



Paramedic Apprenticeship 2025 (2)

Overview

Paramedic Apprenticeship Programme

The Trust runs an internal education pathway, the Paramedic Apprenticeship Programme, in conjunction with the selected Universities for those aspiring to train to become a paramedic. This programme is open to staff with a minimum of two years front line SWAST NHS service as an Emergency Care Assistant (ECA/EAA) or Ambulance Practitioner (AP).

Higher level and degree apprenticeships are a great option for people of any age. As long as you're committed and passionate, then you could benefit from the opportunity to learn and earn alongside your job in the Trust.

Apprenticeship programmes are designed to be studied whilst working, to help you progress academically and professionally in your programme of study and in your career. On the

apprenticeship programme, you will benefit from a workplace mentor and a university personal tutor, who will work together to monitor your progress regularly.

Every individual is different, but someone who is well organised, hardworking, resilient, able to work in a team and conduct themselves as a confident individual stands a great chance of being successful as an apprentice. Your programme will not just provide an academic education, but help you develop as an individual.

Full Details and information about this internal education route can be found [here](#) in our Paramedic Apprenticeship Prospectus.

The Universities are committed to offering practice-based learning, combined with robust employment-focused academic design and delivery, equipping you with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to succeed. Full details of the University of Cumbria Course can be found [here](#). Full details for University Centre Weston (UCW)/University of Worcester Partnership can be found [here](#).

QUESTIONS? We are sure you will! Please do read on but to go straight to our contact page, if you still need answers!

Recruitment & Selection Guidance



Thank you for your interest in this exciting opportunity.

We are delighted that you are considering applying for a place on the Paramedic Apprenticeship Programme in conjunction with the selected University, it is a fantastic opportunity and exposure to development within the Trust. You are at the very start of the journey to potentially becoming one of our Paramedics of the future and we are very grateful for your commitment to the Trust.

The Recruitment process is incredibly tough, with limited spaces and given the high level of applicants can take several attempts so please do not let this discourage you.

In this section, you'll gain all the knowledge you need to start planning your application. We hope you'll also feel empowered and excited for this opportunity, we certainly are!

Applications will be via our Recruitment TRAC system. However, before you apply, you will need to check the following to be considered to be shortlisted for Interview:

Please note if successful, a full DBS and OH are required to proceed onto the course.

1. Have a minimum of two years' experience as a front-line SWAST NHS Emergency Care Assistant (ECA/EAA) or Ambulance Practitioner (AP) (your period of ECA training can count towards satisfying the experience requirement). **The two years SWAST experience must be completed by TBC ****
2. Able to evidence, at time of application, the required qualifications (GCSE Grade 4-9 (historically A-C) in Maths and English Language or the equivalent Level 2 Functional Skills certificates); **Please note provisional statements of results are not sufficient evidence, we will need either the certificate or a certified statement.**
3. *Qualsafe Level 3, 4 and 5 First Response Awards:* Application for direct entry to Level 5 of the BSc Paramedic Science can be considered for those holding the combination of the FREC 3, 4 & 5 First Response Awards. The level 3, 4 & 5 awards need to be completed in sequential order, with each award acting as a pre-requisite to entry to the level above. Therefore, a candidate presenting the FREC 5 award for entry will also hold the FREC 3 & 4 awards, but these will still need to be evidenced through the admissions process. Applicants will still need to evidence maths and English GCSE grade C/4 (or L2 Functional Skills) to meet entry criteria.
4. At commencement of the apprenticeship, to be working a minimum of 30 contracted hours per week (you must have a minimum of 3150 operations hours prior to applying);
5. Have your Line Managers support for application. This includes (where relevant) to have the agreement to be contracted to a minimum of 30 hours per week at commencement of the apprenticeship programme (applicants must have worked a minimum of 3150 hours to be eligible to apply).
6. To have read the [Paramedic Prospectus 2025](#) and understand all that is required from you, before, during and after the course, including the Bridging Course. Sign and return the 2-page Declaration.

7. The '[Head Start Plus to Apprenticeships](#)' is an online open module for you to freely access as you start on your journey towards transitioning into University academic studies at levels 5 and 6. **This module needs to be completed at application stage.** To support the development of your academic skills and digital capabilities whilst helping to boost your confidence as you transition into academic study alongside working in your daily role, the 'Head Start Plus to Apprenticeships' module is available for you to access online and reflects one way of working through a University assignment journey. Everyone can access this version and no log-ins are required. **Evidence of completion of this will be requested at application stage to show you have completed the module.** Utilising this functionality will help you to start thinking about academic writing and the requirements of you if you are considering applying or in fact are due to commence on the Paramedic Apprenticeship Programme.
8. Have the right to work in England and spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship, be one of the following:
 - a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) (including other countries determined within the EEA or those with bilateral agreements), or have the right of abode in the UK, and have been ordinarily resident in the EEA (including other countries determined within the EEA or those with bilateral agreements), for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning;
 - a non-EEA citizen with permission from the UK government to live in the UK, (not for educational purposes) and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years before the start of learning.

The entry requirements for this programme require an ECA/EAA to be working for SWAST. Therefore, we are unable to accept other experience such as Hub, community responder, fire co-responder experience in place.

****Your period of SWAST ECA training can count towards satisfying the experience requirement but Overtime will not. The experience needs to be a full 2 years service and if unplanned absence impacts the length of service between application and start of course, applicants may be withdrawn or added to a holding pool.***

You will be required to have fully and successfully completed both Level 2 standalone qualifications in both English Language and Maths (GCSE 9-4/A*-C or Functional Skills Level 2) prior to application. Your application will not be progressed without evidence of both.

We're so glad you're here! Continue your journey by scrolling on, or use the bottom right navigation option.



1 - A note from Rhys Griffiths, Head of Education

"I started working for the NHS in 2005 for the Welsh Ambulance Service as a 999 call taker. I spent 3 years here and during my time went on to work on dispatch as a dispatch assistant and then seconded to a Senior dispatch role. I joined Great Western Ambulance Service (GWAS) in 2008 as a ECA and was fortunate to have been taught by our very own Lesley Altoft (Learning & Development Officer Team Leader), which I had a fantastic experience throughout the course. I have predominantly worked within the Bristol area over the years as an ECA and went on to complete my Paramedic degree through the Open University. This programme required me to work full time, with self-directed studying in my own time over 4 years – with no dedicated university days, no lectures or abstractions! I'm glad to say we have come a long way since those days!

Once qualified I was placed straight onto an RRV team out of Bristol station, which was a hugely daunting experience as a newly qualified paramedic in a busy and demanding area, however I believe I learnt a lot for solo working and it helped shape my practice for autonomous working and thinking on my feet. Over the years I have been successful in roles as a Lead Paramedic at Bristol station and from 2016 a Clinical Team Member (CTM) in BNSSG. Prior to joining L&D I undertook a pilot role within the BNSSG area titled County Business Operation Officer. I worked closely with the County Commander and Deputy County Commander to engage and work with acute hospital trusts & the CCG. During this time I gained tactical command experience as well as undertaking some of the formal meetings for the county.

The values which I feel strongly about are compassionate & visible leadership and to ensure high quality patient care is the heart of everything we do. I take pride in being an approachable manager and like to work closely with those around me to ensure staff welfare is of the highest priority.

The Paramedic Apprenticeship is an exciting opportunity for many of our non-clinical staff who aspire towards a qualified Paramedic (BSc). This opportunity is a hugely attractive offer and greater than anything that has been offered in the past, however may not be

appropriate for all staff. I would encourage you to read on so that you can consider your own circumstance and individual learning style to see if the programme meets your individual requirements.

I look forward to meeting and working alongside many more of you in times to come."

Rhys Griffiths, Head of Education

Is it right for me?



Every individual is different, but someone who is well organised, passionate and resilient and able to conduct themselves as a professional, confident individual stands a great chance of being successful.

The Paramedic Apprenticeship is a distance learning programme made up of teaching components that take place as a combination of virtual learning and through face-to-face contact days that require you to attend a nominated training location. There is no need for you to travel to Cumbria or UCW/University of Worcester Partnership for any of the programme.

Distance learning is a way of studying, especially for a degree, whereby you study mostly at home. You will be taught through a blended approach to education, a mix of theory and practical. Lectures/lessons are mostly conducted over the internet and by using a virtual

learning environment called Blackboard to submit work and engage with your tutor. The blended approach reduces the requirement to physically attend places of study.



On the Paramedic Apprenticeship there are mandatory contact days allocated to study every year which will include skills and practical elements. These will account for the face-to-face teaching time required and will be covered within your contracted hours – therefore you will not be required to use your ‘own time’ for this educational contact time. These days are calculated as 7.5-hour days and there will still be an expectation that you will undertake further ‘self-directed’ study in your own time as part of your achievement of the apprenticeship.

There will also be a pre-requisite bridging module to successfully achieve prior to the apprenticeship and this is to be completed in your own time and funded by you. You must be fully operational when you commence on the bridging module to gain the practical exposure to complete the practical elements of the logbook and in practice which are needed to successfully achieve the course. See the bridging course section for more information.

You will be required to move onto a structured relief rota on commencement of the full apprenticeship programme and there are several reasons as to why this is necessary, such as:

- There are no external placements and therefore a risk of limited exposure to a varied practice from other clinicians;

- Due to the requirement for internal placements, structured relief allows flexibility to plan internal placements within SWAST with notice and without further abstraction to a roster as some placements may come up at short notice;
- Due to the abstraction requirements, there would be significant disruption to any existing rota pattern which could in turn result in hours being owed to the Trust;
- There is a requirement to work in both urban and rural settings, also including various shift times to broaden the exposure of the student to different settings, stations, and people demographic.



Understanding the Structured Relief Rota for Paramedic Apprentices

The Structured Relief Rota is designed to support your learning and development throughout the two-year paramedic apprenticeship by protecting time for both university attendance and independent study.

Key Features of the Rota:

- **Protected Study and University Days:** Your rota is built around your scheduled university and study days to ensure you have dedicated time for academic learning.
- **University Week Hours:** University days are 7.5 hours long. This means that during university block weeks, you will log fewer hours than if you were working standard 12-hour shifts. However, as university weeks are 5 days, you will be working full time hours of 37.5 hours.
- **Weekend Protection:** The weekends immediately before and after university block weeks are protected to give you time to prepare and reflect on your learning.
- **Rolling Relief Balance Reviews:** The ROC (Resource Operations Centre) have designed the rotas so they balance every 10 weeks, as long as the relief values are planned. When the schedulers plan each week, they will review the rolling relief, and plan the number of shifts required to maintain you hrs. If you have a negative rolling relief balance this may result in an additional shift being planned,
- **Risk of Negative Hours:** Despite these efforts, there is still a possibility that you may finish the programme with a negative hour balance, which can be caused by several things, including additional rest days and moving from 12-hour shifts to 10-hour shifts regularly

Optional Flexibility to Reduce Negative Hours:

- To help manage your hours, we recommend considering the Friday before a study week as a core shift rather than a protected day.
- This is not mandatory, but opting in can help reduce your variance and minimise any negative balance.
- If you choose to do this, please inform your local scheduling team so they can make the necessary adjustments.

The move into structured relief will happen at least a week before your commencement on the apprenticeship programme and not on the bridging course; you will remain on your existing arrangements for the duration of the bridging programme.

ROC are fully aware of the requirement to move and plan you onto structured relief at least a week prior to your course commencing; the Apprenticeship Team provide these details to the ROC.

Please review the [relief & working hours policy](#) for further understanding.

During your apprenticeship you will be placed on a structured relief rota within your current County, this will allow us to plan your shifts around your university and internal placement days and to ensure you work with a variety of different clinicians to give you the best possible learning experience.

As soon as we know your university days these will be planned into GRS for you, you will not need to complete shift swaps or book time off for these. Your remaining shifts will then be planned around the university days, in line with the relief and working hours policy.

Your university days will count towards your worked hours for that week. You will have a named ROC scheduler as you do now, and you will continue to be able to work with them in relation to your shifts and any support ROC can offer you.

If planning to embark on this programme you should do so on the understanding that you will be expected to work flexibly in order to achieve the apprenticeship requirements and this will mean:

- You will have to move away from your current line and into structured relief
- Your existing line will not be protected

Road Map



ECA/EAA to Paramedic Road Map:

How to become a Paramedic through our Apprenticeship Programme in Conjunction with the selected Universities.



Step 1 - Join as an Emergency Care Assistant (ECA/EAA):

Join SWAST as an ECA/EAA and gain 2 years experience to be eligible to apply for the Apprenticeship Programme.



Step 2 - Apply to be a Paramedic Apprentice:

Apply for a place with the selected Universities to begin your studies.



Step 3 - The Bridging Course:

This module needs to be passed before being eligible to enter onto the apprenticeship, it takes 6 months and requires a portfolio of evidence to be gathered whilst in your role as an ECA/EAA.

It is completed in the learners own time and costs the learner **£1750** which can be paid at point of graduation.

It 'bridges' the gap between the ECA/EAA knowledge and skills to a level 4 so you can enter onto the level 5 apprenticeship

The bridging course allows for the degree apprenticeship to be completed within 2 years rather than the standard 3 years for a Bsc in Paramedic studies.



Step 4 - The Apprenticeship:

A degree apprenticeship that after passing the bridging module will take you 2 years to complete

Blended learning approach (Virtual and Face to Face) and delivered by Learning and Development Officers who work for SWASFT but seconded to the University of Cumbria or UCW/University of Worcester Partnership.

Your face to face lectures are currently in block delivery in education centres in either Taunton Conference centre or University Weston Campus.

There will be 41 taught days a year through the blended approach and an additional 15 days a year dedicated for study time.

Currently you need to be able to work a ***minimum of 30 hours per week.***



Step 5 - Newly Qualified Paramedic:

Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship programme, the Trust will make every effort to consider your preferred location for employment. However, we cannot guarantee a paramedic vacancy in your preferred area. Offers of employment will be subject to the Trust's operational requirements at the time, and you may be offered a position in a different location to where you trained. If no suitable vacancies are immediately available, you may be placed in a holding pool until a position arises in your preferred area or another suitable location.

Please note that successful completion of the apprenticeship does not automatically result in progression to a Band 5 salary. You will move to a Band 5 salary upon successful commencement in a Newly Qualified Paramedic (NQP) role, in line with the Trust's pay and progression policies.



Summary:

In the NHS many things change. You will need to be flexible, adaptable and accepting of this as you embark on this journey. But it will be a remarkable journey, becoming one of our Paramedics of the future, earning whilst you are learning and gaining a wider understanding of the Ambulance Service to prepare you for your career.

Interview Process



Please look out for updates on [here](#) and the SWAST weekly bulletin for the job advert.

Interview overview

We understand that interviews can be more daunting for some than others and we are here to support you through it. We have roughly outlined what the interview process will be like below.

In each interview, the panel will consist of Four assessors, two representatives from the selected University and two members of the SWAST Apprenticeship Team. Please read the document included in our email to understand the interview process.

Group interview - This interview will be a value-based group interaction between you and other successful applicants lasting approximately 20 minutes. You will not be tested on previous knowledge, so you do not need to prep for it.

Individual interviews - The panel consists of 1 representative from the selected University and 1 member of the SWAST Apprenticeship Team. The Individual interviews will last approximately 10 minutes each.

Please refer to Interviews - [Paramedic Apprenticeship Prospectus 2025](#) for some more interview tips.

What next after interviews?

It is understandable that waiting for a decision after an interview is a nerve-wracking experience- we've all been there! Please be patient with us while we evaluate all applicants and we will be in touch as soon as we can.

All interviewees will be emailed the outcome of via TRAC. Successful applicants will be sent an offer letter shortly after explaining the next steps of the onboarding.

Frequently asked questions

I am only a few weeks short on experience - why was I not considered for an interview?

With the growth of the programme in the last two years we receive a vast number of applications which meant we have had to tighten the rules up a little bit more this year. The two years' SWAST experience is set out to make it an even and fair process for all applications.

I'm undertaking my Maths/English exam soon - can my application be considered?

Unfortunately, we cannot accept any applicants who do not already have their Maths and English results. We need evidence of certificates or evidence to say you have passed the functional/essential skills at the time of application as mentioned in the essential criteria. We are aware previous cohorts were able to complete their exams alongside the bridging course, however like mentioned above it is important for us to conduct the shortlisting fairly and follow the recruitment guidelines

Do my previous study/qualifications mean I can APEL (skip the bridging course)?

Generally, most learners will be required to undertake the bridging course however where a learner has prior academic study/credits, these can be discussed as to whether they can APEL (skip the bridging). *****Please note this will generally only be possible for qualifications in paramedic science/healthcare related subjects (and at level 4 and above), as it requires evidence of the academic knowledge, clinical skills and clinical knowledge which are usually covered in the bridging course.***

Who to Contact



2 - Got a question?

We're Here to Help

Please use this page to help you contact the right team to answer your queries!

For Recruitment Queries

For any queries regarding your application please contact our **Paramedic Apprenticeship Recruitment Team**

Email: paramedicapprenticeship@swast.nhs.uk

University General Queries

For any general queries regarding the course including start dates, qualification requirements etc

Cumbria Email: apprenticeships@cumbria.ac.uk

UCW Email: for www.ucw.ac.uk/support or apprenticeships@weston.ac.uk

For Bridging Programme Generic Queries

For all general and application queries

Cumbria Email: paramedics@cumbria.ac.uk

UCW Programme Lead Email: joel.phillips@weston.ac.uk

ROC - Exeter

For Rota or Scheduling

Email: Exeter.ROC@SWAST.nhs.uk

ROC - Bristol

For Rota or Scheduling

Email: Bristol.ROC@SWAST.nhs.uk

Useful Links

Paramedic Prospectus 2025

[UoC - Full Details of the Course](#)

[University Centre Weston](#)

[Head Start Plus To Apprenticeships - UoC](#)

FAQ's



Since opening our recruitment we have had lots of questions so we have added this section to try and help with some of the most asked! However, if your answer is not here, please do drop us a quick email and we will do our best to respond!

When do I need to provide evidence of my Qualifications?

Please email paramedicapprenticeship@swast.nhs.uk with copies of your qualifications at the time of your application, no later than the closing date.

Failure to provide the necessary documents will mean your application will not be progressed any further.

What if I have lost or do not have proof of my Qualifications?

Unfortunately, without evidence of your qualifications we are unable to progress your application, this is a requirement set in line with the selected Universities' admission requirements.

In the event that you have lost or misplaced your certificates, you can request replacements from your college or education provider. You can request a replacement here: [Get a replacement exam certificate: Who to contact - GOV.UK](#). We will accept confirmation of such a request providing the order has been confirmed along with an anticipated arrival from the provider. This would need to be received no later than the closing date.

Can I apply if I am due to complete my 2 years after the Closing Date?

Your period of ECA training can count towards satisfying the experience requirement but overtime will not. The experience needs to be a full 2 years service and if unplanned absence impacts the length of service between application and start of course, applicants may be withdrawn or added to a holding pool.

Will my other experiences count towards the front line service requirement?

The entry requirements for this programme require an ECA/EAA to be working for SWAST NHS Ambulance Trust. Therefore, we are unable to accept other experience such as Hub, community responder, fire co-responder experience in place.

Do my qualifications suffice me to not have to complete the Bridging course?

Generally, most learners will be required to undertake the bridging course however where a learner has prior academic study/credits, these can be discussed as to whether they can APEL (skip the bridging). ***Please note this will generally only be possible for qualifications in paramedic science/healthcare related subjects (qualifications at level 4 and above), as it requires evidence of academic knowledge, clinical skills and clinical knowledge which are usually covered in the bridging course.***

Further information can be found in the prospectus under the *Bridging Module* section:

Bridging Module - Paramedic Apprenticeship Prospectus 2025

Contact Us

Please click here to [Contact Us](#)

Thank you for visiting our Page!