All doctors require structured professional support (CPD, appraisal, revalidation etc.) and the committee encourages trusts, LETBs and deaneries to provide this.
9. The committee encourages trusts to appoint doctors to formal Speciality Doctor posts with standard contracts and to move employees to such contracts where they are currently in non-standard posts.

¹ NHS Revalidation support (2013) Organisational Readiness Self- Assessment (ORSA) Report
http://www.revalidationsupport.nhs.uk/CubeCore/.uploads/documents/pdf/ORSA_201213_report.pdf

² Royal College of Surgeons Patient Liaison Group Response to the General Medical Council’s (GMC) Shape of Training Review, 2013
http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/patients/docs/copy_of_PLGresponsetoGMCSshapeofTrainingReviewfinal.pdf