



SPECIAL ORDER

SPECIAL ORDER 2021.54

Paramedic Education Program Application Process

BUREAU OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Issue Date: July 15, 2021

Expiration Date: October 31, 2023

1 OVERVIEW

2 The Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) and the Bureau of Education &
3 Training (E&T) is announcing the opening of the application period for the Department's next Paramedic
4 Program (Program), in coordination with the Emergency Services Bureau (ESB) and the Office of the
5 Medical Director (OMD).

6 DEFINITIONS

7 ➤ None

8 TOPIC DETAILS

9 The deadline to submit the Program application packet is **Friday, July 28, 2021 at 1700hrs.**

10
11 Students that successfully complete the Program will be eligible to test with the National Registry of
12 EMTs for Paramedic certification, and subsequent licensure with the state of Maryland.

13
14 The Paramedic Education Program consists of a series of college-level courses, and will be a mixture of
15 classroom lecture, online learning (using the Virtual Academy and other online resources), lab practical
16 experience, hospital clinical experience, field internship, and field capstone. The first step to entering the
17 Program is to apply to the Paramedic Education Program. Applications will be completed in the Virtual
18 Academy: <https://hcdfrsvirtual.academy/course/view.php?id=629>

19
20 One of the courses required by the Program is Anatomy and Physiology (A&P), which will be offered as a
21 prerequisite class starting on September 27, 2021. If you have already completed a college level A&P
22 class, please contact Don Weigel dweigel@hoardcountymd.gov to find out if you may be excused from
23 the first 15 weeks of the program.

24
25 In general, the Paramedic Education Program will run from September 27, 2021 through March 20, 2023,
26 and include a mixture of normal 24/48 shiftwork and a modified day work schedule.

- 27 • September 27, 2021 to February 19, 2022
 - 28 ○ Normal 24/48 shiftwork with online coursework.

29

- 30 • February 21, 2022 (first day of classroom is February 22, 2022) to October 09, 2022
 - 31 ○ Modified 48-hour work week.
 - 32 ▪ Day-work schedule for classroom and clinical rotations
 - 33 ▪ Normally – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8-hour days
 - 34 ▪ Average 8 hour of Clinical time
 - 35 ▪ Work normal 24-hour field staffing shift if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday
- 36
- 37 • October 10, 2022 to February 19, 2023
 - 38 ○ Modified 48-hour work week.
 - 39 ▪ Field Internship and Capstone
 - 40 ▪ 8-hour / 16-hour / 24-hour Field Internship shifts totaling 32 hours (average) per
 - 41 week
 - 42 ▪ Work normal 24-hour field staffing shift if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday
- 43
- 44 • February 20, 2023 – March 26, 2023
 - 45 ○ Modified day-work schedule for National Registry test preparation and certification
 - 46 testing.
 - 47 ▪ Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 8-hour days
 - 48 ▪ Work normal 24-hour field staffing shift if it falls on Saturday or Sunday
- 49

50 The modified day-work schedule will allow for an academic calendar week that includes three (3) days of
 51 classroom instruction, an average of eight (8) hours per week of clinical rotations, and weekend 24/48
 52 shifts (Saturdays and Sundays), as outlined in the Course Schedule.

53 **CANDIDACY CONSIDERATION:** *See attachment A for complete details.*

54 The “Admission Criteria: Paramedic Program” can be located on the E&T Bureau Page on DFRS Size Up,
 55 under the Forms & Resources box to the right of the page:

56 <https://hcdfrssizeup.howardcountymd.gov/category/education-a-training> . Please review this linked
 57 document closely as it will answer many of your questions and is the guideline for application
 58 requirements.
 59

60

61 The Admissions Criteria will cover assessment of the candidate, the criteria for admissions (both General
 62 ALS Program Requirement and requirements of the Paramedic Program), application submission process,
 63 and additional requirements. Important dates are listed in the next section below.

64

65 Those career providers that are offered acceptance into the Program will be required to agree to work a
 66 special 48-hour per week schedule that includes a mixture of some shiftwork and some daytime
 67 assignments to course sessions, hospital clinicals, field experience, and field internship. In general, the
 68 special schedule allows for assignment to the academic program Monday through Friday, and the
 69 working of normally scheduled shifts as they occur on Saturdays and Sundays (Kelly Days are not earned
 70 during the modified schedule periods). During the weekdays, instructional sessions will be scheduled
 71 three (3) days a week, and clinical and field internship may occur as scheduled on any of the other days.
 72 In this fashion, Program hours shall be compensated work hours. Students who have had previous
 73 attempts to successfully complete the Program may still be offered admissions, but with more limited or
 74 no Department support for a special schedule.
 75

76 **IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION:** See attachment B

77 • **Application**

- 78 ○ In Virtual Academy, self-enroll into the **2021 HCDFRS Paramedic Program Application**
79 ○ <https://hcdfrsvirtual.academy/course/view.php?id=629>
80 ■ This SO, the Application, all Attachments as well as additional important program
81 information can be found in this course.
82
83 ○ No later than **July 28, 2021 at 17:00**, applicants must complete the online application on
84 the Virtual Academy.
85

86 • **Entrance Exam**

- 87 ○ When you complete your application, you will select the date to take the entrance exam
88 utilizing the Virtual Academy.
89 ○ Exams will be administered on **July 29, 30, and August 06, 2021** at 08:30 at the PSTC in the
90 computer lab.
91 ■ Career providers must choose an off-duty date and will not be compensated to
92 take the exam.
93
94 ○ For individuals with justifiable schedule conflicts, there may be limited availability for
95 individually scheduled times to take the entrance exam. These requests must be approved
96 by Education and Training.
97 ■ If you need to request a special exam time, please email Don Weigel at
98 dweigel@howardcountymd.gov
99
100 ○ Each applicant may take the Entrance Exam a second time if he or she does not pass on
101 the first attempt.
102 ■ The second exams are by appointment only and must be completed by August 09,
103 2021 at 15:00 and must be taken at the PSTC.
104
105 ○ The exam is in an on-line format and constitutes a comprehensive assessment of applicant
106 abilities in the following areas:
107 ■ Anatomy & Physiology
108 ■ EMT skills
109 ■ Reading comprehension
110 ■ Mathematics
111 ■ An affective assessment
112
113 ○ More information on preparing for the paramedic program entrance exam is available on
114 the program application page located on the Virtual Academy:
115 <https://hcdfrsvirtual.academy/course/view.php?id=629>
116
- 117 • **Interview Process**
- 118 ○ **By Friday August 06, 2021 at 15:00**, after the exam, applicants must go back into the
119 “**2021 HCDFRS Paramedic Program Application**” to reserve an interview time via the
120 Virtual Academy.

- Applicants must schedule and participate in an interview process on or between **August 11, 2021 and August 20, 2021** (alternate dates may be able to be scheduled on a case by case basis).
 - If you need to request a special interview time, please email Don Weigel dweigel@howardcountymd.gov
- Interviews shall be on an off-duty day for career providers and will be held at the PSTC.
 - No Compensation is authorized.
- The focus of the interview is to establish which applicants are the most qualified to participate in the Paramedic Program.
- Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes and can be scheduled between 0800 hours and 1500 hours each day.

- **Notice of Acceptance**

- Applicant selections shall be announced on or about August 27, 2021.

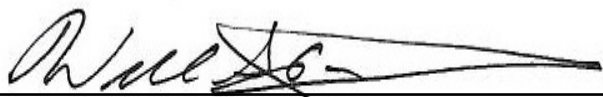
- **Mandatory Orientation Session**

- Selected candidates shall report to the PSTC for one Orientation Session on either September 08, 09, or 13 from 08:30 to 11:30 to receive instructions and materials so they may begin their online content in September. Compensation is authorized.
- Selected candidates shall utilize the Virtual Academy to sign up for their Orientation Day <https://hcdfrsvirtual.academy/course/view.php?id=629>

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS/REFERENCES

- Attachment A: ALS Academic Paramedic Programs Paramedic Course Admissions Criteria
- Attachment B: Course Schedule Overview

Approved:



William Anuszewski, Fire EMS Chief
Office of the Fire Chief

Author:



Donald Weigel, EMS Programs Manager
Bureau of Education & Training



Bureau of Education and Training
EMS Training Branch: ALS Academic Programs
Admissions Criteria: Paramedic Program
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To be considered as a candidate, each applicant must participate and successfully complete all phases of the application process as outlined below. Generally, no more than 20 candidates are admitted to the course, allowing for up to fifteen career and up to five (5) volunteer members.

The Department will select a limited number of qualified individuals for assignment to the Paramedic Course. Assignment to the course is **NOT** an employee right. Rather, it is a Departmental decision to make a significant investment in the education of certain personnel whose commitment to attaining and performing as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) has exceeded expectations. The Department's investment in each student assigned to this year's course will exceed \$50,000. As such, the selection process is extensive, and includes several established criteria. Additionally, the Department can and will consider all facets of an applicant's job performance, including affective elements, in making the decision to offer any given member an assignment to the course. The final decision for each applicant will involve individual consideration, may be subjective, and rests solely with the Fire Chief.

The initial assessment of an applicant for the HCDFRS Paramedic Course will be based on the following:

- Experience as an EMS provider within the Howard County system
- Application content
- Recommendations from their company Captain, and MDO, or Volunteer Chief Officer
- Training and experience in EMS, fire, rescue, and hazardous materials
- Prior completion of college level coursework
- Other criteria established in this document

Additional assessment of an applicant may include, but is not limited to:

- Previous quality assurance issues involving the employee
- Previous personnel actions involving the employee
- Demonstration of team participation, individual responsibility, and leadership qualities
- Other considerations regarding individual performance and demonstration of key qualities

1) Criteria for Admissions (General ALS Academic Program requirements)

- a. Candidates must be in good standing with the HCDFRS ALS Academic Program and may not have previous uncorrected unsatisfactory professional behavior evaluations on file or may not have been dismissed from any HCDFRS ALS Academic program due to reasons other than academic performance.
- b. Candidates that are still on Firefighter Recruit status must be up-to-date with their recruit manual tasks and have shown that while admission to the program would not significantly affect the recruit's development. Each company officer should assess their recruit's progress on a case by case basis and then make a recommendation for admission. Volunteer candidates must meet all requirements of General Order 120.03, Operational Standards for Volunteer Personnel.
- c. Candidates must not have documentation within their employee file of any incident(s) that warranted disciplinary action as per Department General Order 110.13 (or equivalent corporate volunteer corporation policy) within 24 months of the application deadline. Employee personnel files and Performance Reviews are subject to review by the Dean and Program Director with assistance from ASB during the applicant's admission process.
 - i. Special consideration for admission may be considered in the case of a single instance of lateness. Approval for special consideration in this case is at the discretion of the Fire Chief after consultation with the Medical Director, Program Dean, Program Director, and Lead Faculty.



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- ii. Any incident that is known to management, whether it resulted in disciplinary action or not, even those that occurred greater than 24 months prior to the application deadline, may be considered if their nature is deemed by the Fire Chief to be pertinent to performance in the role of an ALS Academic Programs Paramedic Course. In these cases, reasonable consideration will also be given to the time since the incident and the employee's corrective actions and behaviors.

2) Criteria for Admissions: (Paramedic Program)

The following criteria must be satisfied in order to be considered for selection to the course:

- a. The candidate will be at least 18 years old on or before the first classroom session.
- b. Candidates must currently be and have been for at least one full year from the scheduled start date of the course, a member of HCDFRS or a Howard County volunteer corporation that is approved by the State EMS Board to provide advanced life support. Verification of affiliation shall be determined by the Bureau of Education and Training.
- c. The candidate is in good standing with the HCDFRS ALS Academic Program. Previous dismissal from the ALS Academic Program due to reasons other than academic performance may negate eligibility.
- d. The candidate must possess a valid Maryland EMT certification.
- e. It is strongly preferred that the applicant has provided pre-hospital emergency care on at least 150 emergency ambulance transports, functioning as a primary care provider and completing all documentation. As a result of this competency-based process, the applicant must obtain authorization to independently function as an EMT prior to the course application deadline. This information will be verified by the EMS Training Branch.
- f. Applicants must submit an official college transcript of any college courses taken. Some previous college coursework is preferred.
- g. Candidates must obtain all required endorsement signatures on the application. For career personnel, this shall include endorsements from their Company Officer, Company Captain, Battalion Chief, and MDO. For volunteer personnel, this shall include endorsements from their corporation's EMS Officer and Volunteer Department Chief. Endorsements serve as verification that the officer has confidence in the candidate's skills as an independent primary BLS provider and feels that the candidate is prepared for, and supports, the candidate's endeavor to become an ALS provider.

3) Applicant Submissions: The following items must be submitted to the EMS Training Branch by the application deadline stated in the department Special Order that announces the course:

- a. **Application:** A completed the HCDFRS "2021 Paramedic Program Application" in the Virtual Academy. This must be accompanied by a "Letter of Intent," typed on HCDFRS letterhead in Arial 12pt font, and addressed to Don Weigel EMS Programs Manager for Bureau of Education & Training.
<https://hcdfrsvirtual.academy/XXXXXXXXX>
- b. **EMS Certification cards:** A valid and current copy of their Maryland EMT card.
 - i. Volunteer providers must also submit a copy of their current Healthcare Provider CPR card.
- c. **Letters of Recommendation:** **Career applicants** must submit two "Letters of Recommendation," one from their Company Captain (with input from the company officer), and one from their MDO. **Career applicants** must also receive a Letter of Approval for admission into the ALS Academic Program from their Battalion Chief. **Volunteer applicants** must submit one letter of recommendation from their Volunteer Fire Chief, or



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from the Chief's designee with his/her endorsement on the letter. At the discretion of the author, these letters can be forwarded directly to the Officer in Charge of the EMS Training Branch. The letters must state:

- i. The applicant's length of service as an EMS provider with the organization.
 - ii. That the recommending officer has confidence in the candidate's knowledge, skills, and experience as an independent primary BLS provider.
 - iii. That the sponsoring agency, either the HCDFRS or a volunteer corporation, feels the candidate is prepared for and supports the candidate's endeavor to become an ALS provider.
 - iv. Why the candidate would be a good choice for acceptance into the ALS Academic Program.
 - v. Any reasons why the candidate might not be a good choice for the ALS Academic program.
- d. **College Transcripts (if any):** Candidates must submit an official college transcript of any college courses taken. Some previous college coursework is preferred, especially courses in Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, English, and Math. If a transcript has been submitted to the EMS Training Branch within the previous year, and there have been no additional courses taken, the candidate may indicate this on their Program Application and does not need to submit them again.
- e. **Rescue courses:** Completion of MFRI's RTVMR is required and copies of course completion/verification shall be submitted with their Program Application.
- f. **HAZMAT courses:** Completion of at least HAZMAT Awareness is required and copies of course completion/verification shall be submitted with their Program Application.
- g. **NIMS courses:** Completion of ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800 are required and copies of course completion/verification shall be submitted with their Program Application.
- h. **EVOC courses:** Completion of MFRI's EVOC course is required and copies of course completion/verification shall be submitted with their Program Application.

4) Additional Requirements: All applicants for the Department's Paramedic Program:

- a. Must achieve a score of **70%** on the FISDAP Paramedic Program Entry test, a blueprinted, validated exam assessing knowledge levels in the following areas:
 1. A&P (12-15 items per topic)
 2. EMT: (30 items covering the 6 topics on practice analysis)
 - a. Airway
 - b. Cardiology
 - c. EMS Operations
 - d. Medical Emergencies
 - e. OB/GYN/Pediatrics
 - f. Trauma
 3. Reading Comprehension
 - a. Information and expository 11th grade level
 - b. Narrative at the 9th grade level
 4. Psychological/Affective (M5-50)
 5. Math: (15 items)
 - a. Fractions
 - b. Decimals
 - c. Conversions
 - d. Addition/subtraction



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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- b. Must successfully demonstrate their competency in basic writing by successfully answering an essay question.

Candidates who do not meet all of the above criteria will generally not be considered for admission. Any special consideration and subsequent approval are at the discretion of the Fire Chief after consultation with the Medical Director, Program Dean, Program Director, and Lead Faculty.

2021 Paramedic Program Overview

Important Dates

Application Deadline	07/28
Entrance Exam*	07/29, 07/30, 08/06
Interviews	08/11/2021 to 08/20
Notice of Acceptance	08/27
Orientation*	09/08, 09/09, 09/13
Prerequisite (Online)	09/27/2021
Program Start (Online)	01/10/2021
Program Start (In-class)	02/21/2022
Program End Date	03/26/2023

***The student must attend one day of each of the Entrance Exam and Orientation.**

Modules

The program curriculum is broken into modules with each module consisting of didactic (classroom work), lab (skills and simulations), and hospital clinical and field experience.

During the program the Paramedics students will be on a modified 48-hour per week schedule.

The modified schedule will have an average of 32 hours a week dedicated to the program. During the didactic portion of the program, students will work three 8-hour days in the classroom with an additional 8-hour day set for hospital clinicals and field experience.

Students will work their normally assigned shift if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

During the Field Internship/Capstone the candidates will be assigned to shifts in the field to complete the mandatory Field Internship.

2021 PARAMEDIC PROGRAM SUMMARY		
09/27/2021	Module AP	A&P (online)
01/10/2021	Module 1	Operations (online)
01/24/2022	Module 2	Preparatory Part 1 (online)
02/22/2022		Preparatory Part 2
02/28/2022	Module 3	Pt. Assessment
03/21/2022	Module 4	Pharmacology
04/04/2022	Module 5	Airway
05/02/2022	Module 6	Trauma
06/06/2022	Module 7	Cardiology Part 1
06/27/2022		Cardiology Part 2
08/01/2022	Module 8	Medical Emergencies
09/05/2022	Module 9	Special Patients
(concurrent)	Module FE	Field Experience
(concurrent)	Module HC	Hospital Clinical
10/10/2022	Module 10	Field Internship
01/23/2023	Module 11	Capstone
02/20/2023	Module 12	NR Prep
03/13/2023		National Registry Written Exam
03/20/2023		National Registry Practical Exam
<i>*Specific dates subject to change.</i>		