

Programme Specification – Top Up awards at Level 6

Programme Specification for BSc (Hons) Paramedic Studies Top up

This document applies to Academic Year 2019/20 onwards

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	BSc (Hons) Top-up Level 6
5.	Programme title	Paramedic Studies
6.	Pathways available	Single Honours
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Taught modules at University of Worcester
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Full time over 1 year or Part-time between 2- 4 years
9.	UCAS Code	B755
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	Guidance has been sought from: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA 2016) Subject Benchmark Statements: Paramedics QAA (2014) The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	March 2019 August 2019 AQU amendments to Section 19

12. Educational aims of the programme

The University has historically provided high quality education that has facilitated qualified paramedics from both within and outside the UK to enhance their academic and professional skills and 'top-up' their qualifications to degree level. This course builds on this experience, taking qualified paramedics through a study of paramedic science that is practice-focused, academic and has a professional discipline focus.

The implementation of [HCPC \(2017\) Standards of Education and Training](#) included the requirement that the minimum qualification for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) be increased to degree level. Whilst this course does not confer eligibility for registration with the HCPC or other professional statutory regulatory body, at its core is the principle of transformational learning, supporting students to become proactive at delivering high quality care in diverse, rapidly changing, complex healthcare environments across the health-illness continuum.

It acknowledges the rapid expansion in the scope of the paramedic role, addressing some of the challenges presented in delivering the [NHS \(2014\) Five Year Forward View](#). Compassion and a commitment to the promotion and maintenance of human dignity are key concepts underpinning this programme. In design, the course aims to prepare students for a dynamic work environment; an environment in which service user wellbeing is often dependent on integrated systems of health, care and welfare.

Building on learning from their practice as Registered Paramedics, this course offers a rich student-centred approach to teaching and learning to support further academic and practitioner development. This Level 6 course enables students to demonstrate both independence and self-determination. The course is designed for those students who wish to extend their

knowledge and capacity to influence in the paramedic profession and wider health and social care economy.

The course aims to:

1. Promote autonomous and compassionate decision makers delivering advanced high quality, evidence-based, safe and effective care in the urgent, emergency, critical and out of hospital arena with development towards specialist and advanced paramedic roles;
2. Ensure students develop autonomous critical thinking skills, advanced clinical decision making, effective patient assessment and management and professional attributes to meet the needs of patients, both individually and in groups across the lifespan within their scope of practice;
3. Promote understanding, debate and analysis of contemporary social issues, their aetiologies, and policies related to health and social inequalities regionally and internationally, and critically consider available and potential public health interventions;
4. Provide opportunity within a multidisciplinary learning environment to evaluate and critically reflect on contemporary operational practice within the integrated multi-dimensional settings of health, social care, social welfare and other related fields to reduce barriers to care in accordance with the [NHS \(2014\) Five Year Forward View](#);
5. Continue the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and skills and techniques from current evidence-based practice that leads to the ability to conduct research independently related to roles within research and education;
6. Learn within a dynamic, multidisciplinary environment to foster transferable interpersonal, advanced communication and collaborative and team-working skills required for working effectively as a reflective paramedic within complex, integrated multiagency and multicultural environments;
7. Develop transferable graduate skills which promote autonomous lifelong learning and an enjoyment and commitment to continuous professional development in accordance with the [College of Paramedics Career Framework \(2018\)](#);
8. Provide the capacity to be leaders and mentors that contribute to, shape and direct people and policies within different healthcare systems in accordance with the health leadership model (NHS Leadership Academy 2013);

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Knowledge and Understanding		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Draw on knowledge and theory in conjunction with personal and practitioner insight to critically inform understanding of contemporary operational practice within the complex, multi-dimensional settings of health, social care, social welfare and other related fields of work;	PSTU3005 PSTU3003 APHS3012 APHS3009
2.	Develop critical clinical decision making, effective patient assessment and management and professional attributes to meet the needs of patients, both individually and in groups across the lifespan;	PSTU3003 PSTU3005
3.	Critically evaluate the contribution and limitations of relevant research and how this can be used to enhance evidence-based practice;	PSTU3002

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

4.	Provide critical and reflective analysis of complex aspects of paramedic practice, using relevant and established theoretical frameworks;	PSTU3002 PSTU3003 PSTU3005 APHS3011
5.	Evaluate research and other forms of evidence, including contemporary social and public health issues including regional and global contexts related to health and social inequalities;	PSTU3002 APHS3011
6.	Identify and discuss the strategic implications of complex challenges and dynamics that emerge when working within multidisciplinary teams to achieve positive outcomes for/with service users and their families;	PSTU3003 PSTU3004

Skills and capabilities related to employability

7.	Demonstrate effective critical decision-making and problem-solving approaches in making informed judgements of care;	PSTU3003 PSTU3005
8.	Develop skills and capabilities as leaders and mentors that influence and impact on different healthcare systems;	PSTU3003 PSTU3006 PSTU3004

Transferable/key skills

9.	Access, retrieve, interpret and utilise information and evidence appropriately including the use of information technology;	PSTU3002 APHS3011
10.	Critically evaluate communication skills as a leader and facilitator of health care professionals;	PSTU3003
11	Demonstrate autonomy in effective engagement with life-long learning;	PSTU3002

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The programme aims and learning outcomes have been developed in accordance with the [University's Curriculum Design Policy](#).

The Paramedic profession is a practice-based and academic discipline and therefore the integration of theory and experiential learning are central to all aspects of the curriculum. Students will have had placements as part of their original course and may be currently working as registered paramedics. The course recognises students' diversity in relation to learning approaches and rates and acknowledges that consistent and timely guidance, accompanied by a variety of learning and teaching methods will facilitate effective learning.

Learning and teaching in the course is designed to develop specialist knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to paramedics working in complex, multi-dimensional settings of health, social care. Additionally, students will be provided with opportunity to develop academic and

transferable skills, which will contribute to their development as independent and autonomous lifelong learners.

Reflective practice is a key element within the learning and teaching strategy and facilitates the integration of theory with practice. Reflection provides students with the opportunity to examine their personal progress and development and to devise strategies for creating further development opportunities. In addition, developing insight can be critically enhanced through the consideration of theory, research and other significant evidence that stimulates reflection on practice.

The course aims to provide accessible and inclusive learning opportunities that enable students to engage with diverse learning and teaching methods. Learning, teaching and assessment acknowledges the relationship between theory and practice and takes an integrated approach to student learning. The modes of teaching include face-to-face seminars, online teaching, workshops, group online learning exercises, peer learning, critical discussions and case scenario storyboarding. In addition, modules will use Blackboard a virtual learning environment (VLE).

Teaching

Students are taught through a combination of interactive workshops, seminars and case-studies. Interactive workshops take a variety of formats and are intended to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities. Seminars enable the discussion and development of understanding of topics, focused on developing subject specific skills and applied individual and group project work.

In addition, meetings with Personal Academic Tutors are scheduled on at least four occasions for full time students with an additional three occasions for up to four years for part time students.

The University places emphasis on enabling students to develop the independent learning capabilities that will equip them for lifelong learning and future employment, as well as academic achievement. A mixture of independent study, teaching and academic support from [Student Services](#) and [Library Services](#), and the [Personal Academic Tutoring](#) system enables students to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

Contact time

In a typical week a full time (FT) student will have around 10-12 contact hours of teaching and a part time student 2 - 6 hours including; seminar, tutorial and small group activities.

Typically, class contact time will be structured around:

- Group seminars, face to face and online
- Interactive workshops
- Scenario based workshops

The precise contact hours will depend on the optional modules selected and the level of individual tutorial and independent study supervision required. The level of contact will vary throughout the year.

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, full time students are expected to undertake around 25 hours and part time students 12 hours self-study a week. Typically, this will involve preparing for classes through reading set texts and undertaking specific preparatory reading as directed in module resources made available on VLE and preparing for assignments.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes specialist academics/researchers, subject librarians, clinical experts and experts by experience/service users.

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, one principal lecturer is a Senior Fellow, 5 of the lecturers are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy and have a higher education teaching qualification and a further 8 lecturers are working towards a qualification or Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Assessment

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments. Each module has one or more formal or 'summative' assessment which is graded and counts towards the overall module grade.

The precise assessment requirements for an individual student in an academic year will vary according to the mandatory and optional modules taken, but a typical formal summative assessment pattern for the course is:

Critique, reflections on practice, debate, case studies, literature search/review, exam, table top exercise and reports.

14. Assessment strategy

The course seeks to align its approach with the [University's Assessment Policy](#) and the University of Worcester Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. This aims to develop graduates who are self-aware, resilient, self-disciplined and able to work for, and within, teams.

The BSc (Hons) Paramedic Studies course offers a range of assessment experiences, enabling them to develop and demonstrate a wide range of skills to achieve these set of goals and reflect the vision for our students.

A comprehensive assignment brief is provided for all summative assessment items containing explicit criteria that are aligned to the module learning outcomes. The assignment brief will clearly indicate to students what they need to do to complete the assessment successfully. Assessment and moderation strategies are designed to meet the requirements of the [University's Assessment Policy](#).

The assessment strategy is designed to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the course aims and outcomes through meeting the assessed learning outcomes presented in course module specifications. The strategy is designed to assist students with their personal and professional development by enabling them to identify and build upon their strengths and to identify and address areas for improvement. This will be achieved by formative and summative assessment and by acquisition of the skills and discipline required of a reflective practitioner.

Assessments are carefully devised to provide students with the opportunity to practise and improve skills. Stimulating and inclusive formative and summative assessment incorporating timely, learner centred feedback is an integral component of the programme to support and develop student learning. Formative assessment and related feedback is aligned to summative assessment items to enable students to achieve the modular and programme outcomes.

All modules use the [UW grade descriptors](#) which have been applied to the programme as a reference for marking criteria. Staff provide feedback to students on summative items electronically within 20 working days of the assessment deadline.

A grid showing assessment methods and weightings mapped to modules at each level, together with an assessment calendar of submission dates is included in the Course Handbook.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award map: BSc (Hons) Paramedic Studies (Top-up) Level 6					
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status (Mandatory (M) or Optional (O))	Pre-requisites	Co-requisites/exclusions and other notes*
PSTU3002	Independent Study	30	M	None	None
PSTU3003	Complex Practice for the Competent Paramedic	30	M	None	None
PSTU3005	Advanced Pathophysiology and Clinical Reasoning for Paramedics	15	M	None	None
PSTU3006*	Mentorship for Paramedic Practice	15	O	None	None*
PSTU3004	Leading for Enhanced Service Delivery	15	O	None	None
APHS3011*	Research for Practice in Applied Health and Social Science	15	O	None	None*
APHS3012	Contemporary Issues in Mental Health	15	O	None	None
APHS3009	Substance Misuse	15	O	None	None

* Students who have not studied these modules at level 5 must choose these modules at level 6

Top up Single Honours Requirements at Level 6

Single Honours students must take 120 credits from the table above to include all Mandatory and three Optional modules from the list above.

Top-up BSc Paramedic Studies (Non-Honours) Requirements at Level 6

In order to be eligible for the exit award of Degree (non-Hons) Paramedic Studies, a student must have passed at least 60 credits at Level 6 including mandatory modules PSTU3003 and PSTU3005.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education (FHEQ) and is constructed to enable students to demonstrate knowledge and competences as detailed [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA 2016\) Subject Benchmark Statements: Paramedics.](#)

The course has taken account of national and local policy drivers including:

[Five Year Forward Plan \(2014\).](#)

[Shape of Caring: Raising the Bar \(2015\).](#)

[Delivering high quality, effective, compassionate care: Developing the right people with the right skills and the right values \(DH 2016\).](#)

[College of Paramedics Curriculum Guidance \(2017\)](#)

[College of Paramedics Principles for CPD](#)

17. Support for students

Student support is a central component of this course and is available from within the Department of Paramedics and Physicians Associates, in the School of Allied Health and Community and from the wider University.

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

Induction

An induction programme is offered to all students in their first week of the course which provides students with the opportunity to meet the course leader, the course team, subject librarian and their personal academic tutor. Induction includes introducing students to the concept of learning and teaching at level 6, including study skills and academic writing, introduction to information and learning systems including library resources, use of computer facilities, timetabling and access to teaching staff will form part of the induction process, an introduction to student services and the international office. There are also a range of free study skills workshops, open to all students on a self-referral basis and the writer in residence offers one to one support. Academic support is also offered by the [Disability and dyslexia service](#).

Personal Academic Tutors

Personal tutoring is at the heart of student support. All students registered for the degree are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor within the Paramedic Science team for the duration of the course, in addition, the course and module leaders are another source of support for students, especially in respect of overall guidance.

Whilst the Personal Academic Tutor will be the student's first point of contact for support with developing academic skills, it may also be useful for them to access some of the additional support the University provides for all its students. This includes a diverse range of study skill support including maths support, a writer in residence and referencing.

Independent Study Support

All students normally complete a Level 6 Independent Study and are supervised by an Independent Study Supervisor.

Additional Programme Information

All students are provided with a Course Handbook that comprehensively outlines the programme and provides advice and guidance on the Academic Regulations and Procedures of the University of Worcester. Module outlines and assessment details are provided for all modules.

A wide range of information and learning services are available to students including the VLE which are also used for staff and students to communicate with each other.

Additional support

If the student experiences difficulties during their time at the University which fall beyond the scope of their role, the Personal Academic Tutor will direct the student to further, appropriate sources of information and support.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to provide fair and equal access to a university education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it through a policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or age.

For full time applicants, admission to the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Studies Top up is via UCAS. Application for part time students is via the University of Worcester web pages; however international students can access further support with application and visa requirements through the International Office. Students may download application forms from the [University of Worcester website](#) or by contacting Registry Services 01905 855111.

Entry requirements

Students are required to be:

- An HCPC Registered Paramedic
- A Paramedic qualification equivalent to a UK Diploma of Higher Education worth 240 credits: 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5;
- An appropriate visa for entry to study in the UK (international students only);
- If English is not the first language students are required to achieve an IELTS 7.0 (with no less than 6.5 in each component)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

Enhanced disclosure is not required for the programme as there are no placement modules offered.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Details of acceptable qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Admissions procedures

Full-time applicants apply through UCAS Part-time applicants and current University of Worcester FD Paramedic Science students apply through [University of Worcester Admissions](#).

Admissions/selection criteria

All applications received (full and part time students) will be scrutinised and short listed to include checking prior professional and educational qualifications to assess eligibility to access the programme. This includes that the applicant meets the set criteria for the programme requirements stated above in entry requirements.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#) which sets out the full regulations for passing modules, grading of modules, retrieving failed modules, progression from one academic level to the next, requirements for awards, and how the degree is classified.

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.

- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Progression

- A student who, by the time of the reassessment Board of Examiners, has failed 90 credits or more during the academic year as a consequence of non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- If a student has not passed 90 credits by the reassessment Board of Examiners and is not withdrawn due to non-submission, they will be required to retake failed modules in the following academic year. Any passed modules will be carried forward.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Top up Degree (non-honours)	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6, including mandatory modules PSTU3003 and PSTU3005, as specified on the award map.
Top up Degree with honours	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6, including mandatory modules PSTU3003 PSTU3005 and PSTU3002 (Independent Study) as specified on the award map.

Classification

- Classification determined on the profile of the best grades from 120 credits attained at Level 6 only
For further information on honours degree classification, see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

There was 100% graduate level employment with ambulance trusts in 2016/17 and in 2015/16: 100% employment with ambulance trusts; 75% of graduates accepted employment with our partner ambulance trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (WMAS).

The pre-registration paramedic course celebrates significantly high graduate employability. In 2015/16 and 2016/17, 100% of pre-registration paramedic science student who completed their studies successfully gained graduate level employment with ambulance trusts.

Student employability

Students are already qualified paramedics but on successfully completing this degree they will have enhanced employability through the development of graduate knowledge, skills and attributes and be well equipped to further develop their professional responsibilities. Students will also be able and motivated to achieve higher academic qualifications.

Links with employers

Employers within WMAS have been consulted throughout the process in the development of the course.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.