**Career Profile: Paramedic**

A paramedic is also called a Critical Care Assistant (CCA). S/he is a trained medical professional who plays a key role in an Emergency Care Team’s treatment of a patient. The paramedic provides advanced life support to critically ill or injured patients in the pre-hospital emergency environment.

As a paramedic, qualified as an Advanced Life Support Practitioner, you may be expected to carry out some or all of the following responsibilities:

* respond to medical emergencies out in the field in order to stabilise the victim's condition so that s/he can be transported to medical facilities
* carry out CPR and airway maintenance
* perform electric defibrillation and set up intravenous lines
* insert endotracheal tubes
* administer various medication
* interpret electrocardiograms at the scene of an emergency
* manage an incident scene and liaise with provincial services, e.g. traffic, metro police and firefighters
* carry out standby duties at various events

**Education Requirements**

National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in paramedics students are advised to select English, Science and Mathematics and to add to this a selection from the designated subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

## National Diploma / BTech

The paramedic career has a practical focus. Students can enrol for programmes to qualify in emergency medicine at BTechnology and Diploma levels. Short courses such as Basic Ambulance Assistant, Ambulance Emergency Assistant, Critical Care Assistant/Paramedic are offered at a number of accredited institutions.

[Click here to access a list of accredited institutions](http://www.hpcsa.co.za/hpcsa/default.aspx?id=87)[[1]](#footnote-1)

The National Diploma in Emergency Medicine is in the process of being phased out. The most advanced qualification currently available is a four year BTechnology degree in Emergency Medicine (4 years) offered at:

* [University of Johannesburg](http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=www.uj.ac.za/emc)[[2]](#footnote-2) (Department of Emergency Medical Care)
* [Durban University of Technology](http://www.dut.ac.za/site/awdep.asp?depnum=22614)[[3]](#footnote-3) (Faculty of Health Sciences)
* [Central University of Technology](http://www.cut.ac.za/web/academics/faculties/hea/sht/emc)[[4]](#footnote-4) (Emergency Medical Care)

**Possible Employers**

* [Department of Health](http://www.doh.gov.za/) [[5]](#footnote-5)
* Ambulance service, public or private
* Emergency services, e.g. [ER24](http://www.er24.co.za/)[[6]](#footnote-6), [Netcare 911](http://www.netcare911.co.za/)[[7]](#footnote-7)
* [St John's Ambulance](http://www.stjohn.org.za/)[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Mining companies

**Find out more**

Find out more about the challenges of being a paramedic and links to possible career opportunities in the emergency medical field as a paramedic:

* [Gives information on the work of ER24](http://www.er24.co.za/)[[9]](#footnote-9)
* [Keeping paramedics busy](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=nw20080322152852530C396515)[[10]](#footnote-10)
* [Mediczone](http://mediczone.co.za/index.php)[[11]](#footnote-11)
* [Basic tips on what to do at the scene of an accident](http://www.arrivealive.co.za/pages.aspx?nc=accidentscene)[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Are you suited to this career?**

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this occupation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Quiz** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Are you interested in helping people? |  |  |
| Will you be prepared to work long and often unusual hours? |  |  |
| Are you able to work under stressful conditions? |  |  |
| Would people you know describe you as reliable and responsible? |  |  |
| Are you able to work well in a team? |  |  |
| Are you decisive, able to make up your mind quickly? |  |  |
| Are you able to work on your own? |  |  |
| Are you patient? |  |  |
| Are you able to comfort people who are distressed? |  |  |
| Can you express yourself clearly orally and in writing? |  |  |

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is an occupation to consider.

1. http://www.hpcsa.co.za/hpcsa/default.aspx?id=87 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=www.uj.ac.za/emc [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.dut.ac.za/site/awdep.asp?depnum=22614 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.cut.ac.za/web/academics/faculties/hea/sht/emc [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.doh.gov.za/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.er24.co.za/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.netcare911.co.za/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.stjohn.org.za/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. http://www.er24.co.za/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\_id=1&click\_id=13&art\_id=nw20080322152852530C396515 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. http://mediczone.co.za/index.php [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://www.arrivealive.co.za/pages.aspx?nc=accidentscene [↑](#footnote-ref-12)