

NHS Scotland Academy Framework

About NHS Scotland Academy

NHS Scotland Academy (NHSSA) was established in October 2021 with a vision to create and provide innovative, world class education and training that delivers a national accelerated approach to NHS Scotland workforce priorities.

NHSSA's Big Idea is to provoke a collaborative approach to education and training to make a positive impact on the workforce, patients and users of NHS Scotland and Social Care within Scotland.

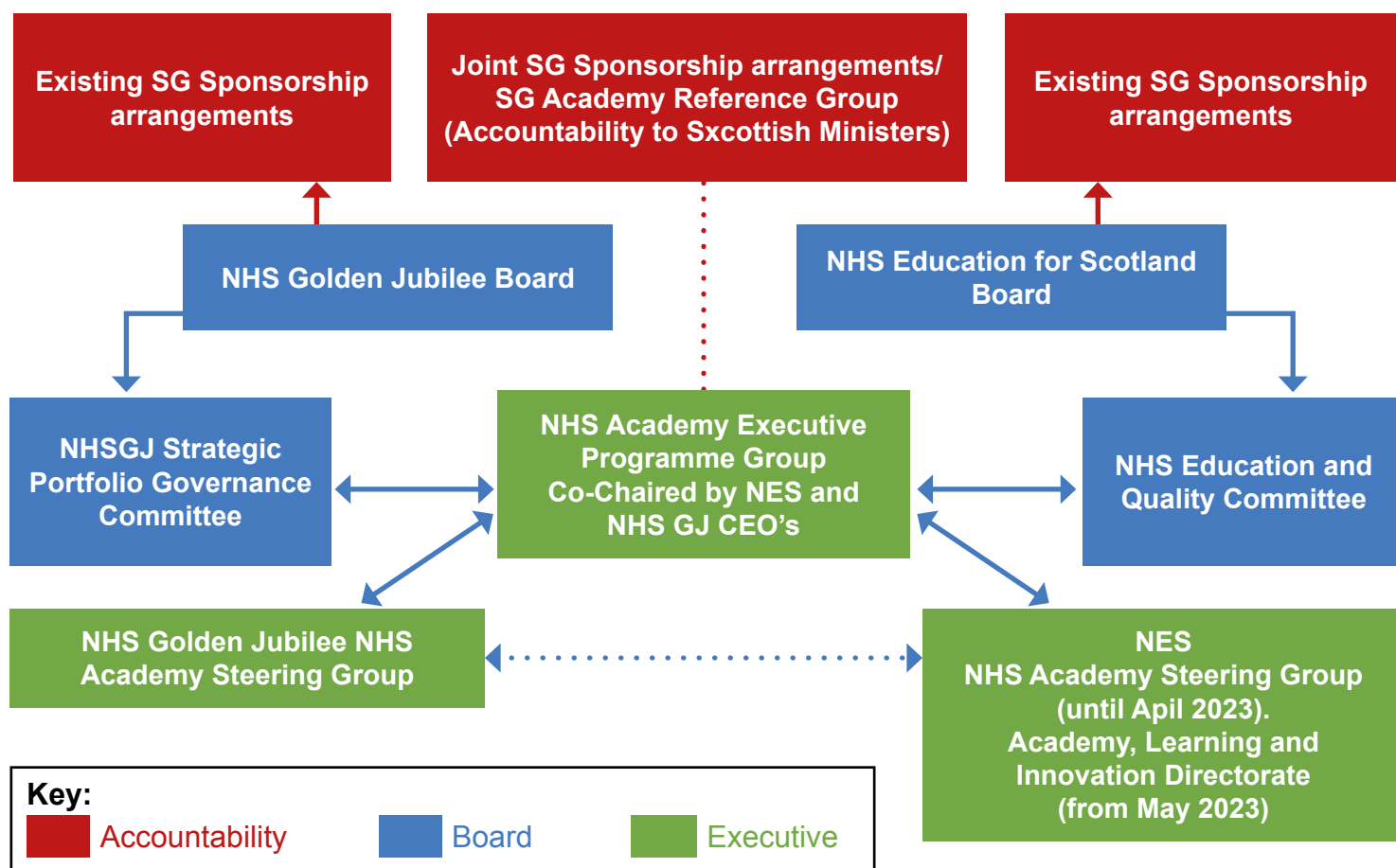
NHSSA does not duplicate or compete with existing work, but fills in gaps, working with partners who are already established in any space, pulling people together and creatively exploring solutions to wicked issues. Where possible, NHSSA provokes a collaborative approach that does not require NHSSA to develop and deliver training, but where other public bodies are not able to, NHSSA steps in as content creator and training provider.

NHSSA is built on four pillars of Collaboration, Excellence, Ambition, and Integrity. Our personality is that we are Straightforward, Friendly, Imaginative, and Confident.

Governance

NHSSA is a partnership between NHS Golden Jubilee University Hospital and NHS Education for Scotland, and operates within the standing orders of the parent Boards. NHSSA is supported by finance, HR, and governance functions in each Board.

For efficiency, some processes including delivery planning, project management, and risk and opportunity processes are managed using an NHSSA approach.



NHSSA approach to Delivery Planning

An NHSSA Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) is managed as an appendix to both parent Board delivery plans, and incorporates a deliverable that allows for new workstreams to be explored and developed in-year. New programmes are added to the ADP after being developed through our robust initiation processes and after funding has been secured.

Our current ADP is available from the NHSSA Senior Leadership Team, or from our SG Sponsorship team.

In addition to delivery planning, NHSSA reports across all projects including those at the exploration stage to our Executive Programme Group, which meets every second month. The most recent report is available on request from: NHSScotlandAcademy@nhs.scot

Commissioning Process for new workstreams

NHSSA is funded to enable exploration of some of the tricky issues facing the health and social care workforce. We generally have 7-10 workstreams in the exploration stage at any time. The exploration stage has a number of steps – outlined in the NHSSA Initiation Process for new workstreams flowchart.

If it is not appropriate for NHSSA to develop an accelerated solution, the workstream will be passed to the relevant body or institution to take it forward, this could happen at any point of the exploration process. We collaborate with stakeholders throughout health and social care, tertiary education and regulators and professional bodies, along with co-creators, throughout the exploration process.

Policy teams are welcome to initiate discussions with NHSSA – NHSScotlandAcademy@nhs.scot directly on potential new workstreams. When in the process of formally approving commissions by NHSSA policy colleagues should contact the SG Sponsor Team – NESSponsorship@gov.scot for the official guidance.



Funding

NHSSA is funded by Scottish Government, with a recurring allocation to support the core programme team, and additional allocations for programme funding for a number of workstreams in workforce priorities. Individual projects are funded by a number of policy teams, with business cases developed in collaboration during the initiation process. All SG allocations should be directed via the NHSSA Sponsorship team, contactable at: **NESSponsorship@gov.scot**

In addition to direct funding, some projects are funded by partners including universities, professional organisations and societies. All workstreams, regardless of funding, are discussed with and approved by our SG sponsors as part of the commissioning process.

The Accountable Officers for the NHSSA budget are the two Chief Executives of the partner boards, with operational responsibility sitting with the NHSSA Director, Associate Director and Head of Programmes (Education).

The NHSSA Executive Programme Group (EPG) provides the mechanism for governance of the NHSSA within each Board. The EPG meets every second month and a standing item on the meeting agenda is a financial update, presented alternately by the DoF of each partner board.

The types of programmes NHSSA delivers

NHSSA reached our fourth birthday in October 2025. NHSSA is a creative team from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, and we have quality standards in place for the design, delivery and improvement of all our programmes. Within these standards, there are no limits to the solutions we explore, develop and deliver. This is sometimes a small, specific intervention to support delivery of an optimal patient pathway, or it is an accredited, externally validated full training programme, or it is immersion to allow the acceleration of skills and support for more people to practice independently.

We have programmes supporting people development in roles at all career stages - from career level 2 to post-CCT skill acquisition. We use a mix of face to face, digital, synchronous and asynchronous delivery, intensive simulation experiences, local supervision and assessment – unique solutions are required to meet each issue we consider.



At October 2025, our current project portfolio is:

National Endoscopy Training Programme (NETP)

- To deliver high-quality training to national (JAG) standards in colonoscopy and upper GI, enabling services to be developed using a whole-team approach to reduce waiting lists and wait times.



Bronchoscopy Training Programme

- To deliver training to Resident doctors in basic bronchoscopy, and Residents, SAS grades and consultants in endobronchial ultrasound and transbronchial needle aspiration of mediastinal lymph nodes (to improve lung cancer staging).



Anaesthetic Practitioners

- To develop the perioperative workforce by delivering an accelerated anaesthetic practitioner programme, focusing on high impact, low volume NES competencies for Band 5 RNs delivered via a workshop programme over 26 weeks.



National Clinical Skills for Pharmacists Programme

- Equipping pharmacists who have completed their independent prescribing qualification with the clinical skills and confidence to begin prescribing, reducing pressure on GP services.



Foundations of Perioperative Practice

- To deliver the workforce for National Treatment Centres by delivering an accelerated training programme, over 31 weeks, to enable band 5 RNs to work in perioperative settings.



NMC OSCE Preparation

- Supporting Boards who have recruited nurses from outside the UK, by helping with preparation for NMC OSCEs. This will help the nurses to gain registration so they can practice independently as quickly as possible.



Biomedical Scientist portfolios

- An accelerated training pathway for BSc graduates to complete practical elements of the training portfolio and achieve registration faster.



High-Volume Cataract Training

- Supporting implementation of the HVCS blueprint by providing digital learning resources for specific skills (draping, marking, consent) for registered and non-registered staff.



National Ultrasound Training Programme

- Increase Ultrasound capacity in NHS Scotland by supporting Boards to train ultrasonographers and doctors in training, in general medical US and some specialties.



National Assistant Practitioner (Endoscopy) Programme and RN (Endoscopy) Programme

- To deliver accelerated training for HCSW's currently working at career level 2 or 3, equipping them to function at career level 4.
- Supporting RNs new to endoscopy practice to gain the skills and confidence necessary for their role. These RNs join the AP (Endoscopy) programme as an interprofessional group.



Assistant Practitioner Perioperative Practice

- Accelerated training for HCSW's working at career level 2/3, equipping them to function at career level 4 in perioperative practice. A 12-month accelerated SCQ pathway delivered alongside the Foundations of Perioperative Practice to support interprofessional working, improved teamwork and collaboration.



Surgical First Assistants

- An SCQF level 10 accelerated learning programme to develop registered perioperative practitioners (career level 5/6 RNs and ODPs) into SFAs, to increase capacity and capability of surgical teams across Scotland.



Decontamination

- Accelerated online education and training programme for Band 2-4 Health Care Scientists employed in Central Decontamination Units (CDU).



Ear care

- Accelerated micro-suctioning ear care training for registered nurses working in Primary and Acute Care. From February 2026.



Cataract surgery immersive training

- Limited number of 6 month immersion placements for senior Residents in NHS GJ and NHS Highland. From February 2026.



Areas under exploration

- Echocardiography
- Breathing Pattern Disorder
- Assessment of swallow



NHS Scotland Academy Portfolio: Completed Projects

Skills and Simulation Centre

- The build of a bespoke space in which to run Academy programmes. Kitted out as a simulated theatre but flexible for multi-use. Completed January 2024. Cost £966K.



Youth Academy pathway pilot

- Co-creation with skills Development Scotland of an NHS Pathway Pilot as a proof of concept. Completed by 23 senior phase school pupils across Scotland. Cost £400K. Youth Academy passed to NES July 2024.



Preparation for roles in Health and Social care

- Developed to support recruitment winter pressures 2021. Ran for 3 years. With 16,858 learners (10 modules). Cost £180K. Passed to NES to run from October 2025.



Cultural Humility

- An online digital resource to support the development of culturally humble values and behaviours across the health and social care workforce. Ran for 18 months. With 3,752 learners. Cost £138K. Passed to NES to run from October 2025.



NHSSA approach to Risk

The partnership between the two Boards enables NHSSA to operate with a more open appetite than either Board alone as NHSSA was created to explore new ways of working, and the learning that we gain from trying and testing new approaches.

The risk appetite adopted by the NHSSA is:

Category	Low														High
	Averse			Minimal			Cautious			Open			Eager		
Financial sustainability			<				>								
Compliance (laws, regulation, codes)	<		>												
Reputation of NHSSA			<							>					
Infrastructure		<						>							
Piloting new technologies for learning									<						>
Embedding new technologies for learning							<					>			
Routine use of new technologies for learning		<				>									
First run of a new programme								<					>		
Second and subsequent runs of a programme					<				>						
Partnership with industry							<					>			
Partnership with publically funded bodies				<						>					
Partnership with third sector bodies				<							>				

Risks, issues and opportunities are actively managed and change processes are in place, along with cycles of continuous improvement and annual review of programmes. NHSSA uses best practice from the 'Orange book', the 3 lines model, and standardised project documentation to capture and review risks, issues and opportunities.



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