Entry requirements and training (paramedic)

This page has information on entry requirements and training needed to become a paramedic. There is also information on the financial support available for those studying at university.

To practise as a paramedic, you must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC[1]). To register with the HCPC[1], you first need to successfully complete an approved qualification in paramedic science.

There are different routes to studying and qualifying as a paramedic. You can:

- take a full-time approved qualification in paramedic science (e.g. at a university) and then apply to an ambulance service as a qualified paramedic
- become a student paramedic with an ambulance service and study while you work
- apply for a degree standard apprenticeship in paramedic science with an ambulance service trust.

University

This is still the most common route to becoming a paramedic. Courses are offered by universities across the country.

For the undergraduate degree, you need:

- two or three A levels, including a science, along with five GCSEs (grades 9-4/A-C), including English language, maths and science

or one of:

Each university sets its own entry requirements, so it’s important to check carefully.

- BTEC, HND or HNC which includes science subjects
- relevant NVQ
- science- or health-based access course
- equivalent level Scottish or Irish qualifications
Each university sets its own entry requirements, so it's important to check carefully. As well as checking the academic entry requirements, it is also important to check the driving licence requirements. Some universities will want you to have at least a provisional licence.

Wherever you study, you will need to show that you have an understanding of the work of a paramedic. It is a good idea to spend some time with an ambulance service.

Courses are usually three years full time. They include a mixture of theory and practical work including placements with ambulance services. It will help to have some relevant experience in healthcare or first aid, either voluntary or paid.

- Find paramedic science courses on our course finder [2]

**Financial support**

You'll be entitled to received at least £5,000 a year towards funding your studies while at university. Depending on your personal circumstances, you might be entitled to more.

- Find out more about financial support while at university. [3]

**Student paramedic route**

Only a few ambulance trusts now offer this option and each will set its own entry requirements. They usually ask for:

- at least five GCSEs, grade 4/C or above, including English, maths and science

  or

- equivalent academic qualification with a high level of health or science content

Bear in mind that entry to student paramedic schemes is very competitive and many applicants have higher qualifications.

Employers also look for:

- a good level of physical fitness
- two years' driving experience

Most student paramedic schemes usually recruit once or twice a year. The recruitment process often involves several stages including an assessment centre which might include:

- interviews
- English and maths tests
- problem solving tasks
- a fitness assessment
- a practical driving task
Degree apprenticeship in paramedic science

To get onto a degree apprenticeship, you'll need to apply for an apprentice position with an ambulance service trust. Numbers are currently small but you can search for vacancies on the NHS Jobs website [4] and Find an Apprenticeship website [5].

You are likely to need some relevant experience, either voluntary or paid. For example, working as an emergency care assistant or volunteering with St John Ambulance or the British Red Cross.

Driving licence

When applying to an ambulance service trust as a student paramedic or once you are fully qualified, you'll be expected you to have a full, manual driving licence. If you passed your test after 1996, you may need an extra driving qualification to drive larger vehicles and carry passengers. Ambulance service trusts use vehicles of different sizes, so check carefully which classifications you need on your licence.

Want to learn more?

- Find paramedic science courses on our course finder [2]
- Search for student paramedic vacancies on the NHS Jobs website [4]
- Search for apprenticeship vacancies on the NHS Jobs website [4] and Find an Apprenticeship website [5].

A paramedic needs to be:

- able to understand a situation quickly
- calm in stressful situations
- confident and reassuring
- resilient in dealing with other people’s strong emotions
- able to follow procedures
- able to work quickly and carefully
- able to work alone or in a team
- prepared to go into unknown or unpredictable situations
A paramedic needs:

- good communication skills
- good listening skills
- excellent driving skills
- organisational skills
- to be able to use equipment and machinery

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/paramedic/entry-requirements-and-training-paramedic

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC
[2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/course-finder?field_leading_to_a_career_in_tid=161&amp;field_qualification_type_tid=All&amp;field_study_mode_tid=All&amp;