

Frequently Asked Questions – Police Constable Entry Route (June 2018)

Police constable entry routes

1. I have always wanted to be a police officer. What entry routes are available to me?

At present, there is still the opportunity to join a police force under the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme. You will need to check your local force recruitment pages for information on vacancies.

More opportunities in joining as a police constable will be introduced as part of the [PEQF](#), however. There will be three entry routes into policing to standardise entry at the rank of constable across England and Wales.

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA): provides the opportunity for you to become a police constable on a three-year degree apprenticeship programme, with a paid salary from your start date. A small number of forces will start the PCDA programme from September 2018, while most other forces will phase it in during 2018/19.

Degree Holder Entry Programme: if you already have a degree (it doesn't have to be police-related) you can join as a police officer on a 2 year learning programme. You will be paid a salary from your start date. A small number of forces will start the Degree Holder Entry Programme from in late 2018, while most other forces will phase it in during 2018/19.

Professionally-focused undergraduate degree in policing: provides the opportunity to enrol on a university programme to achieve a pre-join undergraduate degree in policing, therefore this will be at your own expense. We anticipate that universities will start to offer the pre-join undergraduate degree in policing from September 2019.

It is important that, whichever route a new police constable follows into the service, they reach the same level of professional competence by the end of their probation period. All three routes are based on the same learning content, adjusted to take account of what the new recruit may be already expected to know and the way the learning will be delivered.

The [police recruitment](#) and [police officer](#) pages provide further information for those wishing to apply to become a police constable. Forces are likely to start their recruitment campaigns at different times before these dates, therefore it is worth checking your local force recruitment webpages. List of [police force websites](#) in the UK.

[Direct entry](#) routes are available for entry at superintendent level and will soon be available at inspector level.

<p>2. What will be the minimum educational requirement to join the police service as a police constable?</p>	<p>All applicants will need to meet organisational entry requirements, some of which are set nationally. This includes minimum fitness requirements and you will need to be 18 or older. For the PC degree apprenticeship, you are likely to have achieved a level 3 qualification (which is A-level or equivalent) plus recognised level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics prior to entry.</p> <p>Each force will advertise their entry requirements, so individuals should check with their preferred force. We also suggest you look at our recruitment pages.</p> <p>The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship will be available from September 2018, although the exact date of introduction will vary from force to force. A degree holder entry route will be phased in from September 2018, and a pre-join undergraduate degree in policing should be available from September 2019.</p>
<p>3. How do the national assessment centre (SEARCH) requirements for recruiting officers fit into the PEQF?</p>	<p>SEARCH must still be passed for all new entry routes. Initial entry will need to be successfully negotiated before a candidate can be accepted onto the PCDA and degree holder programmes.</p> <p>SEARCH will fit into the pre-join undergraduate entry route once the applicant has successfully completed their degree.</p> <p>If you are applying for a police constable role and your application is successful, you will go through to the Police SEARCH Recruit Assessment Centre.</p>
<p>4. What is the benefit of joining the police service as an apprentice?</p>	<p>The UK government has set a target of employing 3 million apprentices by 2020. The degree apprenticeship is a higher level apprenticeship which provides the opportunity to earn while you learn while initiating a meaningful career in policing.</p> <p>The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship is anticipated to start from September 2018 onwards. Forces will be recruiting at different times, therefore we recommend that you check your local force recruitment page for information as recruitment for some forces is likely to start prior to September 2018.</p> <p>List of Police Force websites in the UK.</p>

<p>5. Is there an age limit for joining via the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)?</p>	<p>People almost automatically think of apprentices as being school leavers and this is not the case. The introduction of higher-level apprenticeships has made apprenticeships more viable for people to undertake later in their career.</p> <p>The age range for the PCDA is 18 to 55.</p>
<p>6. If I successfully complete an apprenticeship, will I be guaranteed a post on completion?</p>	<p>Forces are keen to provide apprenticeships in order to recruit into their workforce and are investing in you, therefore successful completion typically results in continuation in the role beyond the apprenticeship.</p>
<p>7. Won't it be difficult to complete a full-time three year degree alongside full-time work without devaluing the degree qualification?</p>	<p>We have considered longer options for the apprenticeship but these do not fit with force requirements to operationalise recruits. We recognise that this will be a challenging and demanding programme while working. Finishing the apprenticeship with a degree qualification, however, will ultimately be of great benefit to the individual.</p> <p>It should be noted that academic years are significantly shorter than a normal working year.</p>
<p>8. What if English isn't my first language? Will I get extra help on the apprenticeship?</p>	<p>Extra support will be provided over the course of the apprenticeship. Successful completion of the apprenticeship requires the apprentice to hold 'transferable skills' qualifications (Functional Skills in England, Essential Skills in Wales) in English and Maths at Level 2 (GCSE grade C1 or above).</p>
<p>9. I am thinking of joining the police. What degree should I study for in the meantime?</p>	<p>Some universities already work in partnership with local forces and offer qualifications as a pre-entry route into the service, but at this time it is not possible to offer any guidance as to what qualifications will be recognised on a national basis.</p> <p>The introduction of the Degree Holder Entry Programme enables those who already hold a degree to join on a 2 year programme.</p> <p>Further information and regular updates will be made available on the College of Policing website throughout this programme of work on the police officer page.</p>

<p>10. If I chose to go to university and study for a pre-join undergraduate degree in policing, would I be guaranteed a post as a police constable?</p>	<p>Even though you have achieved the pre-join undergraduate degree in policing, there is more to becoming a police constable than achieving the qualification, such as values and behaviours. You will still have to go through the normal selection and assessment process called SEARCH.</p>
<p>11. Will an applicant to the police service with a policing degree or a degree qualification be able to apply for more than one force at the same time?</p>	<p>No, you can only apply to one force at a time. If you are applying for a police constable role and your application is successful, you will go through to the Police SEARCH Recruit Assessment Centre.</p>
<p>12. As a special constable, I will have gained credits against the National Policing Curriculum. How will this help me become a police constable?</p>	<p>A credit estimator has been designed to help individuals see how many credits they might be able to get for the NPC courses they have completed. The Professional Development Platform provides more information on how this process will work.</p>
<p>13. When will the police community support officer (PCSO) apprenticeship be available?</p>	<p>The PCSO apprenticeship has been developed, it is expected forces will be delivering from late 2018. Forces may start their recruitment campaign before this date, therefore it is worth checking your local force recruitment webpages. List of Police Force websites in the UK.</p>
<p>14. Will I have to be a PCSO to become a police constable?</p>	<p>No. The PCSO apprenticeship is not a prerequisite for becoming a PC, but some people do join as a PCSO and then apply to become police constables.</p>
<p>15. I am already a PCSO. Will my experience count towards becoming a police constable?</p>	<p>The College is producing guidance on career-pathway options for existing PCSOs which would take into account recognition of prior experience and learning.</p>

Further updates will be posted on the College of Policing website as this work progresses. Any questions can be forwarded to PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk