

St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.

Information Kit for Employment Student Paramedics



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Introduction

It takes a special person to become a Paramedic. They are in the front-line of medical care every day. They are confident and able to make fast, smart decisions based on quick assessments of emergency medical situations.

Our paramedics are among the best, carrying on that proud tradition to be the best ambulance service in Australia. That takes individual commitment and hard work, two qualities vital in all our paramedics.

Are you thinking this job might be for you? This Information Pack outlines how to go about becoming a Paramedic. You are now taking the first step towards a highly rewarding career.

St John Ambulance Australia (Northern Territory) Inc.

St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc. (SJAANT) operates under the guidance of the St John Council for the NT, comprised of ten members drawn from various disciplines within the general population of the Northern Territory. The Council provides management guidelines and endorses policy decisions affecting the entire operations of the organisation. Within the Northern Territory, SJAANT has five separate but closely related Arms or Branches:

- ✓ The Ambulance Service
- ✓ Volunteer First Aid Services
- ✓ Contracts and First Aid Sales Services
- ✓ Training and Education Department
- ✓ Corporate Service Department

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible to the Chairman of the St John Council and is accountable for the conduct and co-ordination of SJAANT activities throughout the whole of the Northern Territory.



The Ambulance Service

The Northern Territory Government contracts SJAANT, to provide an Ambulance service for the people of the Northern Territory. The area of responsibility is large although the population is small. Areas inaccessible by road are covered by Aero-medical Service/ Territory Health Services (a government medical service). Centres are located in Darwin, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

Ambulance Communications

The communications centres located in Alice Springs and Darwin provide ambulance communications for the whole of the Ambulance Service in the Northern Territory.

Ambulance trained Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) operate these centres on a 24 hours / 7 days a week rotating roster.



What it means to be a Paramedic

The role of a Paramedic is rewarding, challenging, and demanding. The prime objective for a Paramedic Officer is the efficient and competent treatment and transportation of the sick and injured, within the scope of the Officer's training and experience. It involves daily contact with people in crisis. It also involves being confronted by severely injured and disfigured persons, and in some instances a dying patient or deceased person/s. Routinely, the Paramedic's role involves unpleasant and gruesome sights including serious injury and death of children, interacting with distressed, angry, and anxious relatives and loved ones.

Prospective Student Paramedics should be fully aware of the likelihood of being confronted by these and other unpleasant experiences which may confront their personal values, beliefs and coping style and which may be regarded as outside the usual range of human experience.

The public has a high expectation of the assistance a Paramedic can provide to them and while as a student officer, you may find this expectation overwhelming, the role will provide you with rewards and the knowledge that your skills have made a difference to a person's life.

In applying for a position as an on-road Paramedic officer you must accept that at some time during your employment with the organisation you will be required to work on public holidays, including Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

The following is an overview of some of the environmental conditions and physical activities performed by Paramedics:

- ✓ Working outdoors in all kinds of weather
- ✓ Using patient lifting devices such as collapsible stretcher, carry chairs and wheelchairs
- ✓ Treating patients who may have infectious or communicable diseases
- ✓ Working for extended periods during the day or night in ambulance vehicles
- ✓ Driving a range of ambulance vehicles in all kinds of weather conditions
- ✓ Working in confined spaces such as under vehicles, trains and buildings
- ✓ Working at hazardous material scenes such as a chemical spill, industrial fire or accident
- ✓ Treating patients at heights such as rooftops and building sites.



How to become a Paramedic

SJAANT offers a unique opportunity for a limited number of individuals to become Student Paramedics. This is a University Degree program through Edith Cowan University (ECU), which takes approximately 3.5-4 years. During the program you will undertake the training and development required to become a Qualified Paramedic. You will be employed by us for almost the entire length of your training program. Following is the program structure:

You will be an ECU student from the beginning of your degree right through to your graduation. Your employment as a Student Paramedic with us will commence once you have completed the first 12 weeks of the program.

1

Successful applicants will be *students* in the first 12 week hands-on practical training and assessment, through the Paramedic Training College at Casuarina.

2

Once the first block of training and assessment is completed, students will commence employment as *Student Paramedic Level 1* with SJAANT.

3

Students continue to progress through log books and degree assignments. Further progression through *Student Paramedic Level 2* and *Level 3* upon achievement of pre-requisites.

4

Students will become *Qualified Paramedics* once they have completed the Bachelor of Science (Paramedical Science) degree and gained an Authority to Practice as a Paramedic in the NT.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must include as part of their application a written statement addressing each criterion as listed. About 250 words is generally an appropriate length for each criterion. Applicants should provide evidence to support their claims against the criteria, such as examples from previous employment. The key is to:

- demonstrate capability by providing evidence of how you meet the selection criteria;
- provide specific details; and
- where possible, include an indicator of success or a result.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively with people of all ages from all walks of life. | <input type="checkbox"/> Be flexible and adaptable to carry out all associated duties of a Paramedic e.g. additional training, centre duties, completing necessary paperwork correctly and promptly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work effectively as part of a team, and build relationships with patients, external agencies e.g. hospital employees. | <input type="checkbox"/> Show dedication to always abide by St John Ambulance protocols and procedures. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use knowledge, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate judgments and actions. | <input type="checkbox"/> Have a high standard of personal appearance and hygiene. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The ability to relate to people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, races, religions and cultures. | <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the need to establish and maintain a safe working environment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Possess a high level of physical fitness and strength in order to perform Paramedic duties. | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a written statement (500 words) on why you wish to become a Paramedic Officer. This should include a description of what you think the job is about, what qualities you have that make you suitable for the role, and what kind of contribution to the community and to SJAANT's standing within the NT you will be able to make. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to think and act quickly in emergencies and judge situations and judge people accurately. | |

The Selection Process

The process undertaken by all applicants is quite complex and takes approximately three months. This is to ensure that SJAANT selects based on merit and employs the highest standard of students. The selection process involves a number of assessments, which are carried out in Darwin.

1. During the first stage your application will be assessed and compared with other applications. Panel members will confer to compile a short list of applicants to progress to the next stage of selection. Your referees may be contacted during this stage of the selection process.
2. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and successful applicants will move onto the second stage and will be required to travel to Darwin to undertake the next round of assessments. Accommodation and flight costs will be borne by interstate applicants. Subsidised accommodation may be offered by SJAANT subject to availability.

Assessments undertaken at this stage include:

- ✓ **Medical Examination**
- ✓ **Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE)**
- ✓ **Psychometric Assessment**
- ✓ **Interview**
- ✓ **Group Challenge**
- ✓ **Handwritten Assessment**
- ✓ **Driving Assessment**



The Medical Examination will include a PEM and a functional capacity evaluation, this will include the following areas:

- Full medical history based on a comprehensive five-page questionnaire, including detailed review of work injury and rehabilitation history
- Full musculoskeletal examination
- Examination for hernias
- Epworth Questionnaire (fatigue assessment)
- Urinalysis for diabetes or kidney/bladder disorder
- Cardiac and respiratory examination.
- Vision assessment including colour blindness/visual perception
- Instant Drug screening
- Audiometry (hearing test)
- Spirometry (lung function test)

✓ **Functional Capacity Evaluation** is a comprehensive evaluation of your ability to perform a variety of activities and tasks that could reasonably be expected of a Paramedic. It reports or assesses your body's ability to function with minimal risk of injury when it is at its most fatigued limit. The evaluation takes approximately 3 hours. Minimum lifting weight that you will be assessed on is 25kg for female applicants and 30kg for males.

- The functional capacity assessment is a test of a candidate's capacity to undertake work postures and work activities.
- Consideration has been made when designing this assessment to simulate work tasks that may be required of a paramedic.
- Candidates will be asked to undertake a range of activities including bending, reaching, squatting, lifting, performing transfers (floor and bench height), carrying and pushing and pulling.
- As per the demands of the position, the candidate may be required to lift to a heavy capacity. This may include lifting up to 45kg as per the US definitions of a heavy work.
- Consideration is taken as to the candidate's body weight and they will not be asked to lift more than 60% of their body weight.
- Throughout the lifting assessment the candidate's heart rate and lifting technique will be monitored. If there are any concerns the testing will be ceased.
- A three minute step test is carried out to test the candidate's fitness. They are also required to perform a range of sustained postures including reaching, squatting and kneeling.
- The candidate will be asked to demonstrate fine motor skills as well as the ability to climb stairs. Abdominal, quadriceps and back strength and flexibility will also be assessed.
- The candidate will not be asked to undertake any task that they do not feel able to perform.
- Specific recommendations will be made according to the results of the functional capacity assessment.



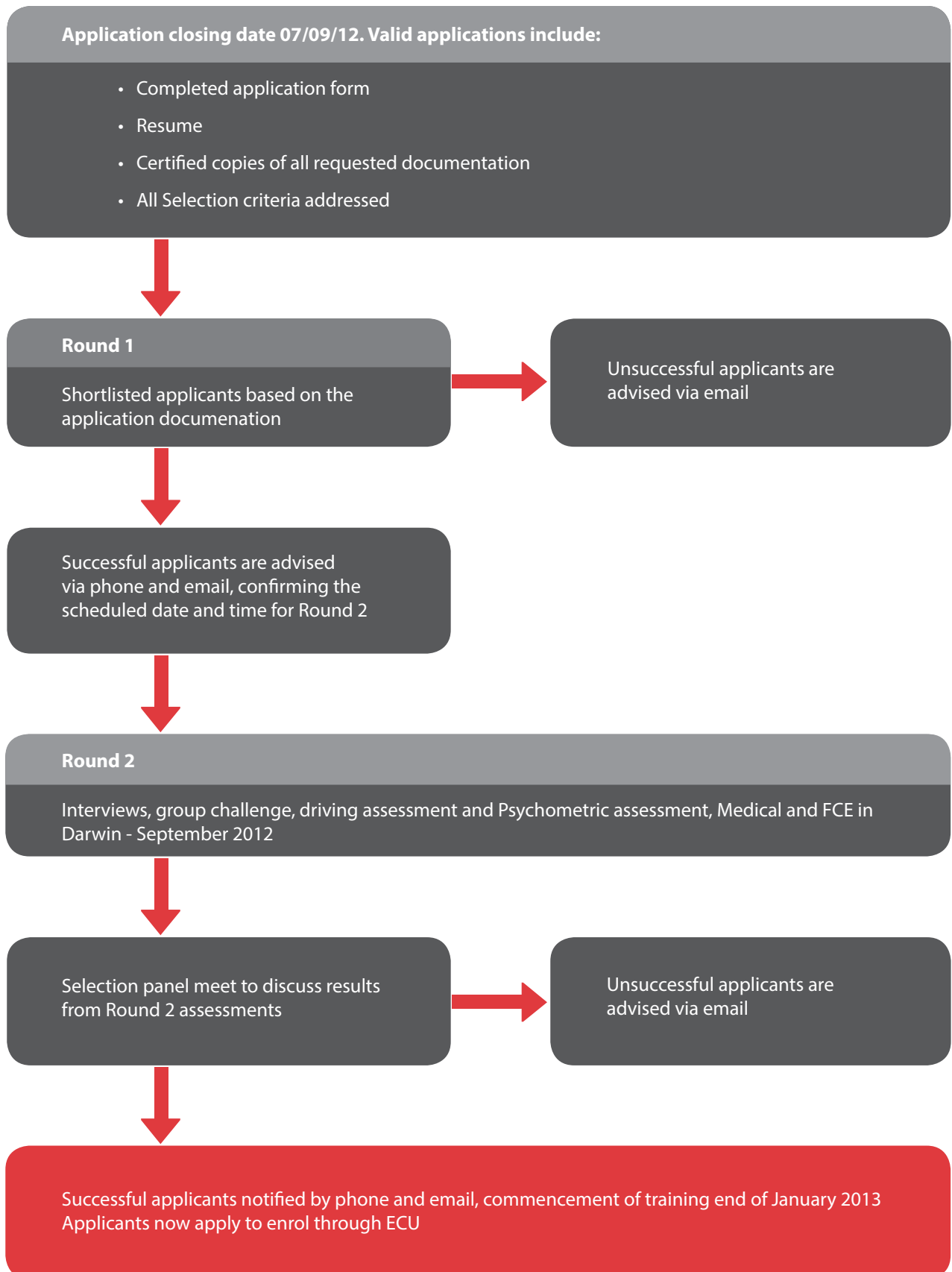
When asked to attend a functional capacity evaluation, please ensure you wear appropriate clothing and footwear, which will enable you to undertake the above exercises.

- ✓ **Psychometric Assessments** – each candidate will be required to complete a General Reasoning Assessment, Values and Motives Inventory and a Personality Questionnaire which will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. All assessments will be conducted online.
 - The General Reasoning consists of three timed tests to measure your ability to work with verbal, numerical and abstract information.
 - The Values and Motives and Personality Questionnaire asks questions concerning your interests, preferences and feelings about a range of things.
- ✓ **Interview** – whilst every attempt is made to give applicants as much notice as possible, SJAANT will seek to expedite its processes. All interviews will be in person and take place in Darwin. Interviews vary in length from 30 minutes to one hour. They are structured to enable the panel to make a fair and equal assessment of each candidate. The selection panel will take notes, and mark responses to questions in accordance with a scoring grid. Opportunities will be given to applicants to ask questions.
- ✓ **Group Challenges** bring together a group of candidates that are presented with a situation and are required to work together to find a solution.
- ✓ **Handwritten assessment** – each candidate is presented with a general topic and will be required to handwrite approximately 500 words on the topic.
- ✓ **Driving assessment** – you will be individually or as a part of a small group be assessed by a member of the Defensive Driving team. This assessment is not to assess your ability to drive at high speed but to assess your driving manner and habits.

Appointment – once all assessment reports are completed and reviewed, the Selection Panel reconvenes to finalise their selections for appointment as a Student Paramedic. Referee checks will be conducted for applicants shortlisted at this stage. A written offer of employment will be made. Once a letter of acceptance is completed and returned to SJAANT, the process of recruitment and selection is complete. Successful applicants now apply to enrol with ECU.



Selection Process Timeline



Training and Development

Successful applicants will undertake an undergraduate Bachelor of Science (Paramedical Science) degree through Edith Cowan University while employed by SJAANT. Commencement of employment will be once they have completed their first 12 weeks of training. The degree program includes academic components as well as practical training. Some hands-on training will be provided through the Paramedic Training College at Casuarina outside of the degree requirements. The overall program is designed to train and develop students to become highly skilled Qualified Paramedics.

The course structure is outlined below. For further course information, go to:

<http://www.reachyourpotential.com.au/courses/K89>. Please note that all units attract HECS fees.

Many of the units are available externally in an online mode and some will be delivered in a face-to-face series of workshops in Darwin.

Some candidates may be able to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for some of the first year units, depending on prior study. You will still be required to attend the first block of training, which is regarded as an Induction course.

The first block of training of 12 weeks includes four units of degree studies covering Paramedic Practice fundamentals, as well as driving and rescue training. Passing all the assessments for those courses will allow you to be included as a member of the crew on the road.



Course Structure

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Summer School	Summer School	Summer School	Summer School
	PST1105 Disease States in Emergency Care	PST3103 Trauma Studies	PST3104 Medical Studies for Paramedics
Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 1
PST1101 Introduction to Paramedical Practice	SCH2204 Pre Hospital Policy, Ethics and Legal Issues	PST3106 Paediatric Studies for Paramedic	NNT3204 Primary Health Care
PSP1106 Basic Clinical Skills for Paramedics	SCH1143 Systems Physiology	PST3107 Obstetric Studies for Paramedics	HST2122 Health Research Methodology
PST1102 Foundations of Paramedical Practice		PSP3105 Clinical Practicum 3	NST 3209 Evidence Based Practice in Health Care
PST2101 Foundations of Paramedical Practice 2			
Winter	Winter	Winter	Winter
PSP2102 Paramedic Practicum			
Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 2
HST1124 Health Communications	PST2106 Pre Hospital Diagnostic Techniques	SCH3236 Pharmacology	PST3210 Perspectives in Emergency Management
SCH1101 Cultural Studies	NST2106 Mental Health Problems and Disorders	PSP3103 Advanced Emergency Care 2	
SCH1134 Human Structure and Function	PSP3101 Advanced Emergency Care 1		

Conditions of Employment

Probation Period / Minimum Period of Employment

The first six (6) months of an employee's employment is a probationary period. During this period, either St John NT or an employee may terminate the employment with one (1) weeks' notice or payment in lieu of notice by St John NT or forfeiture by the employee of remuneration or entitlements in lieu of notice.

Regular, documented performance reviews will be conducted at least every eight (8) weeks throughout the employee's six (6) month probation period with the employee's supervisor or nominated delegate. The final probation report will be completed within six (6) months of commencement of employment.

Rates of Pay

Student Level 1, 2 & 3 – an employee enrolled in a Bachelor of Science (Paramedical Science), currently not Qualified as an Ambulance Paramedic. Progression will be defined through your level of training and development you obtain at each level.

	Hourly Rate	Fortnightly Rate	Base Annual Salary*
Level 1	\$24.10	\$1,831.60	\$47,621.60
Level 2	\$25.72	\$1,954.72	\$50,822.72
Level 3	\$27.90	\$2,120.76	\$55,139.76

rates current as at 01/07/2012

**Roster Allowance (34.4%) or Shift Penalties for working public holidays and weekends will be paid in addition to this salary when running as part of a two person crew.*

Once you are a Qualified Paramedic you will have the opportunity to earn \$83,220 - \$85,978 per annum or as an Intensive Care Paramedic up to \$105,656 per annum.

All other employment conditions are identified in the St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc. Ambulance Enterprise Agreement 2010-2013.

A copy of this document is available online at:

<http://www.fwa.gov.au/documents/agreements/fwa/AE888748.pdf>



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will I be provided accommodation when I move to Darwin?

A: If you move to Darwin from interstate, you are able to stay at SJAANT's subsidised accommodation for the first 12 weeks of pre-employment training. Local recruits will be expected to have their own accommodation arranged.

Q: Will St John assist with relocation expenses?

A: Applicants relocating from interstate are eligible to receive up to \$5000 relocation assistance to assist with the removal of their household and personal effects. This is payable upon successful completion of the probationary period.

Q: How long will it take me to become a qualified paramedic?

A: The training program includes completion of a Bachelor of Science (Paramedical Science) and therefore will take approximately 3.5-4 years to complete. Progression through the program would depend on your academic achievements as well as the completion of your practical skill validation assessments and log books.

Q: When do we get out on the road after training?

A: After successfully completing the first 12 weeks training, which will include clinical, driving and rescue training, you will commence employment as a Student Paramedic in either Alice Springs or Darwin. You will run as a third member on a crew whilst you complete your core skills assessments and log books.

Q: I am a registered nurse; do I still need to complete this training program?

A: At this stage, no conversion programs or bridging courses are offered to people who have other health science backgrounds. However, you may well be eligible to apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL), and have some units of study credited. RPL applications are done directly through Edith Cowan University. Previous experience in similar fields may also assist you with completing the skill validation process quicker.

Q: Do I have to pay the cost of the medical, functional capacity assessment and the psychometric test?

A: No, St John NT will cover the cost of the medical, functional capacity assessment and psychometric test for applicants who have been successful in round one of the selection process.

Q: Am I required to have any vaccinations?

A: As a paramedic you could be exposed to a variety of Communicable Diseases. St John NT routinely offers the following immunisations to all staff:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Flu Vaccination (annually)

If required, St John will provide any additional immunisations.

Q: Do I need to get an unrestricted LR Licence?

A: To apply for a Student Paramedic position you are required to hold at least an unrestricted driver's licence. You do not need a LR (manual) driver's licence in order to drive Ambulance vehicles, however, it is desirable.

Q: Do I get a choice where I will be located?

A: You will be initially appointed to a training area, either in Darwin or Alice Springs, but at any stage as a Student Paramedic you may be posted to any of the service locations throughout the Territory. SJAANT will try to fulfil your preferences but you could be posted to any location within the NT where there is a service requirement for a period of up to 6 (six) months. This is something you may need to carefully consider before applying for a Paramedic position.

Q: English is my second language – what level of oral skill is required?

A: SJAANT is an Equal Opportunity employer. Applicants who have English as a second language are encouraged to apply. Please consider that Paramedics must be clear and effective communicators, so your communication skills in English will be assessed during the selection process.

Q: How much do Paramedics get paid?

A: See page 13 of this information kit for salary levels as you progress through your training.

Q: Am I too old or too young to be a Student Paramedic?

A: As an Equal Opportunity employer, SJAANT has no age restriction for Paramedics. Mature aged people are therefore encouraged to apply. Applicants do, however, need to satisfy the Service's mandatory requirements, such as medical, functional capacity assessments and unrestricted driver's licence.

Q: What if I don't currently meet the Selection Criteria?

A: SJAANT holds intakes for Student Paramedics annually, this pack is designed to enable applicants to prepare in advance for future application processes.

Q: How long does the recruitment process take?

A: Our selection process involves a number of assessments and is quite complex, and takes approximately three months. Applicants will be advised of their progress at the end of each round. While you may meet the selection criteria, all applicants are being assessed in competition with the other applicants, therefore please do not resign from other employment or make life altering decisions until you receive a formal written offer of employment from SJAANT.

Q: How do I demonstrate my eligibility to enrol in the Bachelor of Science (Paramedical Science) degree program at ECU?

A: You are required to obtain a written statement from ECU indicating your ability to meet the university entry requirements. You will need to contact the Student Recruitment team at ECU, indicating that you are an applicant for the NT Paramedic Student program:

Tel: 134 ECU (134 328) 8:30-17:00 WA time

Email: futurestudy@ecu.edu.au

Web link: www.reachyourpotential.com.au where you can search for Paramedicine, or contact Student Recruitment through the Ask Us link.





Zoe Marcham

Working while others sleep

It was an early January morning when I was woken by an intense wet season storm with lots of thunder and lightning. I immediately thought damn - I can't wear my new shoes to work tomorrow in this torrential rain. A few minutes later I heard an ambulance siren and my thoughts turned to all those people who were working throughout the night in that terrible storm. Their work continues no matter what the weather.



Amanda Brain is a part-time student paramedic who has been working with the St John Ambulance Service for the last year. She just loves her work and feels honoured to be able to contribute to our community in a positive way.

"I love the variety. Every day is different. And you never know what to expect when you head off to respond to somebody's call for help - it may be somebody who is distressed or in danger. For me, the most rewarding part of my work is providing emotional support to patients as we deliver them to the next point of care. Last week we responded to a call and found a frail old lady who had fallen and could not get up. She was really worried that she would not be found and would die all alone on the floor of her house. Talking to her and reassuring her as we took her to the hospital was really rewarding. The paramedics at St John Ambulance are a really dedicated

bunch and great to work with. The service goes to great lengths to make sure that trainees like myself have all the necessary skills that we need to take care of our patients. It is a family-oriented service so I am able to maintain a good life-work balance. It is important for me because I want to also spend time with my wonderful husband and two gorgeous daughters."

I asked Amanda if the work is physically demanding. "It certainly is. But that is not a problem for me because I am passionate about keeping fit. My training program has to be flexible to fit in with all my work commitments but I find time to regularly run, ride and do weight training. We had a special training session at work recently which included abseiling down a building and crawling through small, wet tunnels to retrieve a patient - that

was fun in the October humidity! The work is particularly difficult at this time of year. The wet brings its own special challenges. The heat requires more patience from everyone. Visibility is often impaired and the roads can be slippery or muddy. Our uniforms are often soaked and our gloves fill with sweat and, of course, it is precisely at this time that you have to be more vigilant in your work. The most important thing is to avoid putting the patients and ourselves at risk. But we have a great relationship with the Police and the Fire and rely on them a great deal. We all have a job to do and we just get on with it. I am lucky to have a positive attitude which helps."

It is reassuring to know that there are properly trained and dedicated people out there who are ready to come to the assistance of those in need when you ring "000" - whatever the time of day or night - or the weather.



For more information on this position, or anything else you might be interested to know about
St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc., please contact the Human Resource Department
on (08) 8922 6200 or by email jobs@stjohnnt.asn.au