

**Príomhoifigeach Daoine**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí
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Mr. Séamus McGrath, TD

13 May 2025

PQ 19630/25 (Health) - To ask the Minister for Health to engage with the HSE on the pause in recruitment for positions of physician associate: the number of students the HSE funded to partake in a qualifying course; and the amount of funding spent on students who have not yet taken up employment, due to the pause in recruitment. -Séamus McGrath

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

In response to your PQs referenced above, I can confirm since July 2024 the HSE has paused the recruitment for physician associate grade pending the outcome of an independent review. This review will examine the role of Physician Associates and make recommendations regarding the governance of the role, scope of practice and appropriate deployment within Ireland.

In relation to the number of Physician Assistants / Associates the HSE funded the MSc Physician Associate Studies, RCSI End of Year Report 2024 includes the following table below –

Table 1: HSE funding support

Student intake year	Year	Funding by HSE	Contribution by student	No. of Students funded	Available to work in Health Service
2024	First	€22,000	€1,000/annum	30	Jan 2026
2023	Second	€11,000	€1,000	13	Jan 2025

Finally, the amount of funding spent on students who have not yet taken up employment due to the current recruitment pause is 6 which comes at a cost of 66K in total. The remaining sponsored students are still in training and are not currently available for work.

I trust this response is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mairéad Ryan
National HR