

Entry requirements and training (paramedic)

This page has information on entry requirements and training needed to become a paramedic.

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

or

- apply for a degree standard apprenticeship in paramedic science with an ambulance service trust

Full-time route

These are offered by a number of universities and a few other providers.

For a diploma, foundation degree or degree, you need:

The trust will expect you to have a full, manual driving licence when you apply

- two or three A levels, including a science, along with five GCSEs ([grades A-C](#) [2]), including English language, maths and science

or one of:

- BTEC, HND or HNC which includes science subjects
- relevant NVQ
- science- or health-based access course

- equivalent level Scottish or Irish qualifications

You may also be expected to have some relevant experience in healthcare or first aid, either voluntary or paid.

Each university sets its own entry requirements, so it's important to check carefully. 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 take between two and four 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.

Student paramedic route

Ambulance services set their own entry requirements for student paramedics. They usually ask for:

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

or

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

You should bear in mind, though, that entry to student paramedic schemes is very competitive. Many applicants have higher qualifications.

Employers also look for:

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

Most student paramedic schemes only recruit from time to time (once a year or every two years). The recruitment process often involves several stages. You may be asked to attend 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

A degree apprenticeship standard in paramedic science has been approved. To get onto a degree apprenticeship, you will need to apply for an apprentice position with a health care provider. You can search for vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) [3] and [Find an Apprenticeship website](#) [4].

Whether you are applying for a full-time course, student paramedic position or degree apprenticeship, you are likely to need to have 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.

Also, when applying to an ambulance service trust as a student paramedic or once you are fully qualified, the trust will expect you to have a full, manual driving licence when you apply. 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.

Once you've successfully completed a programme approved by the [HCPC](#) [1], you are then eligible to apply for registration with the [HCPC](#) [1]. Once registered as a practitioner, you'll be required to retain your name on the register by keeping your knowledge and skills up to date and paying an annual retention fee.

Want to learn more?

- [Find paramedic science courses on our course finder.](#) [5]
- Search for student paramedic vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) [3]
- Search for apprenticeship vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) [3] and [Find an Apprenticeship website](#) [4].

- Personal characteristics Expand / Collapse
A paramedic needs to be:

Paramedics need 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

- Skills required Expand / Collapse
A paramedic needs:

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

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC>

[2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Grades_A-C

[3] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>

[4] <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

[5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course>