Primary Care Paramedic Program Application Guidebook

2024

Thank you for your interest in our Primary Care Paramedic program!

In high demand throughout British Columbia and across the country, Primary Care Paramedics serve as the backbone for both pre-hospital emergency care systems and private industry medical service providers. Our program delivers prepared and confident new practitioners who are ready to safely deliver patient care from day one on the job.

Columbia Paramedic Academy is an EMALB approved training institution which prides itself on a student-centric approach from start to finish. Curriculum design, instructor recruitment, tuition schedules, exam policies, and more are all built with the student experience first and foremost in mind. Approved training institutions across the province are given flexibility in how they deliver their materials, and I believe this is where Columbia excels - supportive learning environments, an embracing of best practices in education and an involved, responsive management team are just some of the ways you can expect us to help you succeed.

We look forward to welcoming you into our Primary Care Paramedic training program!

Nicola Harper
President
Columbia Paramedic Academy

COLUMBIA PARAMEDIC ACADEMY

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COLUMBIA PARAMEDIC ACADEMY

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) program is an exciting way to enter the expanding field of paramedicine. Many avenues are open to PCP license holders, including careers in community paramedicine, emergency response, and private industry.

This program, whether taken through our traditional in-person delivery or our blended in-person/online delivery, involves a rigorous and comprehensive course of study. The academic demands will be considerable and motivation to pursue a paramedic career is important for success. Applicants must be emotionally mature and physically capable of dealing with patients and the day to day demands of being an emergency care provider.

Constantly reviewed and updated by our curriculum committee and medical director, the PCP program at Columbia Paramedic Academy offers the most up to date paramedic training program in the province while utilizing current best practices in the field of paramedic education.

The program meets or exceeds the National Occupational Competency Profile (NOCP) requirements of the Paramedic Association of Canada (PAC) and has been approved in British Columbia by the Ministry of Health through the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board (EMALB) and designated by the Ministry of Advanced Education through the Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB).

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **Anatomy & Physiology Pre-Entry Course**
  - Must be complete prior to first in-class day of program
  - Self-paced, typically 30-40 hours to complete
  - Access provided approximately 1 month prior to start of in-class program

- **Classroom Courses**
  - 2 delivery methods, both meet Student Aid BC definition of 'Full Time' but the classroom component of one (**Traditional Delivery**) is 100% in person, whereas the other (**Blended Delivery**) involves a mix of 83% in person and 17% online learning.

- **Practicum with BC Emergency Health Services (BC Ambulance)**
  - Minimum 12 shifts (144 hours)
  - Must obtain all required NOCPs, which often necessitates extra shifts.

- Must also receive a satisfactory performance grade on at least their final 4 precepting shifts to indicate they are ready for independent practice.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Evaluation is an ongoing process conducted through a variety of both formal and informal methods. This includes in-class simulations, assignments, written evaluations, and practical exam simulations. Students must also complete a practicum placement on-ambulance.

Successful completion of the program requires:

- **100% attendance for in-class component**

- **Obtaining a grade of at least 75% on:**
  - All assignments
  - All midterm exams
  - Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) (2)
  - Final written exam
  - Final practical exams (2)

- **Practicum completion, as measured by:**
  - Minimum of 12 shifts on ambulance performed
  - Exposure to all required NOCPs
  - Recommended for completion by preceptors

CERTIFICATION

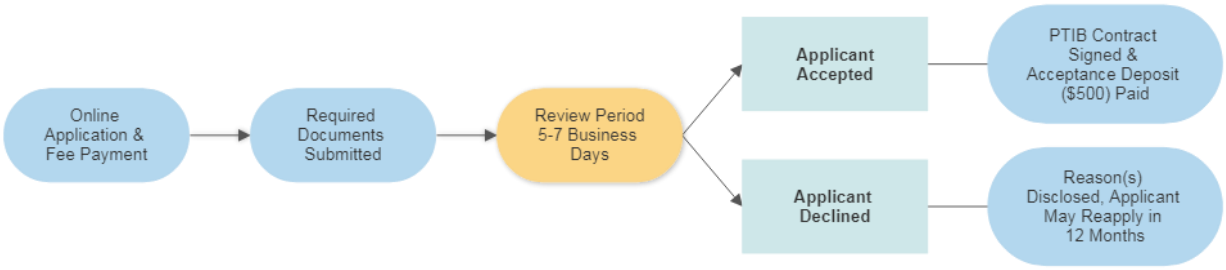
Graduates receive a Primary Care Paramedic Certificate which will allow them to apply for licensing examinations in British Columbia with the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board (EMALB).

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for the program is a competitive one, in that we receive more applications than there are spaces available. Admission is offered on a 'first-come, first-served' basis to applicants who meet our published minimum requirements.

While the deadline to apply is typically 1 calendar month prior to each course start date, we recommend applying as soon as possible for the best chance at avoiding a waitlist.

APPLICATION FLOW



PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The following are requirements for entry into this program.

- **Minimum 19 years of age by program start date**

- **Current 'Emergency Medical Responder' (EMR) certification**
  - Certification can be from any EMALB approved program.
  - Must include full schedule 1 and schedule 2 endorsements. (Or separate EMR Scope Update/Gap training course completed.)
  - Visit columbiaparamedic.ca to learn more about specific requirements to our EMR prerequisite. (Effective Jan. 1, 2024.)

- **'Basic Life Support' (BLS) CPR certification**
  - Formerly known as 'Health Care Provider (HCP)' level CPR certification.
  - Must be current or have expired within previous 6 months of program start date.

- **British Columbia grade 12 completion, or equivalent**
  - Applicants must have completed the equivalent of grade 12 in British Columbia or meet the 'Mature Student' eligibility (see below).

- **Physically ability to perform the tasks required of a paramedic**
  - Formal documentation from a medical expert is not required, however applicants must complete a Statement of Fitness to self-certify that they are

physically able to perform the tasks required of a paramedic. This requires a healthy level of:

- Aerobic fitness (e.g. climbing stairs with equipment when elevator not accessible)
- Muscular endurance (e.g. performing prolonged CPR on a patient)
- Muscular strength (e.g. lifting and carrying patients)
- Flexibility (e.g. treating patients on the floor or in difficult to reach situations)

- **Criminal Record Check**
  - Our clinical and practicum agreements with BC Emergency Health Services (BC Ambulance) and various Health Authorities require us to ensure all students have provided a recent Criminal Record Check.
  - We now use Sterling BackCheck as our primary means of gathering applicants Criminal Record Checks. Once the application fee has been paid, the applicant will receive an email from Sterling Backcheck with information on how to complete the E-PIC (Enhanced Police Information Check).
  - For future programs, we will require use of Sterling Backcheck to complete this requirement, but currently applicants are still able to obtain their criminal record checks from their local RCMP.
    - If applicants choose to obtain their CRC from their local RCMP they must ensure that this includes a 'Vulnerable Sector' check.
  - Clinical placements are a requirement for completion, so applicants with criminal records that would bar clinical placements will not be considered for admission.

- **Two Confidential Letters of Reference**
  - Applicants must have submitted two reference letters directly from the referees that highlight the applicant's ability to work as a paramedic:
    - One professional (i.e. supervisor, teacher, coach, counsellor)
    - One personal
  - Must use confidential recommendation form supplied by Columbia Paramedic Academy

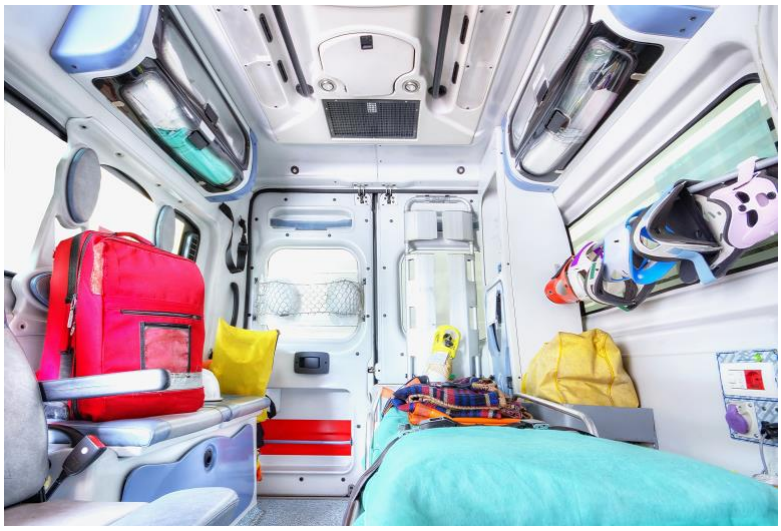
- **Immunizations**
  - The following immunizations must be completed prior to the first day in-class:

  - **Mantoux:** (TB test)-a baseline 1-step test or a test in the last 6 months
  - **Hepatitis B:** Series of 3 injections at 0 months, 1 month and 6 months and antibody testing 2-3 months post 3rd injection
  - **MMR (measles, mumps, rubella):** Childhood series and a second injection for measles
  - **Tetanus/Diphtheria:** Booster every 10 years

- It is also recommended, but not required, that all students have baseline blood tests completed before practicum for:
  - **Hepatitis B antibody-post vaccine series**
  - **Hepatitis C antibody**
  - **HIV antibody**
- **COVID-19 Vaccination:** An approved vaccination (two doses)

MATURE STUDENT APPLICATIONS

A mature student applicant is an individual who did not complete BC Grade 12 (or equivalent) but is at least 25 years of age. The requirement for high school completion is waived for these individuals, however all other admission requirements must be met.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDER

We recognize EMR certifications from any EMALB approved program, however if you have not yet completed this training, our sister companies Heartsafe EMS and Columbia Medical Training do offer it throughout the province. Often it is instructed by our PCP faculty, offering a chance to meet them before the program starts.

EMR courses are always offered locally in the weeks leading up to a PCP program start for our locations, including rural offerings. Please visit these companies to see their specific offerings if you require this training.

Columbia Medical Training - All of BC
columbiatraining.ca

KEY PROGRAM INFORMATION

TRADITIONAL LEARNING VS BLENDED LEARNING AKA 'FULL-TIME' VS 'PART-TIME'

Our Academy offers two delivery methods – which historically were called "Full Time" or "Part Time" however both technically meet the Student Aid BC 'Full-time' criteria. As such, we have more accurately labeled them "Traditional Learning" and "Blended Learning".

Traditional Learning sees 100% of your classroom education taking place in person, at one of our facilities around the province. The entirety of the program is instructor led, providing a quick and more supported education. Highlights include:

- Average of 40 hours/week of in-person instruction
- In-person class takes place Monday – Friday
- Classroom courses last 4.5 months

Blended Learning sees 83% of your classroom education take place in person, with the remaining 17% delivered online through a variety of means (self-study, assignments, facilitated seminars, etc.). This program has a slower pace to allow students a better work/life/study balance as they must spend a considerable amount of additional time on readings to make up for the reduction in face-to-face delivery. Highlights include:

- Average of 15 hours/week of in-person instruction
- In-person class takes place Friday-Sunday, every 2nd weekend
- Classroom courses last 8.5 months

TUITION PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Once an offer of acceptance has been made by the Academy, a student must pay a $500 non-refundable deposit within 7 days to confirm their space. The balance of their tuition and payment of mandatory fees is then due 2 weeks prior to the first day in-class.

We understand that every student has a financial situation that is unique to them. We are always happy to work with potential students on payment plans where needed. Please reach out to our PCP Program Coordinator if you need to discuss other payment arrangements and we would be more than happy to work with you to find a plan that can be achieved and lets you move forward with your studies.

Several items are not included in the base tuition amount in order to allow students flexibility to only pay for what they need, or to try and source them from former students/used stores. This includes textbooks, uniforms and some optional equipment (ex. stethoscope, laptop, etc.).

Application Fee *Non-refundable, due with application*	**$85.00**
Tuition* *$500 (non-refundable) deposit due to accept offer*	**$8,340**
Total Fees (*includes mandatory jacket for practicum)*	**$225**
Total Tuition & Fees	**$8,645**

Several items are not included in the base tuition amount to allow students flexibility to only pay for what they need, or to try and source them from former students/used stores. This includes textbooks, uniforms and some optional equipment (ex. stethoscope, laptop, etc.).

REFUND POLICY

We are a 'Designated Training Institution' with the Private Institutions Training Branch (PTIB) of BC, which has specific policies on student refunds. The complete and most up to date policy can be reviewed on our website.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PRACTICUM (WORK-PLACEMENT)

The program requires a minimum of twelve shifts (approximately 144 hours) of on-ambulance work experience (practicum). Practicum shifts will be scheduled in the same training region as the classroom portion of the program wherever possible.

Note: Practicum, and any assigned clinical shifts, are in addition to the classroom portion of the program.

Students must be prepared to accept the financial cost of travel and living expenses associated with attendance at clinical and practicum sessions, which may take place throughout the training region. Ambulance stations and hospitals may be located on routes that are not accessible by public transportation. Students are responsible for making the appropriate arrangements to ensure their ability to attend placement sessions at the assigned sites.

Practicum shifts are scheduled at the sole discretion of BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) and are subject to availability of trained mentors and BCEHS scheduling requirements for any given shift / day.

WEB-BASED SOFTWARE

Students will be required to utilize a web-based competency-tracking program and online learning platform to track their progress. These systems enable students, instructors, and mentors to communicate and track student progress in real-time and helps to ensure requirements are met and any issues are quickly identified. Students are required to have access to a computer, with internet access for the duration of the program to make use of these applications.

Throughout the PCP program, you will be accessing various online resources and documenting aspects of your training electronically. The PCP program utilizes an in-house competency tracking system to track student progress through both the in-class and practicum portions of the program. There are also other additional curriculum resources that require access to the internet. Students are required to have either a laptop or tablet during the program to support their learning.

LICENSING FEES

Each province has its own licensing regulations and fees, and students are encouraged to review requirements for the province in which they wish to practice. In British Columbia, upon completion of the program you must also successfully complete a formal evaluation conducted by the Emergency Medical Assistant Licensing Board (EMALB). Visit their website at www.health.gov.bc.ca/ema for full details and fees.

The Licensing exam at the PCP level in BC comprises a written Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators (COPR) exam and Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) skill stations. Registration for final licensing exams must be done by students themselves through the EMALB. Students must successfully complete the Columbia Paramedic Academy PCP course before registering for the EMA Licensing final exams. Columbia will forward a copy of the student's PCP certificate directly to the EMALB upon request from the student.
While your tuition includes costs associated with obtaining a student license to practice in the field, it does not include your post-program examinations and licensing fees. Those are payable directly by the student to the licensing board(s) they choose to register with and are not included in the fees paid to Columbia.

WORKSAFE BC COVERAGE

Columbia Paramedic Academy provides WorkSafe BC coverage to students while participating in hospital and ambulance placements. **This coverage does not extend to any other components of the program, including classroom learning.**

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks may be purchased new from third parties or used copies can be sourced from former students. An e-book and the associated online tools for Nancy Caroline's is a benefit but is not required if you prefer to have only the hardcopy.

- **Nancy Caroline's "Emergency Care in the Streets" (8th Canadian Edition)**
  - Mar 2020, Jones and Bartlett Publishers
  - ISBN 978-1284196641
  - Available in e-book and hardcopy version, either is acceptable
- **Decision Making in Paramedic Practice**
  1. Author Andy Collen
  2. Nov 2017, Jones and Bartlett Publishers
  3. ISBN 978-1-85959-641-8

ACADEMY UNIFORM STANDARD

Students are expected to be in uniform on the first day of class and everyday thereafter. Acceptance packages will include a list of current vendors the Academy is aware of, but it will remain the student's responsibility to source and purchase/borrow all the required uniform pieces.

- **Uniform Shirts (min. 2)**
  1. Midnight Navy, short sleeved, collar
  2. Columbia Academy crests on each arm (4 crests included with tuition cost)
- **Uniform Pants (min. 1)**
  1. Midnight Navy, cargo pockets
  2. We suggest 5.11 Stryker Pants, or similar
- **Uniform Boots**
  1. Black, CSA approved
  2. No steel toes allowed
  3. We suggest "Original Swat" brand

- All students will receive 4 Columbia Paramedic Academy crests at no cost. Further crests (for extra shirts, jackets, etc.) can be ordered through www.columbiashop.ca.

- You will also receive a soft-shell jacket to wear in-class and during the precepting portion of your program. This jacket is required for precepting as per BCEHS mandate to ensure you are clearly identified as a student. (The jacket cost is included in your fees.)

- Crests can be purchased for $10/pair (must be added to both arms if chosen)

Sample pictures of approved uniform items:

Columbia has recently set up an online store to provide branded clothing to students. There are pre-order options prior to all cohorts starting. If you are accepted into the program, you will receive more information on this in your acceptance package.

Thank you for considering Columbia Paramedic Academy for your Primary Care Paramedic Program. We look forward to receiving your application.