

Frequently Asked Questions – PEQF (October 2017)

Police Education Qualifications Framework	
1. What is a qualifications framework?	It is a system which credits equivalent levels of learning and expertise and enables employers and education providers to recognise and compare individuals' achievements. The UK framework regulated by OfQual describes the entry level and 8 levels (see below). The most commonly recognised qualification tends to be used as a label. For example, level 3 is often described as being equivalent to A-levels and level 6 as equivalent to a degree.
2. What are the PEQF's education principles?	<p>The sequence of progressive, national professional qualifications which, in its entirety, constitutes the PEQF is being developed in accordance with the following professional education principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• meeting the professional requirements of 21st century policing• ensuring national consistency of professional education• championing a values-based, ethical approach to policing• supporting equality of educational opportunity in the policing profession• developing a high-quality, evidence-based education for the policing profession• promoting a collaborative approach to education in the police service• enabling continuing professional development in policing roles.
3. Does the PEQF also apply to police staff?	Yes, although there is no suggestion of a requirement for a degree for all roles. Some police staff will already have access to role-specific academic qualifications through professional bodies relevant to their role, for example, the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development for HR and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for finance. There is, however, an intention to offer similar academic qualification opportunities to police staff in policing-specific roles such as intelligence, investigation and call handling. The ultimate aim is to establish an inclusive framework that integrates and aligns all police officer and staff roles. Given the enormity of this task, the intention is to phase developments, with the initial priority being police officer qualifications

<p>4. Why should policing have a formal qualifications framework?</p>	<p>Professions support their members and help assure the public that discretion is exercised appropriately by setting clear conditions of membership. These commonly include using a published specialist knowledge base, commitment to an ethical code, keeping up to date with professional development and meeting an educational standard verified by nationally recognised qualifications. In policing, three of these elements of support for professional decision making have been introduced by the College of Policing. Policing does not, however, currently set education levels for roles or ranks which reflect the skills and knowledge required to meet current and future challenges.</p> <p>Initial members of the College have stated that they want their professional body to develop national standards and ensure that their learning and expertise will receive external recognition. Introducing a qualifications framework would meet this demand and provide assurance that those working in policing are qualified to a consistent standard.</p>
<p>5. Aren't police officers already qualified?</p>	<p>There are many highly trained and experienced people working in policing. The profession does not, however, currently set education levels for roles or ranks which reflect the skills and knowledge required to meet current and future challenges. There is variable and inconsistent practice in terms of police education, with the result that some officers have no publicly recognised qualification.</p> <p>Such inconsistency risks undermining the professionalism of the police service. For most professions, a nationally recognised system of accreditation demonstrates that individuals have the required knowledge and skills for their role and thereby offers assurance to the public and to the members of the profession. The police service remains considerably out of kilter with other professions, particularly those which work to protect the public, with regard to its formal education standards.</p>
<p>6. What level of qualifications might people working in policing expect to reach?</p>	<p>Some categories of police staff role, such as human resources, have their own qualifications frameworks, while appropriate levels need to be proposed for police-specific roles such as call handling and investigators. One of the few national qualifications currently available to police constables, the largest group in the police service workforce, is set at level 3. The College has examined the qualification levels alongside its recent analysis and reviews and, together with stakeholders, has reached the view that level 6 is an appropriate reflection of demand on constables (see below). Those specialising and in senior managerial roles might expect to attain level 7 or 8 qualifications, the equivalent to a master's degree or PhD.</p>
<p>7. What is the evidence for qualifications at this level being useful?</p>	<p>In addition to being transferable for individuals, there is evidence from US research that level 6 qualification might help meet future demand and have other potential benefits. US police forces which introduced a similar requirement found officers were better at dealing with complexity and used force more appropriately.</p>

<p>8. Aren't you downplaying the skills and competence of existing officers and staff?</p>	<p>No, quite the opposite. The police service already benefits from a highly skilled workforce. The PEQF will offer the opportunity to formally recognise that.</p>
<p>9. How are the changes going to be introduced?</p>	<p>Some police forces have already introduced a practical policing degree as part of recruitment. As a priority and to help with national consistency, the College has introduced three options nationally, either before entry or through a higher-level apprenticeship entry route, whereby people can reach a level 6 qualification while working in policing.</p> <p>Another of the priority areas has been to create a system to support existing officers and staff in the police service with obtaining a higher-level qualification if they chose to do so, known as the Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning. The Professional Development Platform has been created to support officers and staff. It contains information and guidance, a credit estimator to help individuals see how many credits they might be able to get for their learning and a directory of providers that have agreed to the process, including universities and other organisations offering professional qualifications. It contains information about the courses available, how they are taught and assessed, the course cost and location and direct links to the course listed.</p>
<p>10. Is policing really a graduate-level job? Surely you don't need a degree-level qualification to break up a pub fight?</p>	<p>If that was the only type of incident a police officer had to deal with, then a level 6 qualification would not be appropriate. Police officers, however, have to exercise personal judgement and responsibility and solve problems in complex, unpredictable contexts of all kinds, dealing with everything from child sexual exploitation to counterterrorism.</p>
<p>11. Isn't having common sense and a vocation more important than qualifications in policing?</p>	<p>People in policing need to demonstrate commitment and exercise good judgement, whether or not they have a qualification. Achieving a qualification does not prevent someone having common sense or a vocation for public service. A qualified person might feel able to challenge a majority view previously been accepted as common sense if it contradicted the best available evidence. The College's view is that people working in policing are best equipped with a combination of advanced knowledge, skills and decision-making frameworks to support them in their vocation and in exercising their personal judgement.</p>
<p>12. What value does being a graduate bring?</p>	<p>Graduate-level skills and attributes (eg, critical thinking and analysis, communication skills, reflection, independent decision making, problem solving in complex and unpredictable contexts and research skills) are already demonstrated on a daily basis by current members of the service and will become increasingly important in policing. Such skills will be essential in</p>

	<p>embedding evidence-based policing and will support a highly skilled workforce capable of working more autonomously and efficiently with less supervision.</p> <p>A graduate qualification allows the public and other employers to easily recognise and compare the level of expertise of officers and staff. It may also prove useful when those currently working in policing retire or decide to leave the service.</p> <p>Higher education can also play a key role in supporting the development of skills such as tolerance, willingness to embrace alternative perspectives, moral and ethical reasoning and empathy.</p>
<p>13. Could seeing policing as a degree-level profession put people off?</p>	<p>The College is not aware of evidence which supports this idea. A higher-level apprenticeship entry route would allow people to gain qualifications while earning a salary. Qualitative research with people from minority ethnic backgrounds and education statistics suggest degree status might increase minority ethnic representation in policing. Some 23 per cent of degree students are from minority ethnic backgrounds but 13 per cent of the UK population and only 5 per cent of the police workforce are from the same minority ethnic backgrounds. The College would be interested to see research on the views of people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Statistics suggest people from disadvantaged backgrounds are increasingly likely to obtain level 6 qualifications.</p> <p>We recognise the pre-join degree entry route would mean the financial burden of gaining a degree would be passed onto individuals in line with other professions. As part of implementation, the College would review current funding options for individuals, including schemes for bursaries, scholarships and loans for those with difficulty in accessing education or for those from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Further options might include some form of ‘training’ salary. The College intends to work closely with forces, the Home Office and higher education providers to ensure that adequate options are provided to prevent any negative impact on the diversity of entrants to policing.</p> <p>Other concerns will also be key considerations within the programme of work to implement the PEQF. These include the possible impact of national variations in the cost of living and the implications for mature joiners or those with carer responsibilities that might potentially restrict applications. A full equality impact assessment will be conducted to resolve or mitigate all identified risks.</p>
<p>14. Has an equality impact assessment been</p>	<p>Yes, an equality analysis has been completed and is available. Further consultations are taking place as the programme develops to ensure the equality analysis is captured throughout the implementation of the new framework.</p>

<p>completed on implementing the PEQF?</p>	
<p>15. How will national consistency in delivery be maintained?</p>	<p>The College of Policing, as the professional body, would set national standards and requirements to ensure consistency and standardisation in all new entry routes into policing. Universities and forces would work in partnership to design, deliver and assess each programme.</p>
<p>16. We are concerned that the police in some areas are not fully representative of the communities they serve. Is there not a danger that the requirement to hold a degree and the cost of study may reduce that representation even further?</p>	<p>We recognise that the PEQF and associated graduate entry routes would mean that the financial burden of initial training is passed onto individuals in line with other professions. The College is reviewing current funding options as part of implementation. Bursaries, scholarships, and loans from forces could be used for those with difficulty in accessing education or for those from disadvantaged groups, while further options might include some form of ‘training’ salary. The College intends to work closely with forces, the Home Office and higher education providers to ensure that adequate options are provided to prevent any negative impact on the diversity of entrants to policing.</p> <p>Other concerns will also be key considerations within the programme of work to implement the PEQF. These include the possible impact of national variations in the cost of living and the implications for mature joiners or those with carer responsibilities that might potentially restrict applications. A full equality impact assessment has been conducted to resolve or mitigate all identified risks. Ongoing engagement will continue throughout and beyond the implementation of the PEQF.</p>
<p>17. Does the one-size-fits-all approach work? How will pre-join undergraduate degree in policing students learn the local context of policing?</p>	<p>The national standard component of the pre-join undergraduate degree in policing entry route will comprise around 70 per cent of a full degree and the requirement to meet those standards will ensure national consistency. The remaining 30 per cent of the degree offers forces and higher education institutions the flexibility to design modules to meet the demands of local variations, specialisms or needs. The programme will be updated to ensure that candidates are equipped to meet the changing nature of crime in their region and further afield.</p> <p>Some universities working in partnership with a force may include a Special Constabulary-based practice element. This FAQ will be updated when more detail is available.</p>
<p>18. What are the timescales for introducing the PEQF?</p>	<p>A priority has been to ensure that existing officers and staff have a system to enable them to undertake further education qualifications if they chose to do so. The College’s Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning process has now been finalised and a number of universities and other qualification providers have agreed to the principles. A Professional Development Platform is now available to support officers, staff and forces in finding out more about and engaging with the process.</p>

	<p>Specific timeframes are still to be agreed but a project of this magnitude and importance will take a number of years to implement. As such, it is unlikely that the pre-join undergraduate degree in policing and the Degree Holder Entry Programme will be implemented before September 2018. Some forces may start the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship from April 2018, however.</p>
<p>19. Will enhanced qualifications mean that the police are paid more?</p>	<p>While the consultation document includes a comparison of the starting salaries for different professions, setting the level of pay for police officers and staff is the responsibility of forces and the Home Office.</p>
<p>20. Where can I find the 2016 consultation document and the full response to the Developing the Policing Education Qualification Framework Consultation?</p>	<p>The 2016 consultation and the consultation response can be found in the consultation response document on the College of Policing website.</p>
<p>21. What changes have you made to this proposal since the consultation feedback?</p>	<p>The College is grateful for all the feedback received and has changed the proposals as a result. The changes are outlined in more detail in the consultation response paper and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instead of minimum education levels being set as a prerequisite for appointment or promotion as proposed initially, they will be achieved through professional development and achieving the appropriate qualification will be required for confirmation in post at each organisational level or rank • the revised version of the framework will draw heavily on a model of apprenticeships, offering a sound educational approach as well as funding opportunities that will support most forces and individual learners • a PC Degree Apprenticeship has been developed with the potential to broaden applications and attract people to a career which they may not previously have considered – the opportunity to earn while learning and to have a degree qualification fully funded presents an opportunity for a diverse range of potential applicants • further engagement and detailed consultation with forces to agree and define an appropriate timescale for full national implementation of the proposals is needed.

<p>22. What considerations have been taken into account for different regulations around disability?</p>	<p>Apprenticeships are subject to Equality Act 2000 legislation and this will be applied in the context of the police medical and fitness criteria that all police officers are required to meet.</p>
<p>23. Will the College be developing a role profile for the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship?</p>	<p>The new role profile for a police constable is based on the apprenticeship standard. There will be correlation between the work to renew all role profiles and the education/learning requirements as they are developed through the PEQF project.</p>
<p>24. How will the projects and research undertaken through the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship or other qualifications be used?</p>	<p>The valuable project and research results undertaken by the apprentices will be added to the College research area to create a knowledge bank supporting police forces in serving the community.</p>
<p>25. What communications have been undertaken with chief officer teams and, more particularly, with HR departments? This is going to require a massive change in the way recruitment is undertaken – are forces ready?</p>	<p>We have held several large plenary events along with regional workshops open to forces and higher education institutions. We regularly give updates at a number of senior management forums, such as the Professional Committee, Workforce Coordination Committee, College Board and Chief Officers Council.</p> <p>A Police On-Line Knowledge Area (POLKA)-based PEQF Implementation community is available and is particularly relevant to HR and L&D staff involved in implementing the PEQF.</p> <p>A recruitment forum has been set up for forces, along with a new Recruitment community on POLKA.</p>
<p>26. Can you confirm what the transition process is from the current Initial Police Learning and Development</p>	<p>At the moment, the College is working with key stakeholders to agree a process where this transition is suitable for all those in policing. The College will announce any changes to the regulations in due course through the working groups. The College website will also be updated as a result of the outcomes of the transition agreement.</p>

Programme to apprenticeships is?	
27. What about officers who want to go part-time or take maternity leave/career break while studying for their qualification? What flexibility is there in delivering an apprenticeship?	Further details regarding arrangements in these respects will be published in due course. The College will ensure the arrangements will not discriminate against anyone with protected characteristics in line with the Equality Act and the government's apprenticeship rules.

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