



## **Accelerated Paramedic Pathway Program: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the selection criteria for entry to the accelerated paramedic program?**

You are required to pass all subjects from semester one of the current year plus have an 'unrestricted' (not provisional) NSW driver's licence. You will require an 'unrestricted' Class LR (manual specification) or higher NSW driver's licence prior to being appointed to the Ambulance Service NSW. This will be your responsibility and will be at your expense, after you have been accepted into the program.

You must have a good driving record with a loss of no more than six demerit points off your licence over the previous three years and no licence cancellation for any reason (other than fine default) over the previous 24 months. The Ambulance Service of NSW will consider all driving convictions, particularly those relating to driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, reckless driving, dangerous driving or those leading to loss of licence regardless of when it occurred).

You will be required to pass tests that demonstrate a standard of medical / physical fitness and strength appropriate to perform the requirements and duties of the position. These tests will be arranged and paid for by the Ambulance Service of NSW during your application process.

You will also be invited to a series of aptitude tests arranged and paid for by the Ambulance Service of NSW which will help determine your suitability to work as a paramedic. The tests and subsequent interview will focus on the following skills and abilities:

- effective written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills including excellent customer care skills to a diverse range of clients
- ability to work independently and as part of a team
- analytical skills and problem solving ability
- adaptability and have the ability to remain effective under pressure.

### **What are the requirements of the accelerated course?**

The accelerated course means you start as a trainee paramedic after the completion of two years' full-time study. During this time you will be required to complete the equivalent of 10 subjects. To achieve this, you must undertake and complete subjects in the Summer Sessions at the end of year one and two. A combined total of four subjects are completed in these Summer Sessions. You will also be required to complete four subjects in your third year while in the employ of the Ambulance Service of NSW.

### **How long will I be at university before I can apply for the accelerated program?**

At least one semester of your first year.

### **How do I apply?**

Visit [www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au) to obtain an overview of the Ambulance Service of NSW. Representatives from the Ambulance Service of NSW will visit students at a CSU campus early in 2009 to provide them with an application kit.

### **When will I find out if I have been successful?**

In semester two of the first year of the degree course.

### **What do I receive to confirm my offer?**

A provisional letter of offer will be issued to you from the Ambulance Service of NSW.

### **How much will I be paid?**

The base rate for a year one trainee paramedic is \$42,990 (HECs, salary, salary packaging, sick leave, super etc). However, with shift penalty rates, trainees may earn between \$55,000 and \$60,000 in their first year.



**If I don't get selected at the end of year one can I be selected at the end of year two?**

Yes. You will be eligible to be retested and may be interviewed again 12 months after your last testing.

**If I don't get selected at all can I ever join the Ambulance Service of NSW?**

Yes. You will be required to meet the selection criteria for the position and be successful in the remainder of the selection process.

**I was selected but now I am failing the course, will my offer be withdrawn?**

Your continuation in the accelerated program is subject to you passing all subjects. If you fail your course, your offer will be withdrawn. You may be eligible for special consideration if you can provide evidence of significant extenuating circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis, however you will still be eligible to apply for employment with the Ambulance Service of NSW upon completion of your degree through the Graduate Pathway.

**I was selected and passed the course. Must I work for the Ambulance Service of NSW?**

The Ambulance Service of NSW is one of the largest ambulance services in the world, offering excellent working conditions and benefits under the accelerated program. Notwithstanding, you are eligible to seek employment elsewhere. Should you choose to travel for an extended period, your re-entry into the service will be streamlined and welcomed.

**When will I be advised of my placement?**

When you receive your provisional letter of offer.

**What if I can't move to the placement area?**

Your situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**If posted to a rural location, will I have a mentor?**

You will be placed with a clinical mentor during the third year of the accelerated degree program. You will be fully supervised at all times during this period.

**What follow up training is provided?**

Upon successful completion of the accelerated program, you will be recognised as an Ambulance Service of NSW paramedic and will receive your initial Certificate to Practice (CTP). All paramedics are required to maintain their CTP through engaging in ongoing professional development. The Ambulance Service of NSW provides a variety of opportunities to engage in professional development, and paramedics are also encouraged to pursue professional development provided by other organisations such as tertiary postgraduate studies.

**How will I be supported in my development during the third year of the program when employed by the Ambulance Service of NSW?**

You will undertake an eight-week organisational induction program at the Ambulance Education Centre (AEC) Rozelle. This will ensure you are fully conversant with the Ambulance Service of NSW organisational and operational requirements. The orientation will also involve some assessment in clinical protocols and procedures to ensure you are ready to undertake on-road duties. Participants will then undertake a 30 week on-road practicum under the supervision and guidance of a clinical mentor. The mentor will assist the participant to develop the practices and skills required of a paramedic. The mentor will also complete observation records on the participant which will be assessed by the AEC. During the practicum, participants are also supported by the statewide network of Paramedic Educators and Clinical Training Officers. These Education personnel will ensure your practicum proceeds positively and smoothly. They will assist to resolve any problems that may arise. At the conclusion of the practicum, participants will return to the AEC for the final Accelerated Program Inservice. This Inservice is designed to ensure participants are fully prepared to undertake independent duties as a paramedic.



### **What are the advantages of this program over continuing University full-time and then gaining employment?**

The benefits of this program over remaining in full-time study include:

- a guarantee of employment within the first year of commencing your studies, subject to successfully completing all subjects
- the opportunity to start putting what you have learnt into practice after only two years of full-time study. This enhances your understanding of what you have learnt in the theoretical setting increasing your understanding of paramedical science
- the opportunity to earn an income after only two years of full-time study
- achieving recognition as a qualified paramedic after three years rather than four years as is the case with students not undertaking the accelerated program.

### **Can I choose to complete the full-time program and apply to the Ambulance Service of NSW for employment?**

Yes, you may apply for graduate entry upon completion of your degree.

### **Are there part-time employment opportunities during the first two years while studying at CSU?**

There are no opportunities for part-time employment during the first two years of study at this time. Participants should focus on completing course requirements in preparation for the third year of the program. A clinical placement is undertaken during the second year of the course.

### **What career pathways are available once employed by the NSW Ambulance Service of NSW?**

Subject to successful completion of the program, participants can pursue career pathways including: Paramedic, Intensive Care Paramedic (ICP), Rescue, SCAT, motorcycle ICP, Rapid Response ICP, snow operations, counter disaster, Education, Patient Safety, Ambulance Operations (Dispatch), research, promotion to Station Officer, Team Leader, District Officer, Assistant Divisional Managers, Divisional Managers, General Manager Operations.

### **Will I be employed beyond the 12 month scholarship period (year three)?**

Yes, if your performance and conduct is satisfactory.

### **Why and when do you need to get an unrestricted LR Licence?**

You will need an unrestricted LR (manual) driver's licence in order to drive ambulance vehicles. The cost of obtaining this licence is approximately \$700. The Ambulance Service of NSW will advise you to obtain this when you have completed the selection process and are offered a position.

### **Do you get a choice as to where you will be located?**

You will be initially appointed to a training area which will be generally within the Sydney metropolitan area, but can include regional areas. Prior to undertaking the accelerated program Inservice course at the end of your practicum, the Service will give you the opportunity to express a preference for locations which have been deemed to be priority vacancies – these are located in rural areas. The Ambulance Service of NSW will try to fulfil your preferences but you could be posted to any location within the NSW where there is an ambulance requirement.

### **How do I become an Intensive Care Paramedic?**

After qualifying as a paramedic with the Ambulance Service of NSW in year two, with an additional year of consolidated experience as a qualified paramedic you may apply for merit selection into an ICP course.

### **What professional organisation best represents paramedics and how do I join?**

The Australian College of Ambulance Professionals (ACAP), a national body, represents the professional interests of paramedics. ACAP membership is available to students undertaking tertiary degrees in paramedical science. ACAP provides a range of benefits for its members including professional development opportunities. The NSW branch of ACAP welcomes applications for membership from tertiary students. Visit [www.acap.org.au](http://www.acap.org.au) for more information.