

NHS Specialities – Paramedic Students

Why here?

Paramedics are generalist practitioners who attend to patients in a variety of settings with diverse needs and presentations. They have an important role in reducing unnecessary hospital admissions through treatment, referral and discharge of patients.

The profession is evolving across the UK and in Scotland we are seeing a greater presence of paramedics in settings outside of prehospital emergency care including primary care, in-hospital, and community care environments as well as education, governance and public health.

Therefore, we want to prepare our students through engagement with diverse learning experiences in a wide variety of practice settings. These cross-sector placements allow achievement of pertinent learning outcomes associated with early development of the holistic healthcare practitioner, such as:

Exposure to Diverse Patient Groups & Settings

- Gain experience with a range of clinical presentations across primary, secondary, tertiary, and community care.

Develop Clinical & Assessment Skills

- Enhance understanding of patient assessment, treatment, and management within different healthcare environments.

Understand NHS Services & Patient Journeys

- Build knowledge of healthcare pathways, service complexity, and the multidisciplinary approach to care.

Strengthen Communication & Interpersonal Skills

- Apply and adapt communication strategies to engage effectively with patients, families, carers, and healthcare teams.

Recognise the Importance of Person-Centred & Collaborative Care

- Reflect on interprofessional teamwork, ethical considerations, and strategies to uphold patient autonomy, dignity, and quality of life.

What's in it for placement providers?

Supporting paramedic students on placement can also confer a wide variety of benefits to the environment where they are placed. These benefits can include:

Staff development, including facilitating student learning and organisation of learning opportunities

Increased mutual awareness of scope of practice and professional processes

Clearer shared expectations of patient care provision

More efficient patient care provision through understanding of available services

Establishing links and building future working relationships

How long?

Each placement is 2-weeks long. We consider this to be 36 hours.

The placement experience is mandatory but the student may not meet the exact number of hours and still be able to progress on the programme e.g. if only 30 hours can be achieved within the capacity of the placement provider the other 6 hours does not need to be recovered.

All practice education progression is based on achievement of learning outcomes, not the number of hours the student is present.

Students (unless under 18) are permitted to work night shifts and weekends; therefore, you can arrange for students to follow a specific shift pattern if this is suitable for everyone and facilitates student learning. Additionally, a student may ask to do fewer, longer shifts to achieve their learning and maintain part-time work or family commitments. If this can be accommodated without detriment to the placement provider and their learning it would be appreciated by all.

What can students do?

Below are some additional suggestions of how students can be engaged and active learners to achieve their learning outcomes across both technical and non-technical domains of practice:

Patient Case Studies

- Work with staff, patients, and families to build a holistic understanding of individuals, considering their pre-care life, medical needs, and social circumstances
- Engage in discussions about complex co-morbidities, specialist conditions, and how social factors impact health outcomes.

Inter-Professional Team Observation

- Shadow different professionals to understand their roles in person-centred care.
- Observe multidisciplinary meetings to see how decisions are made and explore available health and social care services, including their aims and referral pathways.
- Participate in situational case studies to assess patient needs and determine which professionals and services should be involved.

Assisting & Observing Patient Care

- Join ward rounds, clinics, and home visits, observing assessments, clinical decision-making, and treatments.
- Practice basic history taking, rapport building, and communication skills.
- Observe targeted assessments such as neurological exams, mental health evaluations, frailty assessments, and pre-operative checks.
- Reflect on how staff adapt communication for different patient needs (e.g., dementia, learning disabilities, anxiety, low mood).

Medication & Specific Care Tasks

- Under supervision and within scope of practice, assist with skills such as medication administration, wound care, catheterization, and pressure ulcer prevention
- Develop an understanding of the legal and practical considerations surrounding complex medication management, potential side effects, and patient safety strategies.

Moving, Handling & Personal Care

- Observe and, if comfortable, assist with personal care tasks (e.g., washing, toileting, feeding) under direct supervision.
- Participate in mealtime experiences to understand factors affecting patient nutrition and ways to provide support.

Senior Team & Departmental Insight

- Spend time with senior staff to understand the daily operations of the service.
- Learn about staff roles, scopes of practice, and how different professionals—including ambulance personnel—interact within the service.

Project-Based Placements

- Gain experience in information gathering, analysis, and reporting within quality improvement, research, and clinical governance teams.
- Contribute to service development by supporting data-driven decision-making and improvement initiatives.

Scope of Practice

Students entering their NHS Specialty placement will be in their 2nd of study.

They will have completed learning, practice and real-world application in 15 – 25 weeks of placement with the Ambulance service in the following:

	Summer Year 2
Baseline Observations including BM	
ECG: Application and recognition of Cardiac Arrest Rhythms	
ECG: Recognition of NSR, ST elevation and depression	
ECG: Recognition of abnormal ECG presentations	
Stepwise Airway Management (including supraglottic airways)	
Awareness and support for advanced airway management	
Introduction to haemorrhage control & Immobilisation	
Assessment of a medical patient (ABCDE & basic Hx)	
Assessment of a trauma patient	
Advanced Life Support (Adult, paediatric & Trauma)	
IV/IO Access	
Development of more in-depth consultation and history for non-life threatening presentations	
Clinical reasoning and shared decision making in non-life threatening presentations	
Introduction to safe practice in referral, safeguarding and discharge	

Students are permitted to practice these skills in the NHS Specialities environment under the supervision of an appropriately trained clinician for the skill.

However, there is no requirement for supervisors to sign off these skills in the students PAD

Supervision

We ask that there is a nominated practice educator (PE) or mentor within the placement area who would meet them at the start of the first day for attendance record keeping and orientation. They would ideally also be responsible for identifying and directing students to learning opportunities (such as those suggested above) throughout the placement block.

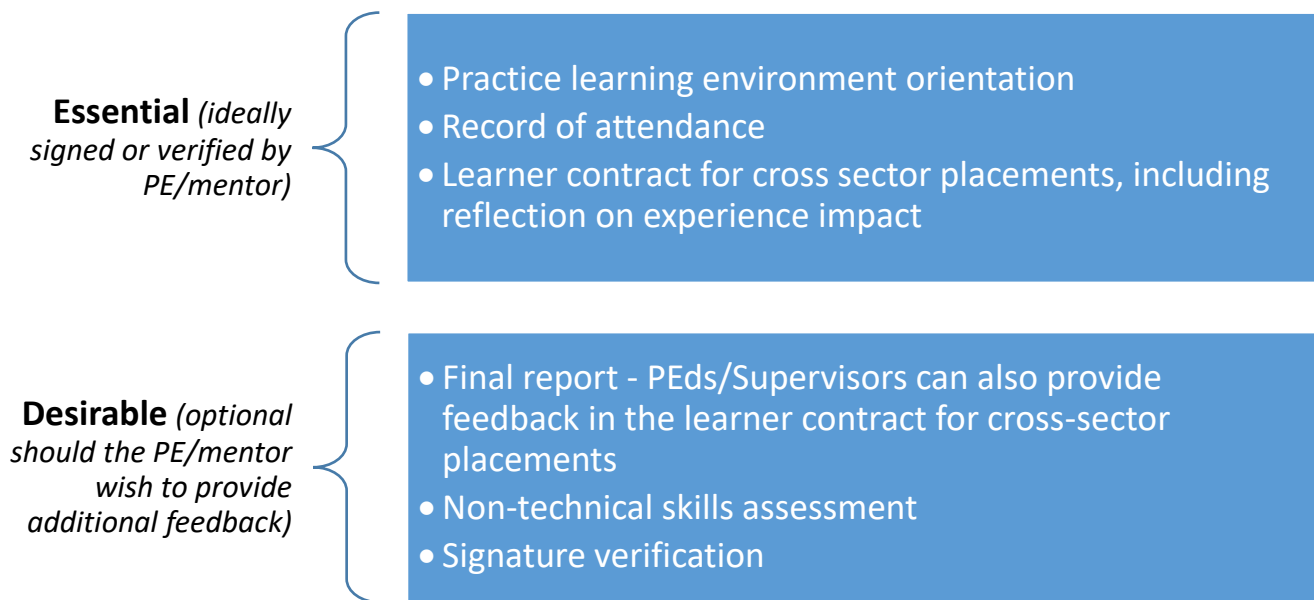
If you have any questions/concerns, please contact paramedicplacements@gcu.ac.uk

Assessment and documentation

All relevant documentation should be completed independently by the student.

It is not necessary for PE/mentors to review/verify these, but comments and feedback are welcomed and encouraged where possible.

Students are required to submit the following documents to GCU following the placement:



PEs/mentors have the option of reviewing and signing these documents should they wish to provide additional feedback, but this is entirely optional.

Students should ensure that they download the correct learner contract for cross-sector and complete the initial sections before they attend the initial meeting