

Scottish Ambulance Service Paramedic Foundation Course

The new Paramedic Foundation Course has been developed in line with the Health Professionals Council (HPC) to enhance the theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding of Paramedic Foundation students. The course has several elements. **All** elements must be successfully completed.

- 1 week national induction
- 3 week emergency driving
- 7 week core programme at the Scottish Ambulance College (SAC)
- 3 x 14 week terms running concurrently with 750hrs of practice placement

National induction is undertaken by all new employees to the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). Staff currently within the SAS progressing to Foundation Paramedic will also take part in national induction. Key elements of health & safety as well as general information regarding how the SAS works are part of the programme. This may be delivered at the SAC or locally.

The emergency driving programme is designed to equip Ambulance Service personnel with the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours, to allow them to respond safely and effectively to emergency incidents and to drive safely and smoothly, to meet patient clinical need and on routine journeys. The programme builds on the students existing driving knowledge and skills by introducing them to “Roadcraft”; a systematic approach to driving. Although referred to as the “system of car control”, the system can be applied effectively to any vehicle and has been the foundation of driving programmes, for all the emergency services and advanced driving course providers for many years.

The units contained within this programme allow the student to develop the necessary skills, supported by appropriate behaviour, attitude and knowledge, to perform their driving duties in such a manner that:

1. Personal, patient and public safety is at the heart of driving decisions.
2. Reinforces the need for dynamic risk assessment and appropriate attitude to risk taking.
3. Exemptions that may be claimed from road traffic law are justified and fully understood.
4. Meets driving standards as required by law and the public expectations of emergency service personnel.
5. Due regard is given to the clinical condition of the patient(s) and the potential impact of the journey on them.
6. Gives due consideration to the environmental impact of poor driving.

This may be delivered at the SAC or locally.

Students attending the (SAC) will require to be prepared before arriving and to that end, six weeks before their course they will receive their pre-course study materials which will indicate specific areas to study.

Included in the pre course study pack is the students **Paramedic Foundation Folder** which contains all course information such as timetable and reference guides, **Foundations for Paramedic Practice** which includes, Psychology, Health

promotion, Ethics and Law plus Audit and Research which all serve to enhance the students overall knowledge.

Nancy Caroline's "emergency care in the streets" will be their main reference book throughout their Paramedic Foundation Course. **Ross and Wilson "anatomy and physiology"** will be issued on arrival at S.A.C. and held by the student for the duration of the residential phase of the course.

The college phase of the course consist of a mixture of Practical scenarios, class lectures and directed project work where the whole class are divided into small syndicates each with their own Paramedic Education Specialist (PES). The PES will give guidance and feedback on a one to one basis throughout the entirety of the college phase of training.

Throughout their course students are tasked with directed project work, where, instead of just sitting listening they get up and research subjects themselves (with full support from their Paramedic Education Specialist) and eventually present their findings to the P.E.S. and the other groups. This system has been met with great enthusiasm from all students involved thus far and gives the student a greater sense of achievement and higher level of knowledge and understanding of clinical conditions (learning should be fun).

Week one of the course is now predominantly theoretical, addressing the main body systems, Respiratory, Circulatory, Nervous and Digestive. Although this is an intense period students appear to achieve a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the body systems in normal and abnormal states

Exam format is Formative and Summative,

Formative exams held weekly.

- These are a combination of multi-choice, true/false, and short written. The pass mark for formative examinations is 70%.

Summative exams are held on weeks 5, 6 and 7.

- Week 5 exam consist of 60 multi choice / true false, pass mark required is 75%. 4 short written questions, pass mark required is 40% per question and 60% overall.
- Week 6 exam consist of 60 multi choice / true false, pass mark required is 75%
- Week 7 exam consist of 60 multi choice / true false, pass mark required is 75%
5 short written pass mark required is 40% per question and 60% overall.

Practical elements are observed and assessed throughout the course these include:

- Patient management (medical)
- Basic Life Support (B.L.S.)

- Intermediate Life Support (I.L.S.) (Resuscitation / Defibrillation.)
- International Trauma Life Support (.I.T.L.S)

Upon successful completion of the core programme students move to the operational environment. During this time they will have the support of a named Practice Placement Educator (PPEd) and a Practice Placement Mentor (PPM).

Academic assignments as outlined in the Paramedic Programme Handbook are completed with term deadlines to be achieved for their submission. Concurrently students must complete 750hrs of practice placement by a combination of working “on the road” with your PPM, short placements with differing branches of the service and often the wider NHS or emergency services and developing a set of competencies as evidenced in your practice placement portfolio.