

Guideline Name: Paramedic Academy		Department: Orange County Emergency Services
Revision Date: April 4, 2025	Issued: June 6, 2022	Approval(s): Kimberly K. Woodward EMS Division Chief 

Scope

This policy applies to all Emergency Medical Technician - Basics in the EMS division (permanent and temporary). Preference will be given to existing permanent trainees.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the implementation of a contracted career transition pathway for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) employed by Orange County. This policy will outline the process for the Emergency Services Paramedic Academy to assist current EMTs (temporary or full-time) in obtaining their Paramedic credential. The “academy” provides the opportunity for personnel to 1) maintain their employment in a permanent capacity and 2) receive a commensurate pay increase while completing the academy process. In exchange for assisting in this career transition, the trainee would be contractual obligated for a period of two (2) years following successful completion of the OCES-EMS FTEP process and oral boards.

Definitions

DTCC- Durham Technical Community College

EMT – Emergency Medical Technician

FRPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

FTE – Full time trainee, funding has been allotted for these positions in the Orange County Budget

FTEP – Field Training Evaluation Program

Permanent- A full time trainee that has completed the probationary process

Temporary- A “part-time” trainee that is not receiving benefits

Guidance

Selection Process:

Pre-requisites for acceptance into the ES Paramedic Academy:

1. Must have successfully completed Phase 1 of the Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP) and permitted to independently practice as an Orange County Emergency Medical Technician without restrictions.

2. Must obtain one EMS supervisor Recommendation (does not have to be current supervisor)
3. EMT has not received any disciplinary actions within the past 12 months.
4. EMT is current on all continuing education requirements
5. Must be in compliance with Orange County Practice Policy (See Orange County System Plan).
6. EMT has submitted a completed Paramedic Academy Application by the specified deadline (see appendix 1)
7. Successful completion of Administrative Panel Interview (*required if there are more qualified candidates than there are positions available*)

Guidelines for Participation in Paramedic Academy:

For selected academy recruits:

1. Trainee must sign a Paramedic Academy Contractual Agreement and the Agreement must be fully executed in order to transition to paramedic trainee position. (Appendix 2)
2. Offers for Paramedic Academy promotion must be initiated by Orange County Human Resources (HR).
3. Candidates must complete all post offer requirements as required by HR.

DTCC Enrollment:

1. Trainee must sign a FRPA release so that grades and affective evaluations may be accessed by employer.
4. Trainee must complete all matriculation (enrollment forms, assessment testing, etc.) requirements of Durham Technical Community College.
5. Failure to submitted required documentation prior to the start date of the paramedic class the college will result in being dropped from the class and will nullify the paramedic academy agreement with Orange County.
6. The college will require background checks in the system they so choose.
7. The trainee must have a valid CPR credential of an agency approved by the College.
8. Trainees are expected to have all required books, materials and college uniform shirts prior to the first day of class.

Tuition, Fees and Financial Responsibility:

1. Trainees of Emergency Services are considered affiliated with Orange County and are therefore exempt from DTCC tuition associated with the paramedic program listed in the continuing education program.

2. The Department provides all costs associated with the community college course. These costs are calculated in the Paramedic Academy Contractual Agreement as reimbursable expenses should there be a breach of contract.
3. The trainee under Paramedic Academy contract is paid as a full time employee during class, clinical, and paramedic testing. Only the salary paid to the trainee during the trainee timeframe is counted toward payout should there be a breach of contract.
4. Any time where the trainee staffs an ambulance as a primary EMT (second provider) will not be counted toward the salary payout for school should there be a breach of contract. Only class, program clinicals, testing and field internship (third rider trainee status) are counted.

Agency Responsibilities:

1. All Paramedic Academy students are directly supervised by the EMS Training officer.
2. Scheduling of weekly EMS unit ride times will be handled through the EMS Training Officer in coordination with the clinical coordinator of the community college.
3. All attempts to ensure the same number of scheduled hours as any other EMS FTEP trainee on a 24/72 or 12 hour rotating schedule will occur however the trainee may not work an EMS shift the night before class, tests, or hospital clinical. Trainees may not be scheduled for more than 24 consecutive hours.
4. Paramedic trainees may be allowed to sign up for overtime associated with special events that do not conflict with class, clinical or assignments only as a last resort. Paramedic trainees may also work in the EMS system as a last resort EMT when the system would fall below the minimum number of ambulances as long as the shift is not the night before class, tests or hospital clinicals. Trainees may not work more than 24 hours consecutively. Overtime shall be avoided so the trainee may focus on all education requirements.
5. The trainee may not count any primary EMT time towards their clinical hours.
6. The trainee shall be assigned a primary preceptor for the duration of the class and is expected to work the same rotation as their preceptor with the *exception of hours entering overtime status*.
7. Any approved annual leave will correspond with the college's break schedule. No other annual leave will be approved while school is in session.
8. Trainees shall be expected to remain on campus should class be dismissed early (with the exception of evacuation or severe weather). Trainees shall utilize the time to study or practice skills in the lab.
9. Leave without pay will not be recommended by the Emergency Services Director during the paramedic academy (extended leave requests or needs will be handled following the County's existing Family Medical Leave Act/extended leave policies).

Responsibilities of the Trainee

1. It is vital that the trainee communicates with their direct supervisor to ensure that weekly work hour requirements are met. Early notification to the trainee's direct supervisor is required if there is any alteration of the scheduled classroom, hospital clinical shifts, or ambulance ride time.
2. The paramedic trainee will clock in utilizing the County's approved time keeping process at the class or clinical start time. The trainee shall clock out for lunch breaks unless lunch is provided as part of the class or clinical. The trainee shall clock out at the end of class or clinical.
3. The trainee should attend all continuing education opportunities to maintain agency standards. Any conflict due to unavoidable school schedule shall be reported to the trainee's direct supervisor in advance.
4. Trainees will be required to display a positive and professional demeanor, professional appearance when representing Orange County Emergency Services. Adherence to the department's ETHOS at all times is also required.
5. Trainees are required to turn in all assignments and successfully pass all modules to remain in the program.
6. Trainees are required to arrive on time, in proper uniform and be well rested for all classes, clinicals, and field internship.
7. Trainees shall follow all program rules and shall also complete clinical documentation within the deadline set forth by the college.
8. Trainee shall follow college requirements for absence notification as adhere to the Orange County EMS Attendance Policy. All activities associated with the community college program are considered continuing education.
9. Trainee shall sign the daily college roster.
10. Trainees shall adhere to all Department policies and represent the Department's ETHOS at all times.

State Testing and FTEP

1. Upon successful completion of the program, trainee shall sign up for a NC State Credentialing Exam within two weeks of course completion.
2. Trainees may under the direct approval of the EMS Division Chief utilize a County Vehicle to commute to the State testing site if necessary. Trainees may clock in upon arrival at the testing site and clock out upon completion of the testing.
3. Trainees may not engage in any patient care above the EMT level during the period between graduation from the college paramedic program and receiving their State credential.
4. Should the trainee be unsuccessful with obtaining State Credential on the first attempt a meeting with Instructor and EMS Training Officer shall take place with the trainee to create a study guide for deficient areas. Failure on second attempt results in a performance improvement plan with more detail. Failure to pass the exam on third attempt will result nullification of the Paramedic Academy Contract.

5. Once the State credential has been obtained, the trainee is assigned to an available preceptor/FTO and enters FTEP Phase 2.
6. Trainee is required to successfully complete all remaining phases of the FTEP process.
7. The successful completion of the Medical Boards marks the end of the FTEP process, documentation of this successful completion will be provided to the Division Chief of Finance and Administration so that a personnel action form is completed. This step allows for the promotion of the trainee from ES Grade 8 to ES Grade 12. This will become effective on the first day worked in the new pay period.