

AUT

A FUTURE IN
PARAMEDICINE



WHAT IS PARAMEDICINE?

While flashing sirens and speeding ambulances may be the public image of what a paramedic may do, they handle much more than car crashes and other accidents.

As a registered medical professional, paramedics' core business is caring for people and saving lives by providing out of hospital emergency care and advanced life support in a timely manner. After paramedics arrive by ambulance at an accident or medical emergency site, they must assess the patient to formulate and diagnose an intervention plan and treatment.

They provide acute medical care, treating injury and illness across a broad spectrum of medical situations in unique environments.

Utilising your skills and knowledge gained through extensive training and clinical placement you are well placed to make a real difference to the lives of New Zealanders on a daily basis.

If you have a strong compassionate personality, a genuine interest in providing emergency care, have strengths in defusing volatile situations, and can cope with unpredictable challenges involving trauma and illness, then this could be a great career path for you.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

There is an increased demand worldwide for paramedics and/or emergency services due to an ageing population, less community GPs and more emphasis on increasing primary health care in the community.

Primary care needs

The Ministry of Health's increased focus on reducing hospital admissions through out-of-hospital care has led to increased roles and responsibilities for paramedics in the primary care setting. Paramedics with an advanced knowledge of chronic conditions in aging populations are particularly in demand.

Telehealth increasing

There is an increase in provision of telehealth services (triaging on the phone, providing health advice and guidance). This is a fast growing sector that is changing work requirements for paramedics. Many graduates work in call centres or from home to provide this essential work setting.

Funding increases

Changes in funding in the health workforce and the global pandemic have led to year-on-year increases in ambulance budgets to account for the increasing demand and reliance on this essential health service.

Diversity of population

More diversity of ethnicity is needed within paramedic services due to New Zealand's growing ethnic diversity. By 2050, 50% of New Zealanders will identify as non-European. Fluency in another language is becoming a useful additional skill.

Other employment options

Organisations such as the NZ Defence Force, the National Health Agency and primary health organisations (PHO) employ paramedicine graduates into health-related roles. Extensive clinical placements give students the perfect opportunity to find the best setting for them before graduating.

Global opportunities

Overseas opportunities are enormous with inviting pay packets and work conditions for organisations from throughout Australasia, UK, USA and Canada EMS services actively seeking graduates from New Zealand.

Degree for registration

Since 2021 a paramedicine degree is the requirement for paramedic registration in New Zealand or Australia.

WORK SETTINGS

Paramedic graduates usually find jobs with ambulance services of St John Ambulance (covers 95% of New Zealand's population) or Wellington Free Ambulance (covers Wellington region). Diploma graduates can work as EMTs with ambulance services, but not as paramedics.

Paramedics can also work for out-of-hospital emergency care, such as hospital emergency departments, primary health organisations (medical centres/GP clinics), off-shore oil rigs, industrial/mine sites, ski fields, super yachts, and educational institutions.

Postgraduate qualifications open up further opportunities for paramedic roles. Critical Care Paramedic (CCP) or Extended Care Paramedic (ECP) develop a greater range of knowledge, skills and clinical application of medicine in a vast array of settings, including work in rapid response vehicles, helicopters, GP surgeries, or in remote overseas locations, such as the Pacific Islands and the Middle East.

With experience and specialist training, paramedics can become part of emergency response teams, working with NZ Police, and Fire and Emergency NZ. They can also participate in international relief work, with the New Zealand and Australian Defence Forces also employing paramedics.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Paramedics usually work two day shifts (12 hours each) and two night shifts (12 hours each), then have four days off.

Levels of practice

First responders – Volunteers who have undergone a comprehensive first aid course and provide pre-hospital care to a limited level under supervision of paramedics.

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Assists paramedics as part of ambulance services, including some drug administration and cardiac life support. In New Zealand this is often a graduate entry role. EMT's need an 'authority to practice' (ATP). You are typically eligible to apply for an ATP at the 18-month point in the Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine.

Paramedic – Attends accidents, medical emergencies and many other callouts, helping stabilise people who are sick, injured or in shock while transporting them to a medical facility if required. Requires skills such as manual defibrillation and IV cannulation, synchronised cardioversion and the administration of a range of drugs. Requires a Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine.

Critical and Extended Care Paramedic – CCPs and ECPs hold the highest qualification attainable in New Zealand. As specialists in critical care and clinical judgement, they have proven clinical ability to manage complex patients. They deliver a wide range of drugs, advanced airway management, and a number of invasive skills. Requires a 12-month postgraduate course of study.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Practice professionally – Undertake safe, skilled, ethical and legally appropriate pre-hospital emergency care that meets legislative requirements of all health professionals.

Demonstrate sound clinical judgement – Make clinical decisions in a timely, ethical and patient inclusive fashion. Be able to adapt to changes in the patient's condition, taking into account the patient's present condition and circumstances leading to it, their age and autonomy, distance to hospital care and availability of resources.

Practice contextually – Value and respect diverse cultural and professional perspectives. Skilled working with colleagues, sick and injured people, whānau and the community.

Problem solve effectively – Able to interpret observations and clinical history, recognise severity and solve problems in new situations. Underpin problem solving with a sound grasp of knowledge and rationale.

Lead astutely – Competent at making decisions in a team setting, working well under pressure, being a role model and fostering optimal performance in teams.

Clinical skills – Knowledgeable in a range of paramedic practice, including putting in IVs, resuscitation, treating shock and injuries, performing emergency procedures and using specialist equipment such as cardiac defibrillators. Demonstrate competency in safety and situation assessment and risk management. Highly knowledgeable about the anatomy and physiology of the human body.

SALARY GUIDE

The rates below are national St John Ambulance and Wellington Free Ambulance rates and do not include overtime.

	Salary (per year)
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) graduate role	\$60,000–\$66,000
Paramedic	\$79,000–\$87,000
Critical Care Paramedic (CCP)	\$94,000–\$104,000
Extended Care Paramedic (ECP)	\$94,000–\$104,000
Australian new graduates (Paramedic Intern)	AUS \$100,000 (location dependent)

Sources: St John Ambulance Collective Agreement, www.payscale.com
Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (mid-2022) and should only be used as a guideline.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Effective communication skills across a diverse range of people
- Able to develop professional relationships with emergency services including police and Fire Emergency NZ
- Physically fit and capable of dealing with long shifts
- Motivated, resilient and realistic about the challenges of paramedicine
- Self-assured, confident, trustworthy and ethical
- Demonstrate professional integrity, honesty, and collegiality
- Clean driver's licence



PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

To work as a paramedic in New Zealand, you must be registered with the Kaunihera Manapou Paramedic Council of New Zealand, the regulatory authority for Paramedics registering to work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

AUT is the only New Zealand university to offer a Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine. Whitireia New Zealand (Wellington region) also offers a degree.

Extensive clinical hours (approximately 1,000 hours), while studying, ensure AUT paramedic graduates are work ready. This includes a hospital placement in a general ward, as well as emergency wards.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study is available at postgraduate level, including the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science in Paramedicine focusing on Critical Care Paramedicine and Extended Care Paramedicine, through to master's and PhD / Doctor of Health Science level qualifications. Study areas include psychosocial aspects of emergencies, resuscitation physiology, emergency risk communication, contemporary intensive paramedicine and business continuity and crisis management.

Zoe Farmer

Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine
Flight Crew Medic for GCH Aviation

"As a flight crew medic and winch operator I am one of two paramedics on the helicopter. When operating the winch I command the movement of the aircraft by the pilot for the critical care paramedic (CCP) going down the wire into the scene. In any emergency situation there is a fine balance between patient needs and the safety of all onboard.

Helicopters are typically dispatched to higher acuity incidences so I am always applying my clinical skills as well as my winching skills. As a registered paramedic I assist the CCP with various tasks, following their assessment and treatment to pre-empt their needs. I'm currently completing postgraduate study to become a CCP, so it's really helpful to be working alongside one.

It can be difficult working in a noisy and compact cabin wearing heavy-duty gear, such as a helmet and night vision goggles and only communicating via intercom. But I love how no day is ever the same and I am pushed beyond my comfort zone in a challenging environment. I enjoy the exposure of standing on the skid outside the helicopter inflight, winching the flight medic and patient.

My shifts start at 6pm and I work 24 hours on/24 hours off for five days, then have four days off. A busy shift could be four or five jobs in 24 hours. On average, 2-3 hours is spent on each job, then we need to refuel, restock and complete safety checks before heading off again.

The prospect of working on a search and rescue helicopter is what drove me towards paramedicine. I was wanting to be outdoors, physically active, making a difference and have opportunities for continuing professional development in an evolving field. This has it all.

Tips

Think about what separates you from your peers. My love of outdoors and rock climbing helped me get this job. I also did extra placements and took on other learning opportunities, attended conferences, sat on committees, mentored first-year students, volunteered for St John and taught First Aid part-time."

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"We look for ability to be self-driven, work in unison in a small dynamic team and listen and learn. We want someone who can give clear verbal communication to the pilot, has a good sense of humour and is able to cope with the flexibility of shift work. Zoe has these skills and attributes in abundance.

Experience as a St John Ambulance paramedic or in an emergency department will help you gain clinical exposure and life skills. This job is not for the faint-hearted."

Rick Knight

Flight Crew Manager, GCH Aviation



USEFUL WEBSITES

Ngā Paerewa o Manapou Paramedic Standards
www.paramediccouncil.org.nz

St John NZ

www.stjohn.org.nz/About-St-John/Join-St-John/Ambulance-Officers

NZ Paramedic Education and Research Trust

www.nzparamedic.org

Defence Forces

www.defencecareers.mil.nz/army/jobs/medic

Australasian College of Paramedicine

www.paramedics.org

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about paramedicine studies and the Bachelor of Health Science, visit www.aut.ac.nz/paramedicine


For other Future Career Sheets visit www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets

EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through <https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>

FUTURE STUDENTS


Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire
futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

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CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)


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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, mid-2022.

