



University Intake Targets for Paramedic Education in AY 2026–27



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Summary: Announcement of university intake targets for the Paramedic Education programme for Academic Year 2026–27.

FAO: Principals / Chairs of Scotland's universities, and the general public.

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University Intake Targets for Paramedic Education in AY 2026-27

Purpose

1. I am writing to announce the university intake targets for BSc Paramedic Education programmes for Academic Year (AY) 2026-27.

Background

2. The five Scottish universities that have previously been awarded contracts to provide Paramedic Education – Glasgow Caledonian University, Queen Margaret University Edinburgh, Robert Gordon University, University of Stirling and University of the West of Scotland – will continue to deliver this programme.
3. In setting this intake target, SFC received guidance from the Scottish Government's Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Directorate. In a departure from the previous approach of setting a three-year intake target, covering the periods AY 2023-24, AY 2024-25 and AY 2025-26, CNO Directorate has set an intake target for one year only for AY 2026-27. CNO Directorate guidance to SFC is provided as Annex A.

Intake target for AY 2026-27

4. The overall intake target for Paramedic Education in AY 2026-27, as recommended by the CNO Directorate, is **335 students** with 'Home Fee' status. This is unchanged from the previous three year intake targets. The AY 2026-27 intake targets for each of the five universities are set out in [Table 1](#) below.
5. SFC will confirm the funded places and the associated funding with this programme in the final funding announcement for AY 2026-27, due to be published at the end of May 2026.

Rest of UK and international students

6. The intake targets contained within this announcement are for students with 'Home Fee' status. Universities can recruit rest of UK (rUK), Republic of Ireland (RoI) and international students, but should discuss any recruitment with the Scottish Ambulance Service and placement providers before doing so. RUK, RoI and international students cannot be counted against the intake targets.

Monitoring

7. Universities should return information on students on their Paramedic Education programmes to SFC through their annual Early Statistic Returns. Details of the information required will be published in the annual Early Statistic Returns Notes of Guidance on the SFC website.

8. We would expect universities to continue to work with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and provide information as required for their performance management role. Scottish Government colleagues will write to universities in due course to set out further details of the reporting requirements for NES's performance management.
9. Following discussions with colleagues in CNO Directorate, and concerns around consistent over-recruitment in previous years, the tolerance thresholds for monitoring under and over-recruitment in Paramedic Education have been updated and will be based on intake, rather than the student population across all three years of the course.

Under-recruitment policy

10. SFC will continue to operate an under-recruitment policy for the Paramedic Education programme in AY 2026-27, and we may recover funding if universities under-recruit against their intake targets, subject to a tolerance threshold of 15%. This is an increase to the previous under-recruitment tolerance and will apply for one year only.

Over-recruitment policy

11. SFC will continue to operate an over-recruitment ('consolidation') policy for Paramedic Education in AY 2026-27.
12. Owing to concerns over consistent over-recruitment by institutions and a surplus of paramedics passing through the system, CNO Directorate has asked SFC to reduce the over-recruitment threshold to 4% of the intake target, or three students, whichever is higher. Universities may be liable for a financial penalty if they exceed their intake target by more than the tolerance threshold.
13. This change will be for one year only whilst CNO Directorate looks at the deployment of paramedics in the wider community, and a more informed decision can be made.

Further information

14. Please contact the Funding team in our Investment & Research Directorate, tel: 0131 313 6500, email: funding@sfc.ac.uk.

Helen Cross
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Table 1:
Breakdown of university intake targets for Paramedic Education in AY 2026-27

University	Intake target for AY 2026-27
Glasgow Caledonian University	67
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	67
Robert Gordon University	67
University of Stirling	67
University of the West of Scotland	67
Total	335