

## Inherent Requirements

### Graduate Diploma/Certificate of Paramedicine

Federation University Australia and the Institute of Health and Wellbeing strongly support the rights of all people, who wish to pursue pre-registration paramedicine studies to achieve their potential and career objectives.

#### **Definition**

Federation University defines for its purposes, inherent requirements as the ability to work productively to achieve the core learning outcomes and required quality of the course while maintaining:

- academic integrity
- the ability to work in teams, and
- the capacity to work safely.

*Adopted from Australian Human Rights Commission 2021.*

#### **Inherent Requirements**

Federation University Australia is committed to ensuring equality of access to all courses and units and will provide reasonable adjustments to the learning environment to meet the needs of a diverse range of students. For example, students with a disability, and students with caring responsibilities.

However, Federation University acknowledges that there are some situations where adjustment is not possible. In such cases, Federation University will provide information on such restrictions to enable students to make an informed decision in relation to their courses and unit options in the form of inherent requirements.

Inherent requirements refer to the fundamental attributes, skills, and abilities that you must be able to achieve in order to demonstrate the essential learning outcomes of the degree you are studying. For example, such restrictions may include but are not limited to the following:

- Inability to secure a current Working with Children Check precluding students being able to undertake mandatory placements.
- An inability to make reasonable adjustments in the education, clinical or workplace environment in relation to physical, psychological, cultural, or sensory disabilities precluding students from being able to undertake mandatory placements.
- Disclosures on Police checks that may preclude students from being able to undertake mandatory placements.

Federation University also notes that successful completion of a qualification does not necessarily guarantee registration in the associated profession. Students are advised to seek information on any restrictions that might apply to them in the applicable registration process prior to making decisions on a choice of course. For example, APHRA registration for paramedicine students.

## Introduction

The role of a Paramedic is demanding and requires a number of personal attributes and skills. In line this, please familiarise yourself with the inherent requirements of the role of a paramedic and the Graduate Diploma of Paramedicine. This information will help guide your leaning and help you to understand any obstacles you my encounter in applying for employment/registration as a paramedic.

- Sitting and driving (<30 minutes)
- Frequent and sustained squatting and kneeling to access patients at ground level. Some forward bending over patient
- Sitting and forward bending to provide clinical treatment/monitoring in the back of a moving ambulance. Some balance required.
- Frequent manual handling of patients (generally two officers), including rolling, positioning, lifting and carrying patients (<180kg) between knee and waist level, and pushing/pulling trolleys. Assistance is to be called for heavier patients.
- Manual handling of equipment between ground and above shoulder level (<20kg), lifting and carrying bilateral/unilateral (e.g., medication boxes, oxy-viva)
- Other demands include shift work, work stress, fatigue and irregular eating hours associated with the workload (e.g., 12-hour work shift).
- Sitting and driving (<7 hours)
- Frequent and sustained squatting and kneeling to access patients at ground level. Some forward bending over patient.
- Sitting and forward bending to provide clinical treatment/monitoring in the back of a moving ambulance. Some balance required.
- Frequent manual handling of patients (generally two officers), including rolling, positioning, lifting and carrying patients (<180kg) between knee and waist level, and pushing/pulling trolleys. Assistance is to be called for heavier patients.
- Manual handling of equipment between ground and above shoulder level (<20kg), lifting and carrying bilateral/unilateral (e.g., medication boxes, oxy-viva).
- Some heavier manual handling tasks in situations as required. May include use of equipment available to assist in removing patient from injury source.
- Some sustained sitting or lying down at station when on standby waiting for calls on night shift.

The Paramedic Medical Standards reflect the inherent requirements of the role. Applicants are assessed against the Medical Standards to determine their capacity to perform the duties of a Paramedic (i.e., fit for duty). These aspects are assessed as part of the pre-placement medical and physical capacity assessment.

## 1. General

Individuals are required to work in shifts, with fluctuations in workload and variations in shift duration. Overall, an inherent requirement of the Paramedic is to transport patients via various vehicles. Vehicles undertake emergency lights and sirens driving, including when a patient under active treatment is on board.

It is a requirement that students meet the medical requirements for a commercial driving licence, as prescribed in the Assessing Fitness to Drive guidelines.

Individuals may be working in high stress environments that involve loud noises, varying environmental conditions and distressing scenes. All individuals should consider whether this is appropriate for them.

## 2. Vision

Individuals are required to have good vision to be able to operate a vehicle and perform patient care duties.

If an individual has visual acuity worse than 6/9 in the better eye, or worse than 6/18 in either eye, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.

Individuals who experience any diplopia (other than physiological diplopia) when fixing objects within 20 degrees of the primary direction of the gaze are ineligible for appointment.

Individuals must not have any indication of night blindness.

If an individual has a visual field defect, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.

If indicated by an ophthalmologist or optometrist, the individual will be required to undertake an annual review of their vision.

## 3. Hearing

A loss of more than 40 decibels on the ISO 389 scale (at 500, 1000 and 2000 CPD on a pure tone audiometer) in either ear is considered significant, however may not exclude an individual from appointment. Hearing should be evaluated without the use of artificial aids.

If any doubt exists as to an individual's auditory acuity, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.

#### **4. Cardiovascular conditions, fainting or blackouts**

Individuals are required to undertake significant physically and psychologically demanding duties such as prolonged extrications, walking long distances in difficult terrain, and lifting and carrying patients.

If an individual suffers from any of the following conditions, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands should be sought:

- Angina Pectoris or Suspected Angina Pectoris
- Confirmed myocardial infarction
- Coronary artery bypass, grafting or coronary angioplasty
- Vascular disorders
- Uncontrolled hypertension
- Valvular heart disease
- Arrhythmia
- Cardiomyopathy
- Congenital heart disorder
- Reoccurring fainting or blackouts.

#### **5. Neurological and neuromuscular conditions (excluding epilepsy)**

If an individual suffers from any neurological or neuromuscular disorder, a specialist report referencing the employee's condition against the medical requirements for a commercial driving licence, as prescribed in the Assessing Fitness to Drive guidelines and the specific critical job demands must be obtained.

#### **6. Epilepsy**

Individuals with a diagnosis of epilepsy/seizures will be measured against the requirements for a commercial driving licence specified in the Assessing Fitness to Drive for Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers Standards.

Individuals with a history of febrile convulsions limited to early childhood do not require further review.

#### **7. Respiratory diseases**

If an individual suffers from any obstructive lung disease such as severe chronic asthma, chronic bronchitis or emphysema, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.

#### **8. Metabolic diseases**

Individuals suffering diabetes mellitus may be considered for employment as a Paramedic. Some special conditions may need to be considered with regard to geographical placements and/or shift type e.g., placed in a larger station with

day/nightshift operations, requirement to work as a dual paramedic response and no on call emergency availability.

## **9. Psychiatric illnesses, depression or anxiety**

Where there is a risk that an individual may be compromised by a psychiatric condition or psychological instability, a specialist report, taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.

A history of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or significant history of mental illness may exclude a person from employment as a Paramedic. A written report from a treating medical officer may be required.

## **10. Orthopaedic conditions**

If an individual has suffered from a back injury that resulted in more than one week off work or full-time study, spinal surgery or suffers from chronic back pain, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands should be sought.

If an individual has suffered from multiple dislocations, reconstructive surgery or arthritis in any joint, a specialist report taking into account the critical job demands is required.

Individuals are required to have good manual dexterity (for drawing up drugs etc).

## **11. Medications**

Medications which impair consciousness, cognitive thinking or spatial coordination may preclude employment or the Paramedic from performing operational duties. A detailed medical report is required from the applicant or employee's treating medical officer for consideration before operational duties may be considered.

Applicants with a personal or family history of malignant hyperpyrexia cannot be accepted (because of the use of methoxyflurane in ambulances) unless they have had testing that indicates volatile anaesthetic agents are not involved in their case.

## **12. Substance abuse**

A definite history of abuse of any substance (alcohol or drug - either prescription or non-prescription) may exclude a person from employment as a Paramedic. Further testing may be requested at the approved Medical Assessor's discretion.

## **13. Immunisation requirements**

Individuals are required to provide evidence of immunisation history. This currently includes (but is subject to change): COVID-19, Influenza, Varicella, MMR, Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis.

#### **14. Mask Fit Testing**

Individuals are required to undertake mask fit testing and provide evidence of at least two appropriate masks.

#### **15. Legal Requirements**

- Undertake a criminal record check/police check.
- Undertake a Working with Children Check
- Comply with the Code of Conduct as set out by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
- Comply with the policies and codes of conduct set out by Federation University (including clinical placement guidelines and academic integrity policies).
- Comply with the policies as set out by the clinical placement institution (including the Ambulance Victoria Clinical Placement Guidelines).

#### **16. Knowledge – Cognition, Numeracy and Literacy**

- An individual is required to acquire, retain, and use knowledge to develop practice.
- This includes critical analysis and reflection on practice (sometimes and pressure and time constraints).
- Individuals are required to develop knowledge and practical skills and apply them to patient care in a range of settings.
- Individuals are required to draw knowledge from a range of different sources including readings, research, lectures, tutorials, videos, podcasts, practical demonstrations, and scenario work.
- Individuals are required to possess English literacy skills that are sufficient to communicate (verbal and written), comprehend, interpret and reference (academic conventions learning materials and patient records. There is a minimum required standard (English Language Skills) for registration with the Paramedicine Board. Further details can be found here: <https://www.paramedicineboard.gov.au/Professional-standards/Registration-standards/English-language-skills.aspx>
- Numeracy skills: Individuals are required to possess basic numeracy skills to perform simple division and multiplication (without the aid of a calculator) relating to medication calculations.

Reference:

Victoria University – Bachelor of Paramedicine Inherent Requirements.  
Kinnect – Paramedic Medical Guidelines 2023.

Australian Human Rights Commission. Inherent Requirements. <https://humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12052> retrieved 06/09/2021.