COLLEGE OF paramedics leading the development of the paramedic profession

POST REGISTRATION – PARAMEDIC CAREER FRAMEWORK 4th Edition
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Foreword

Since the College of Paramedics published the 3rd edition of the Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework\(^1\) in 2015, considerable progress has been made throughout the UK regarding the continuing development of paramedics in all four pillars of the paramedic career framework. The first edition of the digital paramedic career framework was published in 2016 and includes appropriate case studies. In 2017 the College published the Paramedic Post-Graduate Curriculum Guidance\(^2\) and reviewed, updated and published the 2nd edition of the digital paramedic career framework, this is available at https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/downloads/DigitalCareerFramework2017v2.pdf

A career framework diagram was created for the 2015 Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework\(^1\) 3rd edition, and is recognised by many national stakeholders, including The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE), The Council of Deans of Health (CoDH), The Department of Health, Northern Ireland (DH, NI), The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), Health Education England (HEE), NHS England (NHSE), NHS Education Scotland (NES), The Workforce, Education and Development Services (WEDS), and Royal Colleges. With ongoing development and changes in the profession this next edition of the career framework will include the next iteration of this well received diagram.

Paramedics continue to develop along the leadership and management, education, research and development, and clinical practice pathways, the latter with opportunities in primary, urgent, emergency, and critical care. The College of Paramedics as the professional body for UK Paramedics reiterates its commitment to “leading the development of the paramedic profession”; this publication is one of many key elements in delivering this commitment.

Graham Harris FCPara
National Education Lead
The College of Paramedics
June 2018
Introduction

Since the publication of the third edition of the Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework, the College of Paramedics (herein known as the College) has undertaken and made considerable progress regarding the continuing development of the profession. These activities individually and collectively, have been instrumental in furthering post registration career opportunities for members of the paramedic profession. The following illustrations specifically apply: Paramedic Post-Graduate Curriculum Guidance, Practice Educator Guidance Handbook, and positive application to The Commission on Human Medicines for paramedics to become Independent Prescribers (see Section D). In 2018 the HCPC published the recommendations following the consultation on the review of SET 1 on the threshold level for paramedic entry to the Register. The recommendation is for BSc (Hons) degree level entry. The timescale for this process is mapped below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time scale</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th September 2017</td>
<td>The HCPC Education and Training Committee (ETC) agreed and recommended to Council the text of a draft public consultation to review SET 1 the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September – December 2017</td>
<td>The public consultation process took place between 25th September 2017 to 15th December 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st March 2018</td>
<td>The HCPC ETC, published their executive summary and recommendations on the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register. ‘Bachelor degree with honours for: … paramedics’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st March 2018</td>
<td>The HCPC Council ratified the decision to change SET 1 on the threshold level for paramedic entry to the Register. ‘Bachelor degree with honours for: … paramedics’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd March 2018</td>
<td>The HCPC will not accept any new applications for approval of paramedic programmes that are delivered at below degree level (level 6/9/10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st September 2021</td>
<td>The HCPC will withdraw approval from existing programmes delivered below the new threshold level. They will not be able to take on any new cohorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 2023</td>
<td>Final set of students eligible to apply for registration with a threshold award less than BSc (Honours) degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 2024</td>
<td>All potential registrants eligible to apply to the HCPC register will have completed a BSc (Honours) degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The College has long held the view that the threshold level for entry to the Register should be a BSc (Hons) degree. This view has been strengthened substantially as the workload of paramedics has involved increasing proportions of primary, urgent and unscheduled care for which complex decisions would be made independently. This document focuses on the post registration career opportunities for paramedics.

### A2 Background

The past decade has seen the transition into higher education as the main pathway into the paramedic profession. During this period, paramedics have further developed their knowledge and clinical expertise to be capable and competent in providing care in a wide range of primary, urgent, unscheduled, emergency and critical care settings. Particular emphasis being placed on their diagnostic abilities, in particular differential diagnosis, enhanced patient assessment skills, critical decision-making, and clinical reasoning skills, in treating and managing service users and patients safely. Paramedics provide definitive care at the point of contact, or onward referral to appropriate specialist services to service users and patients who may present with a variety of needs, such as acute, chronic and/or long-term conditions, minor illness, or injury, mental health, obstetric, palliative, and end of life care (EoLC). The recognition of paramedics as members of a multi-professional workforce has become integral to developing the modern day health service. The NHS England 2015 *Transforming urgent and emergency care services in England: Safer, Faster, Better: good practice in delivering urgent and emergency care* publication advised that, care delivered by senior clinical decision makers, such as specialist or advanced paramedics can produce better clinical outcomes. More recently Health Education England (HEE) published the *Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England*, based upon the following frameworks, *Scottish Government: Supporting the Development of Advanced Nursing Practice*, and the *Framework for Advanced Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals in Wales*. These identify and explain that new ways of working and delivering healthcare necessitates that clinicians have the professional development they need to adapt to changing circumstances. As paramedic practice has evolved and developed both academically and clinically, the four pillars of advanced practice (*clinical practice, leadership & management, research & development and education*) have been introduced into the paramedic curriculum. These pillars are the basis of the career pathways available to paramedics, section B provides further insight into these, should individuals decide to develop their career through the opportunities provided by progressing through one or more particular pathway.
This fourth edition of the *Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework* has been prepared to provide service users, paramedics, employers, AACE, CoDH, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Care Quality Commission (CQC) or devolved nation equivalent, HCPC, HEE, NES, WEDS, NHS England, DH – NI, Patient Advisory Forums (PAF) and other key stakeholders. Information and advice concerning the four pillars of career pathways for paramedics throughout the UK represents an important contribution by the professional body. The document provides a structured process to guide individuals and employers in developing career pathways.

The document also provides direction regarding the educational requirements for the clinical practice pathway and describes the appropriate higher education descriptor levels for *UK Degree-Awarding Bodies*9,10 throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (see Section C). It also provides information concerning the other pillars of the *Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework*, including leadership & management, research & development and education. The professional body makes available the following streams which are applicable to paramedics continuing, personal and professional development.

**A 3.1 Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework Pillars & Diagram**

Clinical Practice:
*Paramedic, Specialist, Advanced and Consultant.*

Leadership & Management:
*Team Leader, Manager, Senior Manager, and Director.*

Research & Development:
*Research Paramedic, Research Fellow, Reader, and Professor.*

Education:
*Practice Educator, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Professor.*
A4 Education Qualifications and Roles

The College makes known that the attainment and achievement of the education qualifications referred to within the clinical pathway, does not entitle the award holder to adopt the title of; Specialist Paramedic, Advanced Paramedic, or Consultant Paramedic. These are roles that require the individual to be in a specific post with the corresponding title. Clinical roles require demonstration of competence and performance in practice, as well as educational attainment.

A 4.1 Post Registration – Paramedic Clinical Career Convention

Paramedics have extensively developed and expanded their scope of practice across the clinical pillar, with ongoing career and employment opportunities continuing. The
Clinical pathway of the Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework categorises the levels of Paramedic, Specialist Paramedic, Advanced Paramedic, and Consultant Paramedic, all of which are aligned to the Skills for Health – Key Elements of the Career Framework publication. These professional titles use a paramedic designation which is protected by law. An example where this does not occur is, Emergency Care Practitioner, which does not identify the profession of the clinician.

Paramedics who wish to develop and become a Specialist Paramedic should obtain sufficient evidence through education and proficiency to demonstrate a portfolio of post-graduate capability and competence. The achievement of this level of practice will require the attainment of the appropriate skills and clinical competence, through the undertaking and acquisition of a programme of education at FHEQ level 7 / SCQF level 11 post graduate diploma (PGDip). This may cover either primary, urgent, emergency, critical care or other subject curricula.

Specialist paramedics who wish to develop and become an Advanced Paramedic should obtain sufficient evidence through education and expertise to demonstrate a portfolio of post-graduate capability and competence. The achievement of this level of practice will require the attainment of the appropriate skills and clinical competence, through the undertaking and acquisition of a programme of education at FHEQ level 7 / SCQF level 11 Masters’ degree MSc. This may cover either primary, urgent, emergency medicine or critical care or other subject curricula.

Advanced practice is acknowledged on a UK national basis as that which requires the paramedic to have completed a relevant master's degree. Health professionals who practice at advanced level, have the capability to make sound judgements in the absence of full information and to manage varying levels of risk when there is complex, competing or ambiguous information or uncertainty. Advanced clinical practice is characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making, and encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, research and development, and education, with demonstration of core capabilities and area specific clinical competence.

Advanced paramedics who wish to develop and be eligible to apply for a position as a Consultant Paramedic should obtain sufficient evidence through education and expertise to demonstrate a portfolio of post-graduate expertise and competence. The achievement of this level of practice will require the attainment of the appropriate skills and clinical competence, and the undertaking and acquisition of a Doctorate programme of education at FHEQ level 8 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland / SCQF level 12 in Scotland in a subject relevant to their practice.

The College believes that all future consultant paramedics should lead on areas such as the key themes identified in the respective allied health professional documents.
Core responsibilities may include the organisational development role in areas of new and innovative clinical practice as well as ensuring that current research findings are used by all staff to inform their practice. The key responsibility for a Consultant Paramedic is to make significant and original contributions to the profession and engaging in critical dialogue with peers. There is a strong element of research within the role, whether working clinically, in education, management or academia. Working at strategic or executive level, they apply a highly developed theoretical and practical knowledge over a wide range of clinical, scientific, technical and/or management functions. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment as a Consultant Paramedic may require the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional, clinical or equivalent environments.

The College of Paramedics has a consultant paramedic group that leads on areas of specialty within paramedic practice, and health care provision.

### A 4.2 Post Registration – Paramedic Clinical Career Education Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paramedic Title</th>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Assessment Standard</th>
<th>Period of Study to Achieve Competency</th>
<th>Experience/competency required to be eligible to apply for the next level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paramedic</td>
<td>BSc (Hons)</td>
<td>College of Paramedics – Paramedic Curriculum Guidance HCPC Standards of Education &amp; Training HCPC Standards of Proficiency - Paramedics QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – Paramedics</td>
<td>3 to 4 years</td>
<td>Paramedics should obtain sufficient evidence through education and expertise to demonstrate a portfolio of post-graduate capability and competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Paramedic</td>
<td>PGDip</td>
<td>CPD Portfolio of Evidence College of Paramedics - Post Graduate Curriculum Guidance College of Paramedics Post Registration Paramedic Career Framework QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – Paramedics</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Specialist paramedics should obtain sufficient evidence through education and expertise to demonstrate a portfolio of post-graduate capability and competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Paramedic</td>
<td>MSc</td>
<td>CPD Portfolio of Evidence College of Paramedics - Post Graduate Curriculum Guidance College of Paramedics Post Registration Paramedic Career Framework QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – Paramedics</td>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>Advanced paramedics should obtain sufficient evidence through education and expertise to demonstrate a portfolio of post-graduate expertise and competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Paramedic</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>CPD Portfolio of evidence College of Paramedics – Post-Graduate Curriculum Guidance College of Paramedics – Post-Registration Paramedic Career Framework</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B1 Clinical Practice

The College makes known that the education levels described in the paramedic career framework diagram relates only to the clinical practice career pathway. The following section provides guidance and explanation on the clinical ability and career aspirations of the present day paramedic.

The needs of the 21st century UK population has developed beyond comparison to those of the population that saw the introduction of the National Health Service (NHS). These demands have evolved due to a combination of technological, educational, sociological and legislative changes which require paramedics as allied health professionals (AHPs), to deliver the appropriate care at the point of contact or refer to other health services as required.

A paramedic is an autonomous practitioner who has the knowledge, skills and clinical expertise to assess, treat, diagnose, supply and administer medicines, manage, discharge and refer patients in a range of urgent, emergency, critical or out of hospital settings. Their focus includes the care of acutely ill and/or injured patients at initial presentation, and those who present with an acute exacerbation of a chronic illness or disease.

All four pillars are part of developing advanced practice. Depending on the individual’s role and level of clinical practice will affect the percentage of responsibility for each pillar. An Advanced Paramedic may have an advanced practice clinical role with strong education/teaching and research elements, and less leadership and management responsibilities. (see Figure B1.1).
Paramedics who aspire to develop along the clinical practice pathway through the Specialist, Advanced and Consultant Paramedic levels will require them to further develop their knowledge, capability and clinical expertise through ongoing development and enhancement of the following:

- Assessment, diagnosis, referral, and discharge;
- Assessing and managing risk;
- Clinical governance;
- Critical thinking and analytical skills incorporating critical reflection;
- Decision making/clinical judgement and problem solving;
- Developing higher levels of autonomy;
- Developing confidence;
- Developing therapeutic interventions to improve service user outcomes;
- Development of advanced psychomotor skills;
- Equality & diversity;
- Ethical decision-making;
- Higher level communication skills;
- Managing complexity;
- Non-medical prescribing in line with legislation;
- Promoting and influencing others to incorporate values based care into practice;
- Service user focus/public involvement.

The College emphasises the importance and future potential of developing paramedics along the clinical practice pathway through the acquisition of the relevant educational and clinical skill competency development, and, being integrated into the UK health service systems as part of multi-professional teams delivering patient focused healthcare.

B2 Leadership & Management

This section provides guidance for paramedics who are considering progressing their career in leadership and management. It is a fundamental component of paramedic practice, with paramedics developing their leadership and management skills, competencies and experience throughout their career.
However, paramedics may wish to develop their career specifically through the leadership and management pathway. This may include both informal and formal positions of leadership and management in a wide range of roles and organisations. For example; clinical management, operations management, project and programme management, governance, finance, strategy, systems leadership and policy development.

Paramedics whose role incorporates leadership and management responsibilities will affect the percentage of responsibility for each pillar. A Senior Manager or Director may have strong leadership and management focus, and less in clinical, education and research and development elements. (see Figure B2.1).

There are various models and frameworks of leadership[15,16,17] that provide valuable evidence-based resources for those wishing to develop their understanding of leadership and management, which can be used to support development of leadership and management skills, competencies and experience.

The Healthcare Leadership Model[15] is one such framework, comprised of nine dimensions. These are applicable to the leadership role of the health care professional, irrespective of their position along their career journey, or formal position within an organisation.

The nine dimensions are:

- Connecting our service
- Developing capability
- Engaging the team
- Evaluating information
- Holding to account
- Inspiring shared purpose
- Influencing for results
- Leading with care
- Sharing the vision


In Scotland, a similar leadership model is contained within the NHS Scotland Leadership Qualities Framework[16] available at: www.nes.scot.nhs.uk

In Wales, the NHS Wales Leadership Qualities Framework[17] available at: www.wales.nhs.uk
The College recognises that there are many different models and frameworks of leadership, and that increasingly paramedics work in organisations outside the NHS. However, the College believes that the above leadership models and frameworks can support the development of a shared understanding for developing the role of paramedics as leaders across the health and care system.

Paramedics considering a career in leadership and management may find the following organisations and the resources they make available useful, as part of career planning and development.

- College of Paramedics Digital Paramedic Career Framework – for case studies and examples of paramedics who are currently working in a variety of management roles – www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/publications/digital-career-framework
- The Institute of Healthcare Management (IHM) – www.ihm.org.uk
- The NHS Leadership Academy – www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk

Paramedics are employed in the NHS, private and independent sectors at each level of the leadership and management career pathway.

B3 Research & Development

The following section provides guidance for paramedics in relation to the role of research in their professional career pathway. Clearly the paramedic profession has a commitment to improving patient care and, as such, it is the professional responsibility of all paramedics to engage with the research and evidence underpinning professional practice, whether leading research studies, being a participant in research, or purely being research aware.

The breadth of this engagement ranges from the completion of patient records and/or collection and collation of other forms of data, appraisal of evidence to inform practice and policy, through to designing and conducting large multi-centre research studies.

In preparation for these roles, paramedics are introduced to research, evidence-based healthcare and research methodologies as part of their pre-registration and post registration studies. This education equips them with essential skills such as critical appraisal and evaluation which are necessary to utilise effectively the evidence base underpinning paramedic professional practice. Paramedics throughout their career will need to develop and cultivate the following research abilities and attributes:
■ Ability to access research/use information systems;
■ Conference presentations;
■ Critical appraisal/evaluation skills;
■ Involvement in audit, quality improvement and service evaluation;
■ Involvement in research;
■ Publications.

Paramedics whose role incorporates research responsibilities will affect the percentage of responsibility for each pillar. A research Professor will have a strong focus on research, and less in education, leadership and management, and clinical elements. (see Figure B3.1).

Although the career framework presents the career pathways as discreet entities, in reality the domains are interdependent. Research is no different and to get to the role of research Professor, the individual will most likely have developed expertise in at least one of the other domains as well. The pathway of development as a paramedic researcher is diverse and exciting. The production and application of research within the clinical practice, leadership and management and education domains of the paramedic career framework is fundamental. Research, as well as being a discipline in its own right; intersects across all of these domains and arguably should inform all areas of professional development. Those paramedics who enter these areas of the profession are encouraged to consider adopting a career pathway that interlinks with that of the research domain of the framework.

Within any of the domains, paramedics will need to undertake research activities, often in the form of a research dissertation as part of the attainment of an MSc. As paramedics develop along their chosen career pathway some will complete a Doctorate and such an undertaking will require the individual to develop; “The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.”

The growth of peer reviewed journals such as the British Paramedic Journal provide an excellent platform for dissemination of these substantive research studies informing wider healthcare communities about the existence of the growing body of evidence underpinning paramedic professional practice.

There are an increasing number of possibilities for funding for individuals to undergo research development study programmes from various organisations such as local NHS Trusts, private organisations, charities, collaborations with Higher Education Institutions to name but a few. Paramedics could liaise with Ambulance Trusts’ research...
departments to find out more about available opportunities. In addition, individuals can consider a variety of national schemes which exist to support the development of healthcare research leaders of the future, some examples include:


For those that choose to progress their career along the research pathway there is the opportunity to be innovative in the development of knowledge that will inform advancement of the paramedic profession. Whilst undertaking research and developing the evidence base is important, implementation of these findings into practice is an important outcome of a research career and this can only be achieved by working across the four pillars of the career framework, as none of them exist in isolation.

**B4 Education**

The following section provides guidance and explains the expectations for paramedics considering the educational stream of the paramedic career framework. The education and training of paramedics has evolved from a vocation into a professional perspective.

This has resulted in significant developments for both pre and post registered paramedics either within clinical practice or the education sector delivering higher education paramedic science programmes.

Initially student paramedics encounter formal higher educational principles through attendance at lectures delivered by academic staff. They also receive mentoring and support from Practice Educators, who are registered paramedics that have undertaken a programme of ‘appropriate’ practice education training. The Practice Educator role is often the first post-registration qualification attained by a paramedic who has an interest in supporting and developing others.
Paramedics whose role incorporates education/teaching responsibilities will affect the percentage of responsibility for each pillar. A senior lecturer will have a strong focus on education, and less in research and development, clinical, leadership and management elements. (see Figure B4.1).

There is already an increased requirement for paramedics to develop as educationalists in both the clinical practice environment and education sector.

Paramedics wishing to pursue a career in education would benefit from achieving a recognised teaching qualification/award such as:

- PGCE teaching qualification
- MA Education
- Doctorate in Education EdD

Along with obtaining the appropriate teaching qualifications, the attainment of the relevant award from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) would also be expected as the individual develops:

- Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA)
- Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA)
- Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (PFHEA)

As an educationalist you would be expected to provide expertise in the key aspects of paramedic education and practice. The following is an example in over-arching terms of generic objectives common to an educational position.

- Keeping informed of developments in the field in both technical/specific terms of the wider subject area and the implication for practice and/or academia.
- To be responsible for the development of learning outcomes aligned to an appropriate assessment strategy. Identify the learning needs and define appropriate learning objectives
- Interact with learners to challenge thinking, foster debate and develop the ability of learners to engage in critical discourse and rational thinking. Transfer knowledge in the form of practical skills, methods and techniques with the assistance of a Practice Educator if required.
As the profession develops there will be an increased requirement for those who wish to aspire and develop along the education pathway to deliver education to both the pre- and post-registered paramedics.
The following section provides guidance on the educational level descriptors that are associated with this level of post-registered paramedic. These include reference to the following publications,\textsuperscript{8,9,10}. Since 2015 *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies*\textsuperscript{8} is the reference point for academic standards used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Prior to 2015 two parallel frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies applied, one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies*\textsuperscript{8} (FHEQ), and one for Scotland, *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS)\textsuperscript{10}. (See section C1.1).

In 2018 the HCPC as the regulatory body for paramedics amended the threshold level of qualification for entry to the register for paramedics to a Bachelor of science degree with honours. Since 2003 the threshold entry to the register had been set at the equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education level 4, or SCQF level 7. The College understands that throughout this period a large number of the profession completed pre-registration programmes below a Bachelor degree with honours to become eligible to apply to the HCPC register as a paramedic.
The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies is the reference point for academic standards used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) since 2015.

Prior to 2015 the above Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies were the reference point for academic standards used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6 on the FHEQ: Bachelor’s degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.
2. An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline.
3. Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
   - To devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline.
   - To describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline.
4. An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge.
5. The ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. Apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects.

Bachelor’s degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.
2. An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline.
3. Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
   - To devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline.
   - To describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline.
4. An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge.
5. The ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. Apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects.

Characteristic outcomes of the degree.

1. A systematic, extensive and comparative knowledge and understanding of the subject(s) as a whole and its links to related subject(s). A detailed knowledge of a few specialisms and developments, some of which are at, or informed by, the forefront of the subject.
2. A critical understanding of the established theories, principles and concepts, and of a number of advanced and emerging issues at the forefront of the subject(s).
3. A critical understanding of the uncertainty and limits of knowledge and how it is developed, and an ability to deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the subject.
4. A comprehensive knowledge and familiarity with essential and advanced materials, techniques and skills including some at the forefront of the subject.
5. Skills in identifying information needs, and in the systematic gathering, analysis and interpretation of ideas, concepts and qualitative and quantitative data and information from a range of evaluated sources including current research, scholarly, and/or professional literature.

Typically, holders of the degree will be able to:

1. Use their knowledge, understanding and skills in the systematic and critical assessment of a wide range of concepts, ideas, and data (that may be incomplete), and in both identifying and analysing complex problems and
2. Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem.

3. Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

And holders will have:

1. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
   – The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
   – Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
   – The learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at SCQF level 10 on the FQHEIS:

Honours degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. A systematic, extensive and comparative knowledge and understanding of the subject(s) as a whole and its links to related subject(s). A detailed knowledge of a few specialisms and developments, some of which are at, or informed by, the forefront of the subject.

2. Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgments, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions - to a problem.

3. Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

And holders will have:

1. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
   – The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
   – Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
   – The learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

2. Communicate the results of their study and other work accurately and reliably using the full repertoire of the principal concepts and constructs of the subject(s).

3. Systematically identify and address their own learning needs both in current and in new areas, making use of research, development and professional materials as appropriate, including those related to the forefront of developments.

4. Apply their subject-related and transferable skills in contexts of a professional or equivalent nature where there is a requirement for:
   – the exercise of personal responsibility and initiative
   – decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
   – the ability to undertake further developments of a professional or equivalent nature.

issues; demonstrating some originality and creativity in formulating, evaluating and applying evidence-based solutions and arguments.
2. A critical understanding of the established theories, principles and concepts, and of a number of advanced and emerging issues at the forefront of the subject(s).

3. A critical understanding of the uncertainty and limits of knowledge and how it is developed, and an ability to deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the subject.

4. A comprehensive knowledge and familiarity with essential and advanced materials, techniques and skills including some at the forefront of the subject.

5. Skills in identifying information needs, and in the systematic gathering, analysis and interpretation of ideas, concepts and qualitative and quantitative data and information from a range of evaluated sources including current research, scholarly, and/or professional literature.

**Typically, holders of the honours degree will be able to:**

1. Use their knowledge, understanding and skills in the systematic and critical assessment of a wide range of concepts, ideas, and data (that may be incomplete), and in both identifying and analysing complex problems and issues; demonstrating some originality and creativity in formulating, evaluating and applying evidence-based solutions and arguments.

2. Communicate the results of their study and other work accurately and reliably using the full repertoire of the principal concepts and constructs of the subject(s);

3. Systematically identify and address their own learning needs both in current and in new areas, making use of research, development and professional materials as appropriate, including those related to the forefront of developments;

4. Apply their subject-related and transferable skills in contexts of a professional or equivalent nature where there is a requirement for:
   - The exercise of personal responsibility and initiative
   - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
   - The ability to undertake further developments of a professional or equivalent nature.
The following section provides guidance on the educational credit level descriptors that are associated with this level of post-registered paramedic. These include reference to the following publications\textsuperscript{8,9,10}. Since 2015 \textit{The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies}\textsuperscript{8} is the reference point for academic standards used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Prior to 2015 two parallel frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies applied, one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, \textit{The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies}\textsuperscript{9} (FHEQ), and one for Scotland, \textit{The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland} (FQHEIS)\textsuperscript{10}. (See section C2.1).
### C 2.1 FHEQ Level 7 / SCQF Level 11 – MSc

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**Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS:**

Master’s degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.
2. A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
4. Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
   - To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.
   - To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

**Characteristic outcomes of Master’s degrees**

1. A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.
2. A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
4. Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
   - To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.
   - To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
2. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.
3. Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

1. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
   - The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
   - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
   - The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.
The Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) Level 8 / Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 12 - Doctorate

The following section provides guidance on the educational credit level descriptors that are associated with this level of post-registered paramedic. These include reference to the following publications, \(^8,9,10\). Since 2015 The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies\(^8\) is the reference point for academic standards used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Prior to 2015 two parallel frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies applied, one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies\(^9\) (FHEQ), and one for Scotland, The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS)\(^10\). (See section C3.1).
### C 3.1 FHEQ Level 8 / SCQF Level 12 – Doctorate

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Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 12 on the FQHEIS:
Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
2. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
3. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.
4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
2. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
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4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Characteristic outcomes of Doctoral degrees

1. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
2. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
3. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.
4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.
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<td>2. Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches. And holders will have: 1. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.</td>
<td>2. Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches. And holders will have: 1. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.</td>
<td>2. Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches and will have: – The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.</td>
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D1 Background, and eligibility to become a prescriber

On the 1st April 2018, legislation for paramedics to train to become independent prescribers came into force. The Human Medicines Regulations (2012) amendment (2018) includes the paramedic profession, alongside the other non-medical professions able to undertake independent and supplementary training, and practice as a prescriber.

This change in legislation is the culmination of the Allied Health Professions (AHP) Medicines project, which is a joint initiative by NHS England and the Department of Health to extend prescribing, supply and administration of medicines to Allied Health Professions. The project work is aimed at facilitating service re-designs; increasing patient choice; improving access to medicines; and making the best use of allied health professionals’ skills, whilst promoting patient safety and optimising the use of medicines and the necessary associated governance.

Prescribing by non-medical healthcare professions in the UK is moving towards being regarded as a feature of advanced clinical practice. Paramedics seeking to undertake prescribing must satisfy a range of considerations and eligibility criteria, and most importantly have a clearly defined role requiring prescribing. The eligibility criteria for aspirant prescribers is available in the College of Paramedics document, Improving Patients’ Access to Medicines: A Guide to Implementing Paramedic Prescribing within the NHS in the UK. Prescribing education should not be considered as continuing professional development in isolation, and the need to prescribe should be evident in the development of the paramedic’s career and clinical practice.
The curriculum which all prescribers undertake is based on the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's document *A Competency Framework for all Prescribers* and from which the Allied Healthcare Professionals Federation (AHPF) *Outline Curriculum Framework* (OCF) is based. The process for approving education programmes for specific professions is undertaken by the Health and Care Professions Council based on the learning outcomes in the OCF.

### D2 Education Level

Prescribing education is available at both level 6 and level 7 (or equivalent in devolved nations), however, in line with the requirements to practice at advanced level, education for paramedic prescribing should be undertaken at level 7. There is an eligibility requirement to have experience of study at level 7, and therefore where a full Master's-level advanced practice award has not yet been achieved, prescribing would not normally be undertaken at the start of an advanced practice education pathway.

The provision of education at level 7 reflects the complexity of prescribing in clinical practice. The rigour associated with prescribing courses links very closely to patient safety and appropriate prescribing decision making, mindful that prescribing is not simply about providing new, or more, medicines. Independent prescribing is an integrated approach to holistic care for patients based on assessment, diagnosis, communication, planning, and safety considerations. The level of understanding comprehension and synthesis of the complex concepts is reflected in the course content and assessment strategies, and ultimately safeguards patients' safety while under the care of paramedic independent prescribers.

### D3 Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) – Annotation to the Register

Prescribing is a responsibility given in law (Human Medicines Regulations [2012]), and the authority to prescribe is delegated to the professional regulator – in the case of paramedics, this is the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The method by which authority is given is through annotation of the individual registrants' registration. Paramedics who become prescribers will, on successful completion of their prescribing course, be able to apply for annotation as an independent and supplementary prescriber (independent prescribers are automatically also supplementary prescribers) and on completion of the process, this will appear on the register and can be viewed via the HCPC website.
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<td>Registered until</td>
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| Additional entitlements | Supplementary prescribing (SP)  
Independent prescribing (IP) |

Data valid at: 12:00, 17 December 2017
References


Appendix A

Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework Group

The Board of Trustees of the College of Paramedics wishes to thank the following members, who have contributed to the reviewing, editing and final production of the 4th edition of the College of Paramedics – Post Registration – Paramedic Career Framework.

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