



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
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Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

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GHA Paramedic Programme receives seal of approval for Paramedic degree

The GHA are delighted to report that following a validation assessment visit by the Health Professionals Council (HPC) in February, it has now received confirmation that the Foundation Science Degree in Paramedic Science (Gibraltar) delivered by the University of Kingston and St George's University has been approved. This is the first time in their history that the HPC have validated and approved an external paramedic degree outside of the UK. It will allow individuals who successfully complete the programme to be eligible for registration with the HPC in the same way as physiotherapists and dieticians are registered under HPC in the UK. This means that not only will local graduates receive their academic awards but, in addition, their registration with the HPC is an internationally recognised passport to practice. This will enable them to access further training and clinical placements once qualified so they can develop further qualifications and expertise. It also provides them with formal confirmation that they are registered practitioners who meet the same standards of expertise as those in the UK.

GHA's four paramedic students, Paul Watson, Mikey Valarino, Jenny Garrett and Sigurd Haverland will now commence the clinical placements required by the University. These include working in the operating theatre alongside Consultant Anaesthetists to refine expertise in airway management and venous cannulation. The maternity placements will include shadowing a midwife for 3-4 day shifts. This will assist the GHA in achieving improvements in patient outcomes and is another significant step in a long series of recent clinical improvements for GHA's ambulance service. It fulfils a primary commitment made by the GHA when the ambulance service was transferred from St John Ambulance to the GHA in 2006, which was to develop local ambulance clinicians to the UK paramedic standard.

To attain this recognition, the GHA has worked in partnership with the University of Kingston and St George's University, who have been delivering the paramedic degree to the London Ambulance Service over the last 10 years. They were commissioned to conduct a distance-learning package with University of Kingston and St George's University to develop selected Emergency Medical Technicians to Paramedics in Gibraltar.

The role of the Health Professionals Council is to protect the public. It keeps a register of professionals who meet their standards for their training, professional skills and behaviour. The HPC validated the educational standards through different workshops in Gibraltar to ensure that the resources available were adequate to carry out the 'Skills Passport' required for the Paramedic Science degree here in Gibraltar. This in itself was a pioneering event since it was the first validation the HPC has carried out outside the UK.

Dr. John Cortes, Minister for Health congratulated the GHA and University of Kingston team involved in the preparation for the validation process. The Minister said, 'It is another significant step in our journey to meeting our manifesto commitments to give Gibraltar the ambulance service it so richly deserves'. It also demonstrates delivery of our commitment to deliver degree level programmes for our local workforce here in Gibraltar.'

During the period 13th and 14th February, the HPC carried out an intensive scrutiny of the paramedic programme and the capacity for GHA to support this. The assessment team were very impressed by our students, the enthusiasm and support demonstrated by the GHA mentors who will be assisting them during their training, the excellent resources available in St Bernard's Hospital and the organisers of the training package from University of Kingston and St George's University.