



**Paramedicine Board of Australia**

# PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES FOR REGISTERED PARAMEDICS

29 June 2018

## Introduction

The Paramedicine Board of Australia (the National Board) has adopted these professional capabilities for registered paramedics on an interim basis and will apply them, as appropriate, to its regulatory functions.

These capabilities identify the knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed for safe and competent practice of paramedicine in Australia and draw on the *Professional Competency Standards – Paramedics Version 2.2* 2013 published by the Council of Ambulance Authorities and the *Australasian Competency Standards for Paramedics 2011* published by Paramedicine Australasia.

These professional capabilities will eventually be replaced when the National Board adopts professional capabilities that will be developed as part of a project commissioned by the National Board. That project will include wide consultation with stakeholders and is expected to begin in late 2018.

The *Professional capabilities for registered paramedics* apply to all registered paramedics and to individuals seeking to qualify for registration, including:

- practitioners qualified and/or trained in Australia, and
- practitioners qualified and/or trained overseas.

The National Board has powers under the National Law<sup>1</sup> to develop standards, codes and guidelines about the eligibility of individuals for registration in the paramedicine profession.

Some of the National Board's standards, codes and guidelines refer to competent and ethical practice.

## Background

The National Board has decided that, in order for an individual to be granted general registration, a practitioner must be able to demonstrate professional skills, attributes and the application of knowledge in the practice setting.

### Approach to developing these capabilities

The core domains and capabilities in this document have been informed by a comparative review of the documents that describe the competency standards for the paramedicine profession in Australia.

### How to use the capability statements

The capability statements identify the minimum knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary for practice.

They have been grouped into domains which identify elements of practice. Domains are not an indication of procedures undertaken by paramedicine professionals and are not a list of tasks.

During any one procedure, it is expected that practitioners will demonstrate elements from a number of domains. This recognises that competent professional practice is more than

a sum of each discrete part. It requires an ability to draw on and integrate the breadth of capabilities to support overall performance.

To demonstrate capability, an individual must apply their knowledge and understanding holistically in a practice environment.

## The domains

The domains for the professional capabilities for registered paramedics are:

**Domain 1:** professional and ethical conduct

**Domain 2:** professional communication and collaboration

**Domain 3:** evidence based practice and professional learning

**Domain 4:** safety, risk management and quality assurance, and

**Domain 5:** paramedicine practice.

### Scope of each domain

Each domain comprises a list of statements that identify the scope of capabilities a registered paramedic must demonstrate for that domain.

### Level of capability

Further information is provided against each capability statement on how that capability can be demonstrated, such as through knowledge, skills and professional attributes. These descriptions set out the minimum professional capabilities for registered paramedics in Australia.

A practitioner's capability will expand and improve as they gain professional experience. Professional capability is a reflection of how a practitioner applies their professional judgement, decision-making skills and experiential knowledge to apply their scientific knowledge, practical skills and ability in any given situation.

<sup>1</sup> Section 38 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

# PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES FOR REGISTERED PARAMEDICS

## Domain 1: Professional and ethical conduct

This domain covers registered paramedics' responsibility to be professional and ethical, and to practise with professional autonomy and accountability within the current medico-legal framework. It also addresses their responsibility for ensuring that patient/service user confidentiality and privacy is maintained at all times, while recognising the potential role as a patient/service user advocate.

What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<p><b>1. Practise in an ethical and professional manner, consistent with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of legal responsibilities and the legal and ethical boundaries of paramedicine practice</li> <li>• manage personal, mental and physical health to ensure fitness to practice</li> <li>• follow mandatory and voluntary reporting obligations</li> <li>• apply the Paramedicine Board of Australia's Code of conduct to their practice</li> <li>• provide relevant information to patient/service user and demonstrate appropriate methods to obtain informed consent</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge of the Australian healthcare system</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of the basic principles underpinning bio-ethics within paramedicine practice</li> <li>• exercise appropriate levels of autonomy and professional judgement in a variety of paramedicine practice settings</li> <li>• operate within the current legislation applicable to paramedicine practice, and</li> <li>• practise in accordance with the applicable legislation governing the use of prescription-only medicines by paramedics in the jurisdiction of practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Legal responsibilities</b> may include an understanding of responsibilities contained in relevant state/territory and federal legislation and regulations, specific responsibilities to maintain confidentiality, confirm informed consent and exercising duty of care.</p> <p><b>Informed consent</b> is a person's voluntary decision about healthcare that is made with knowledge and understanding of the benefits and risks involved.</p> <p><b>Principles underpinning bio-ethics</b> must include: respect the rights of the individual, respect the autonomy of the individual, cause no harm, and advance the common good.</p> <p><b>Relevant aspects of the Australian health care system</b> may include knowledge of service provision arrangements, the structure of the health system and the range of roles that paramedics may play within that structure.</p> <p><b>Key elements of fitness to practise</b> must include competence, professionalism, including a sense of responsibility and accountability, self-awareness and professional values, sound mental health and the capacity to maintain health and wellbeing for practice.</p> <p><b>Reporting obligations</b> must include making a notification about the health (impairment), conduct or performance of a registered health practitioner that may be placing the public at risk; as well as of their own impairments to practice.</p>

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What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<p><b>2. Provide each patient/service user with an appropriate level of dignity and care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the influence of socio-cultural factors on patient/service user attitudes and behaviour</li> <li>• display appropriate professional behaviour in patient/service user interactions</li> <li>• identify and respect appropriate boundaries between patients/service users and health professionals, and</li> <li>• assess each situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and apply the required knowledge and experience to provide a response that is in the best interest of the patient/s.</li> </ul> <p><b>Socio-cultural factors</b> may include those related to cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, disability, socio-economic, geographic locations; and identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.</p> <p><b>Appropriate professional behaviour</b> must include behaviour that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respects socio-cultural difference, is empathetic and non-discriminatory, regardless of individuals or groups race, culture, religion, age, gender, sexual preference, physical or mental state, and</li> <li>• respects, and so far as possible upholds the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every patient/service user. This includes their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Assume responsibility, and accept accountability, for professional decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and respond appropriately to unsafe or unprofessional practice</li> <li>• integrate organisational directives, policies, procedures and guidelines with professional standards, and</li> <li>• apply relevant quality frameworks to practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Quality frameworks</b> may include workplace specific frameworks, relevant jurisdiction publications and the Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care published by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.</p>
<p><b>4. Advocate on behalf of the patient/service user, when appropriate within the context of the practitioner's practice as a paramedic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the principles of patient/service user advocacy and their application to paramedicine practice, and</li> <li>• recognise when it may be appropriate to intervene on the patient's/service user's behalf</li> </ul> <p><b>Principles of advocacy</b> may include supporting and promoting the rights and interests of individuals, assisting individuals to achieve or maintain their rights and representing their needs.</p>

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## Domain 2: Professional communication and collaboration

This domain covers registered paramedics' responsibility to utilise appropriate, clear and effective communication. It also addresses their responsibility to ensure that they function effectively with other healthcare team members at all times.

What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<p><b>1. Communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively with patient/service user and their family or carers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish rapport with patient/service user to gain understanding of their issues and perspectives, and to encourage their active participation in care and treatment</li> <li>• communicate with the patient/service user and/or carers to collect and convey information and reach agreement about the purpose of any care and treatment</li> <li>• convey knowledge and procedural information in ways that engender trust and confidence and respects patient/service user confidentiality, privacy and dignity</li> <li>• respond appropriately to patient/service user queries or issues</li> <li>• use appropriate communication skills to effectively manage avoidance, confusion and confrontation</li> <li>• identify and effectively manage likely communication barriers, including anxiety and stress, specific to individual patients/service users and/or carers</li> <li>• make appropriate adjustments to communication style to suit the particular needs of the patient/service user including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and</li> <li>• make provisions to engage third parties, including interpreters, to facilitate effective communication with patients/service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication needs</b> may be influenced by English language skills, health literacy, age, health status, culture.</p> <p><b>Appropriate adjustments</b> may include the paramedic demonstrating an awareness of the ways that their own culture and experience affect their interpersonal style, and having an awareness of strategies to ensure this does not present an impediment.</p> <p><b>Communication techniques</b> must include active listening, use of appropriate language and detail, use of appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues and language, and confirming that the other person has understood.</p>
<p><b>2. Collaborate with other health practitioners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and maintain effective and respectful collaborative working relationships as a member of a healthcare team</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of professional roles and responsibilities of healthcare team members and other service providers and how they interact with the role of a paramedic</li> <li>• follow accepted protocols and procedures to provide relevant and timely verbal and written communication</li> <li>• effectively supervise tasks delegated to other healthcare team members</li> <li>• consult effectively with relevant healthcare team members and other service providers to facilitate continuity of care, and</li> <li>• make appropriate referrals to other healthcare team members and other service providers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Healthcare team members</b> may include registered health practitioners, accredited health professionals, and licensed or unlicensed healthcare workers.</p>

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## Domain 3: Evidence-based practice and professional learning

This domain covers registered paramedics' responsibility to engage in evidence-based practice and to critically monitor their actions through a range of reflective processes. It also addresses their responsibility for identifying, planning and implementing their ongoing professional learning and development needs.

What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<p><b>1. Makes informed and reasonable decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operate within a framework of making informed, evidence-based, reasonable and professional judgements about their practice, with acting in the best interests of their patients as their primary concern, and</li> <li>make sensible, practical decisions about their practice, taking account of all relevant information and the best interests of the people who use or are affected by the service that is being provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Uses clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine clinical judgements and appropriate actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply critical and reflective thinking to resolve clinical challenges</li> <li>demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving and situation analysis</li> <li>analyse and critically evaluate the information collected to make clinical judgments</li> <li>recognise that clinical judgements involve consideration of conflicting information and evidence</li> <li>formulate a diagnosis informed by the patient assessment and analysis of context and situation, and</li> <li>identify the time criticality of treatment and transport.</li> </ul> <p><b>Critical thinking</b> may include skills in questioning, analysing, synthesising, interpreting, and cognitive reasoning, and the critical appraisal of literature and evidence.</p> <p><b>Reflective practice</b> may include self-reflection during and after a clinical challenge or experience. It may involve structured and informal reflection to review and integrate knowledge and findings into practice.</p>
<p><b>3. Draws on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select or modify approaches to meet the needs of patients, their relatives and carers, when presented in emergency and urgent situations</li> <li>change their practice as needed to take account of new developments, and</li> <li>demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Identify ongoing professional learning, development needs and opportunities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate understanding of legal and professional responsibilities to undertake continuing professional development (CPD)</li> <li>critically reflect on personal strengths and limitations to identify learning and development required to improve and adapt professional practice</li> <li>seek input from others to confirm professional learning and development needs</li> <li>plan and implement steps to address professional learning and development needs, and</li> <li>maintain records of involvement in both formal and informal professional learning and development activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Professional learning and development</b> may be provided by the professional community and the broader healthcare network/practice.</p>

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## Domain 4: Safety, risk management and quality assurance

This domain covers registered paramedics' responsibility to protect patients/service users and others from harm by managing and responding to the risks inherent in paramedicine practice. It also addresses their responsibility to ensure high quality professional services are provided for the benefit of patients and service users.

What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<p><b>1. Protect and enhance patient/service user safety</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow patient/service user identification procedures to confirm the correct match of patient/service user with intended procedure, care and/or treatment</li> <li>• identify and manage risks associated with patient/service user transfers, and</li> <li>• identify and manage risk of infection, including during aseptic procedures.</li> </ul> <p><b>Patient/service user identification procedures</b> must use at least three recognised patient/service user identifiers, and may include procedures for transferring patients/service users from other health professionals. Procedures may be contained in workplace materials, relevant jurisdictions' materials and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care publications.</p> <p><b>Infection control risk management:</b> The registered paramedic must demonstrate understanding of transmission modes of hospital-acquired infections (host, agent and environment); established practices for preventing the transmission including effective hand hygiene; and ability to implement NHMRC infection prevention and control guidelines.</p>
<p><b>2. Maintain safety of self and others in the work environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of legal responsibilities for health and safety of self and others</li> <li>• identify safety hazards in the workplace and apply knowledge of responsibilities for notification, and</li> <li>• use appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsibilities for notification of safety hazards</b> may include protocols or instructions, legislation and regulations.</p>
<p><b>3. Operates effectively within a mobile environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to urgent and non-urgent requests for assistance in a low risk manner in accordance with relevant road safety legislation, organisational directives, policies, procedures and guidelines</li> <li>• utilise appropriate transport platforms taking into account clinical need, time criticality and environmental considerations, and</li> <li>• cooperate with and utilise the support of other emergency service and rescue organisations to facilitate patient access/egress/extrication in the most effective manner.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Maintains records appropriately</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record information systematically in an accessible and retrievable form</li> <li>• keep accurate, comprehensive, logical, legible and concise records</li> <li>• use only accepted terminology in completing patient care records, and</li> <li>• review, communicate, record and manage patient/service user information accurately, consistent with protocols, procedures and legislative requirements for maintaining patient/service user records.</li> </ul> <p>Patient/service user information management must comply with confidentiality and privacy. The registered paramedic must demonstrate awareness of the legislative requirements about ownership, storage, retention and destruction of patient/service user records and other practice documentation.</p>

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What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<b>5. Monitors and reviews the ongoing effectiveness of their practice and modifies it accordingly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programs</li> <li>• consider feedback from colleagues and critically reflect on their own paramedicine practice, and</li> <li>• make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease care or treatment, or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Audits, reflects on and reviews practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the principles, application and need for quality control and quality assurance in paramedicine practice</li> <li>• demonstrate an awareness of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures</li> <li>• maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement</li> <li>• participate in quality assurance programs, where appropriate or required</li> <li>• reflect on practice and the application of such reflection to their future practice, and</li> <li>• participate in case conferences and other methods of review.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Participates in the mentoring, teaching and development of others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in guiding the learning of others</li> <li>• share knowledge with colleagues</li> <li>• support healthcare students to meet their learning objectives</li> <li>• share knowledge and experience with colleagues relating to individual/group/unit problems</li> <li>• contribute to orientation and ongoing education programs</li> <li>• act as a role model to other members of the healthcare team</li> <li>• participate, where possible, in coaching and mentoring to assist and develop colleagues, and</li> <li>• participate, where appropriate, in teaching others including paramedic students, those of other health disciplines, and developing less experienced paramedics.</li> </ul>



# PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES FOR REGISTERED PARAMEDICS

## Domain 5: Paramedicine practice

This domain covers profession specific knowledge, skills and capabilities required for practice as a registered paramedic.

What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<b>1. Use patient information management systems appropriately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of patient information management systems, and</li> <li>• ensure correct verification and management of information.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Assess and monitor the patient/service user's capacity to receive care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify factors or conditions that may affect the patient/service user's behaviour and/or capacity to undergo the procedure</li> <li>• identify patients/service users most at risk; including pregnant women and the fetus; breast feeding mothers and their children</li> <li>• identify contraindications and limitations arising from the patient/service user's capacity to receive care; determine appropriate adjustments to procedures; and, where appropriate, communicate these to the patient/service user</li> <li>• perform patient/service user assessment and interventions in accordance with legislation, registration standards, codes and guidelines, including gaining informed consent, and</li> <li>• identify and respond to a patient/service user's deteriorating condition, or inability to undergo a procedure or treatment, consistent with duty of care and statutory requirements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Patient/service user's capacity or behaviour</b> may include pre-existing medical and/or physical and physiological conditions, age, pregnancy, psycho-social, socio-economic, culture, English language skills.</p>
<b>3. Understands the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are specifically relevant to paramedicine practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the structure, function and pathophysiology of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with knowledge of health, human growth and development, disease, disorder and dysfunction</li> <li>• understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process</li> <li>• understand the theoretical basis of and the variety of approaches to assessment and intervention</li> <li>• demonstrate applied knowledge of human anatomy and physiology sufficient to understand the nature and effects of injury or illness and to conduct assessment and observation in order to establish patient/service user management strategies</li> <li>• understand psychological and social factors that influence an individual in health and illness, and</li> <li>• understand the clinical sciences underpinning paramedic practice, including physiological, pharmacological, behavioural and functional.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Conducts appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the safety of patients/service users and those involved in their care</li> <li>• position for safe and effective interventions</li> <li>• demonstrate applied knowledge of the indications and contra-indications of using specific paramedic interventions including their modifications, and</li> <li>• modify and adapt practice appropriate to the emergency environment.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Demonstrates the requisite knowledge and skills to participate in mass casualty or major Incident situations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of the public health model for response to major incidents</li> <li>• demonstrate applied knowledge of emergency medicine for a mass casualty/major incident event, and</li> <li>• maintain currency with organisational directives, policies, procedures and guidelines relating to the major incidents.</li> </ul>

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What registered paramedics must be able to do	Evidence of this capability for the paramedicine profession
<b>6. Formulates specific and appropriate patient/service user care and treatment actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors within their authorised scope of practice</li><li>• demonstrate sensitivity to the factors which shape lifestyle that may impact on the individual's health and affect the interaction between the patient/service user and registered paramedic</li><li>• utilise knowledge, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate judgements and actions, and</li><li>• prioritise the care provided to optimise safety and health outcomes for the patient and demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving.</li></ul>