

Paramedics

General competency framework · Professional level · 5 competencies · approx. 75 minutes

How to use this guide

- Focus on these 5 competencies — the behaviours that matter most for this role — not a chronological career history.
- Ask every candidate the same core questions, then probe. Allow around 15 minutes per competency.
- Ask for real examples and use STAR — the Situation, the Task, the Action they took, and the Result.
- Stay neutral, capture what they say, and judge later. Gather evidence on one competency at a time.
- Rate each competency 1–5 against the positive and negative indicators, and note the evidence.

5 Outstanding 4 Good 3 Acceptable 2 Marginal 1 Poor

1. Personal Leadership

Takes responsibility for their own actions. Proactively takes on additional responsibilities and drives their own performance. Lives their own values, actively acknowledges and seeks feedback from others.

Why this matters for Paramedics: The 2023 HCPC Standards of Proficiency for paramedics strengthened emphasis on autonomy, accountability and ethics. Standard 2 covers personal/professional conduct, safeguarding, recognising the power imbalance with service users, and not abusing it for personal gain. Personal Leadership captures the self-driven integrity and ethical accountability that the standards now centre.

Give me an example of a time when you have been required to justify an action/decision that you had taken.

- Why were you required to do this?
- How did you feel about this?
- What approach did you take?
- What lessons did you learn from this experience?

Tell me about a time when you acted over and above what was expected of you in your day to day role/took on additional tasks and responsibilities.

- What made you take this on? What was it about you?
- How did you manage to deliver this on top of your day job?
- How did you keep yourself motivated/driven?
- What support did you need/get? How did you enlist this?
- What was the outcome? What feedback did you get?

What would you say are your core personal values?

- How are these manifest in the way that you work?
- Have you ever had a situation where your values/principles felt crossed or compromised? Tell me about it? How did you respond?
- With hindsight how would you approach this situation differently?
- How do your values support you at work/help you to perform? (strengths)
- How might these values get in the way/hinder you? (development needs)

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
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Does not hold self personally accountable for actions/decision/performance. May make excuses for mistakes or blame others/systems/processes		Takes personal responsibility for performance and actions
Quickly backs down when decisions/actions are challenged or becomes overly defensive about chosen path. Fails to appreciate the opportunity for learning		Has the confidence to defend decisions/actions – does this without getting defensive. Can provide a clear rationale for actions but can see alternative views
Does as much as is necessary. Shies away from taking on additional tasks or responsibility		Proactively takes on additional responsibilities/ is prepared to go “beyond the call of duty” for the greater good
Is unable to clearly articulate their drives and core values – does not appreciate what is important to them and how this might positively or negatively influence their behaviour and performance		Is self-aware – understands their motives, values and drivers and how these influence their behaviour in situations (both positively and negatively)
Behaves in a manner that is less consistent with their core values or responds in a less constructive way when faced with situations where these feel compromised/crossed		Behaves in a manner that is consistent with their core values – is prepared to take a stand/responds constructively when these feel compromised
Fails to articulate or is not prepared to admit areas of strength and areas in need of development		Able to openly and clearly articulate strengths and areas for development
Fails to proactively seek feedback on their behaviour/ performance/effectiveness. Waits for feedback to be given to them and in the absence of this carries on regardless		Actively seek feedbacks from others on their performance and the impact of their behaviour/style
Disregards feedback from others. Explains feedback away and justifies rather than using it to improve their performance/approach		Responds positively to feedback from others – acknowledges and responds by making the necessary modifications to style and approach

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1-5): _____

2. Decision Making

Understands critical success factors and assesses a range of possible options before making a decision. Steps back and seeks alternative perspectives when faced with unfamiliar scenarios. Willing to make decisions without access to all the information. Considers the implications of their decisions beyond the immediate issue.

Why this matters for Paramedics: Standard 4 'Practise as an autonomous professional' explicitly requires personally responsible decision-making — making and justifying decisions, exercising personal initiative, applying logical and systematic problem-solving in unfamiliar situations. Decision Making captures this directly.

Describe a situation where you had to assess a number of possible options prior to making a decision.

- What were the options? Which did you choose?
- What criteria did you use to make the decision?
- What were the pros and cons of the other options?
- What was the outcome?
- What was the business impact of the decision?

Tell me about a time when you felt it was necessary to seek alternative perspectives/refer a decision upwards before taking action.

- What was the context?

- Why did you choose to refer/seek other perspectives?
- What challenges did this add to the decision making process?
- How did this help you/impact the quality of the final decision?
- To what extent do you still seek support/refer in this area?

Tell me about a time where you feel you were too hasty with your decision making/failed to consider the knock on implications of your decision?

- What makes you say that?
- Why did you feel you needed to be hasty/fail to consider consequences?
- What would have been the implications if you had deferred/understood the impact?
- What lessons have you learned from this? How has this informed your approach?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Makes decisions without a clear understanding of critical success factors and without clear criteria against which to analyse particular courses of action		Ensures they have clarity on criteria and critical success factors prior to engaging in decision making
Is rather blinkered in decision making – fails to consider the full range of alternatives or to accept that there may be alternative options		Considers a range of alternatives/options when making decisions and objectively assesses the pros and cons of these
Makes decisions without a full understanding of the wider context and the knock on implications		Appreciates the business impact of decisions – understands the wider ramifications and implications
Goes it alone, failing to get support or alternative perspectives where this is required (e.g. in unfamiliar situations/where information is incomplete)		Understands where additional perspectives could support the decision making process and is prepared to seek support and guidance prior to making decision
Fails to apply and adapt learnings from previous experience or trust tacit knowledge when dealing with novel situations		Applies and adapts previous experience to novel situations
Fails to consider a range of angles or the implications of different courses of action. Focuses exclusively on hard facts/quantifiable information at the expense of the emotional/ people aspects of the situation		Considers issues from a range of angles (e.g. cost, risk, impact, benefit, short and long term opportunities, impact on people)
Rushes into decisions – is hasty and often makes decision on the basis of a superficial analysis		Willing to make decisions and take calculated risks on the basis of absent/incomplete information
Shies away from making difficult/contentious decisions. Abdicates responsibility or defers the judgement to others		Is prepared to make and stand by difficult decisions

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____

3. Customer Focus

Builds effective customer relationships to ensure needs and expectations are understood. Understands the importance of the customer to the business, seeking regular feedback whilst being prepared to say no when needed.

Why this matters for Paramedics: Standard 2.5 and 2.6 require paramedics to 'respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of service users' and base relationships on 'mutual respect and trust'. Customer Focus captures understanding service users' needs and partnering with them, even in time-critical situations.

Give me an example of a time when you provided excellent customer service/went the extra mile for a customer.

- What did you do differently in this situation? Why did you do this?
- What makes this situation stand out for you?
- How does your approach compare to that of your peers?
- What was the outcome? How did you know the customer was satisfied?

At times we all fail to deliver what a customer requires. Can you think of a time when this has happened to you?

- Why were you unable to meet the needs of the customer?
- How did you feel about this? What feedback did you receive?
- How did you respond to the customer's subsequent requests?
- What have you done to prevent the same situation occurring?
- What feedback mechanisms have you put in place to ensure customer satisfaction?

Sometimes customers don't really understand what they want or present requests that will not meet their real need. Tell me about a time when you had to ask questions/listen carefully to clarify the exact nature of the customer's need.

- How did you get to the root of the issue/help the customer articulate their real need?
- How did the customer respond?
- What would have been the impact of you not acting in this way?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Is less focused on providing excellent service to customers. Sees customers as a means to an end rather than an end in itself		Provides a friendly, efficient, professional and courteous service to customers
Lacks accountability/responsibility for customer issues. Fails to show personal commitment for resolving customer issues		Takes personal responsibility for customers, prioritising customer satisfaction highly
Fails to see/articulate the link between the customer and the organisation/business. Fails to appreciate the commercial impact of positive/negative PR		Understands the importance of the customer to the organisation/business. Clearly articulates the link between customer satisfaction and business performance
Presents customers with solutions that are based on wants rather than real needs. Is not always honest in dealings with customers		Is honest and authentic in dealings with customers – provides clear recommendations based on insights from the customer
Does not seek to truly understand and ascertain customer needs. Operates more on a "here is my solution, what is your need" basis or focuses more on customer wants rather than needs		Demonstrates a genuine curiosity and interest in the customer. Asks the right questions and listens carefully to the customer to build trust in the relationship and get to the real need
Fails to demonstrate empathy or an appreciation of the impact of their message on the customer. Could do more to put themselves in the shoes of the customer		Demonstrates empathy with customers. Show sensitivity and considers the impact of their message on the customer
Focuses on completing a transaction rather than developing a relationship with the customer		Focuses on developing a customer relationship rather than on completing a transaction
Is not proactive in seeking regular feedback from customers		Seeks regular feedback from customers

May over promise and under-deliver when customers are unrealistic with demands or when requests are not commercially viable. Needs to be able to say no (with integrity) to customers		Will not promise what cannot be delivered and ensures that work with customers is commercially viable. Prepared to say no to customers
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Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

4. Resilience

Remains calm and maintains a positive attitude when faced with difficult circumstances. Thrives under pressure, remaining focused despite distractions. Quickly recovers from setbacks.

Why this matters for Paramedics: Standard 3 explicitly addresses the paramedic's own health and wellbeing — recognising the impact of stress, developing strategies for self-care, maintaining fitness to practise. Combined with Standard 1.2 'managing the emotional burden that comes with working in a pressured environment', Resilience is unambiguously central — uniquely so among regulated health professions.

Describe a situation where you felt that the demands being placed on you were unreasonable/excessive

- What did you do to help manage the pressure of the demands?
- How successful were you? How do you know (feedback)?
- What was the impact on your performance?
- How did you minimise any negative impact on your performance?
- With hindsight what have you done differently when faced with demanding/pressurised situations?

Tell me about a crisis (at work) you have handled recently.

- What caused it?
- What did you need to do to resolve it?
- How were you feeling at the time?
- How did you manage your emotions? How effective were you?

Give me an example of a significant setback that you have experienced in your role/career to date.

- How did this come about?
- What did you do? Why?
- To what extent were others aware of your feelings?
- How do you feel about the situation now?
- What would have helped you to pick yourself up more quickly?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Becomes ruffled or emotional when under pressure – loses control when under stress		Remains calm and collected in difficult circumstances. Keeps control in stressful situations
Takes eye off the ball and can become distracted/ preoccupied when under pressure to the detriment of performance		Maintains performance under pressure. Indeed thrives in pressurised situations
Uses a limited range of coping strategies or maladaptive coping strategies when under pressure (e.g. poor diet and little exercise)		Adopts a range of effective coping strategies to deal with pressure (e.g. manages symptoms, re-frames, tackles the source)
Fails to consider or spot signs of pressure in self		Recognises signs of stress/pressure in self
Gives up easily – does not show tenacity when faced with setbacks		Persists with a course of action despite setbacks – shows tenacity in the pursuit of goals

Tends to dwell on disappointments or setbacks which can interfere with focus and performance		Remains a positive outlook in the face of setbacks and disappointments – sees them as an inevitable part of the process. Learns and moves on
Loses focus when under pressure		Maintains focus when under pressure
Focuses on the wrong things – gets caught up in distractions and loses focus/attention		Manages distractions in the working environment and keeps self focused on performance goals

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____

5. Technical Capability

Has the necessary knowledge, skills and proficiency to conduct their role. Demonstrates mastery in their area of technical capability. Stays up to date with advances in their field and commits to their continuous development.

Why this matters for Paramedics: Standard 1.3 requires paramedics to keep skills and knowledge up to date and Standard 1.4 to use 'a range of integrated skills' to manage clinical challenges in unfamiliar circumstances. Technical Capability captures clinical and procedural mastery, plus the breadth required to work autonomously in unpredictable pre-hospital environments.

What have you done to develop your knowledge, skills and abilities to help you achieve in your role?

- In what ways would you say you have developed?
- What opportunities have you taken/created?
- What improvements have resulted? How have these helped you?
- Talk to me about your development plan? How are you building your technical capability? What will doing these things give you?
- What is the next step for you in your career? How will you get there?

What do you do to ensure that you have all of the information you require to perform effectively in your role?

- Where do you get the information from?
- How does this assist you in your role?
- How do you keep up to date with developments in/outside the business?
- Why is it important to do this?
- What do you see as the key challenges/changes in the industry over the next 5 years?

What aspects of your technical capability are you particularly proud of?

- Why are you proud of these aspects?
- How do they help you perform your role?
- What have you done to create these strengths?
- Which aspects of your technical capability need the biggest improvement?
- What are doing to improve them?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Fails to identify development needs in technical capability or does so superficially		Can clearly articulate strengths and development needs in technical capability
Identifies needs but waits for these to be addressed – does not proactively create or seize opportunities to build technical capability		Acts on development needs – creates and seizes opportunities for continuous professional development
Is guarded about own development needs		Is open about own development needs

Is focused on development in the here and now. Is unable to articulate a development plan to support longer term career goals		Considers development for both current role but also future career aspirations
No evidence of really understanding the nature of the industry, the market and the competition		Understand the industry, the market and the competition
Fails to keep self up to date with the necessary knowledge to perform in role		Stays abreast of trends/changes in the market place and applies these to their role
Cannot articulate the key challenges/changes facing the business/industry		Demonstrates a sound appreciation of the medium/ long term challenges facing the business
No strong profile/network/reputation in their field or in the industry – has not capitalised on wider networking opportunities		Has built a strong network and profile in the industry – seen as a thought leader
Lacks essential knowledge of subject area for effective performance in the role		Possesses the knowledge necessary to carry out the role. Demonstrates mastery of their subject areas.
Lacks some of the necessary skills/proficiency for success in the role		Skilled and proficient in their area

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____