

Jennifer Firth
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Department of Health



**COUNCIL OF
DEANS OF HEALTH**

The voice of the deans and heads of
UK university faculties for nursing,
midwifery and the health professions.

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By email

25 July 2014

Dear Jenny,

Professional Eligibility for the NHS Bursary Scheme

Many thanks for your letter of 24 June 2014 concerning the Department of Health's (DH) call for evidence for professional eligibility to the NHS Bursary Scheme. We understand that a full case for the inclusion of the paramedic profession is being submitted by Health Education England (HEE) and the College of Paramedics. We do not wish to duplicate that evidence but are writing to support their case.

We believe that the paramedic profession now meets or is on track to meet the core criteria for eligibility for inclusion. Paramedics are registered professionals with the HCPC. Although the minimum UK education threshold for the paramedic profession is Cert HE level, recent analysis for the HCPC Education and Training Committee found that 83% of education programmes in the UK were at DipHE or equivalent and above.¹ The HCPC is actively looking at the educational threshold for programmes, with a view to exploring raising the threshold. HEE's Paramedic Education and Training Project also has a particular focus on moving to a national standard model of NHS commissioning and consistent funding for paramedic education.

Including the paramedic profession within the Bursary Scheme also fits with the stage two rationale for inclusion. There is an important and urgent national priority to develop the role of paramedics in meeting the challenges of delivering urgent and emergency care. There is a case from the perspective of widening participation: the paramedic profession has struggled to recruit BME students and inclusion within the Bursary Scheme may bring this more in line with other health professions. Inclusion would clearly support national consistency, a significant problem in the current adhoc

¹ <http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000464CEnc11-ThresholdlevelofqualificationforentrytotheRegister.pdf>

arrangements; it would also support paramedic students to be able to achieve reasonable work/life balance, in common with other health professions where course demands make part-time work more difficult.

We also note that inclusion of the paramedic profession within the Bursary Scheme is a specific recommendation of the PEEP report², a research study into paramedic education and training that suggests the most appropriate funding model for England is the HEE/LETB commissioned model with bursary support.

We hope that you will consider the paramedic profession for inclusion in the Bursary Scheme. If you require further information please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessica Corner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jessica" written in a larger, more prominent script than the surname "Corner".

Professor Dame Jessica Corner
Chair, Council of Deans of Health

² Allied Health Solution (2013) Paramedic Evidence Based Education Project (PEEP) End of Study Report, <http://hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/321/2014/04/PEEP-Report.pdf>