



College of  
Policing

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# Policing Education Qualifications Framework

Consultation

2 February to 29 March 2016

**BetterProfessionals**<sup>™</sup>  
for **BetterPolicing**

## About this consultation

Topic	The establishment of a Policing Education Qualifications Framework to introduce a national, standardised framework of recognised and accredited qualifications.
Scope	To discuss how these proposals can be developed and implemented.
Geographical scope	England and Wales.

## Basic information

To	This consultation is open to the public.
Duration	2 February to 29 March 2016.
How to respond	Responses can be submitted online through the College of Policing website <a href="http://www.college.police.uk">www.college.police.uk</a>
Enquiries	<a href="mailto:PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk">PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk</a>
After the consultation	The College of Policing will carefully consider all responses to the consultation and publish a 'Response to Consultation' document. This will explain the College's final policy intentions. All responses will be treated as public unless the respondent requests otherwise.

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# Foreword



‘The Job’s not what it used to be’ was the popular refrain when I joined the police in 1980. I was not in the first generation of police to hear this. My grandfather told me how modern innovations such as the personal radio and panda cars had changed the job after he joined in 1929. Further back, his father could have blamed the introduction of motorised transport for the big change in offending behaviour, and therefore police work, after he joined in 1902.

So, has it really changed that much recently? Based on our analysis of the changing nature of demand in policing and our review on police leadership at all levels, the answer is: Yes, it has.

One of the big changes of recent times is the increase in online criminality and the resultant need for officers and staff to investigate and gather intelligence online. Another is the substantial rise in public protection work that sees those serving in the police striving increasingly to prevent domestic abuse, monitor high-risk sex offenders and protect at-risk children. High-risk judgements have to be made about where and when to place resources, and whether or not to intervene to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

Situations which may be considered a basic feature of policing, such as maintaining the peace by splitting up an alcohol-induced fight, have also changed. Such crimes and incidents still require the traditional hallmarks of British policing – good communication, the ability to remain calm and de-escalate a volatile situation, and physical courage. But today, in addition to the ‘usual’ components of an investigation, such as forensics and witness evidence, this simple pub fight is now likely to have a number of online aspects. It has probably been filmed on a variety of mobile phones, CCTV and police video cameras. Witnesses, perpetrators and victims may make disclosures on social media. The fight may have been preceded by online abuse or harassment. In preparing the case file and in giving evidence, the officer now has to account for a thorough investigation covering these myriad considerations.

Establishing the first ever Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) will allow police colleagues to gain academic recognition for their existing skills, police training and practical experience. We will ask established academic providers to accredit this prior learning and give serving officers and staff the opportunity to gain a degree or other transferable qualification. We believe that there is an appetite within policing to secure this recognition.

This consultation will consider the educational requirements for those who join policing in the future. Acknowledging the changed nature of policing and the increasing need for critical thinking and problem-solving, we propose that future officers and some staff will need to be at graduate level to do the job. We are considering three entry routes: a degree containing a high proportion of practical learning within a police force, a graduate conversion course and an apprenticeship route which culminates with achieving the same qualification. Our Leadership Review looked at the changing nature of the British workforce and found that an increasing number of young people will study to degree level over the coming years.

We recognise that the strengths of policing include its accessibility as a career to people of all backgrounds and it being a vocation. We want to preserve these strengths while ensuring that the increasingly complex role of those working in policing is properly recognised.



**Chief Constable Alex Marshall**  
**CEO, College of Policing**

# 1 Background information

## The College of Policing

- 1.1 The purpose of the College of Policing is to provide everyone working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public, and secure public trust.
- 1.2 The College of Policing has three complementary functions:
  - **Knowledge** – we develop the research and infrastructure for growing evidence of ‘what works’. Over time, this will ensure that policing practice and standards are based on knowledge rather than custom and convention.
  - **Education** – we support the development of individual members of the profession. We set educational requirements to assure the public of the quality and consistency of policing skills, and we facilitate the academic accreditation and recognition of our members’ expertise.
  - **Standards** – we draw on the best available evidence of ‘what works’ to set standards in policing for forces and individuals. Examples include our Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and peer review.
- 1.3 We will use the policing knowledge base, our legal powers, our influence and connection with members, and our ability to set educational requirements, test new ideas and innovate to raise professional standards in policing.

## 2 Executive summary

- 2.1 Every day, people who serve the public in high-risk environments, such as those in policing, exercise judgement to make difficult decisions about public safety. Prescriptive guidance and supervision cannot be provided for every eventuality in dynamic situations, so other means of support and assurance are needed. Professions support their members and help assure the public that discretion is exercised appropriately by setting clear conditions of membership. These commonly include the use of 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. The final element, qualification, is the subject of this consultation.
- 2.2 Policing does not currently set education levels for roles or ranks which reflect the skills and knowledge required to meet current and future challenges. Variable and inconsistent practice exists in police education, with the result that some officers have no accredited or publicly recognised qualification. Initial members of the College have stated that they want their professional body to develop national standards and to ensure that their learning and expertise will receive external recognition. Introducing a qualifications framework would meet this request and provide assurance that those working in policing are qualified to a consistent standard.
- 2.3 The framework would align to the UK's Regulated Qualifications Framework which regulates the awarding of credit for equivalent levels of learning and expertise. The UK framework is used by employers and education providers to recognise and compare individuals' achievements. It has nine levels, with Level 3 comparable to A-levels and Level 6 equivalent to a degree. Level 6 recognises an individual who takes decisions in complex and unpredictable settings with limited information, something that many who work in policing already do.
- 2.4 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 PCSOs, call handling, and investigators.

- 2.5 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 and reached the view that Level 6 is an appropriate reflection of the current and future demand on constables. Officers and staff able to demonstrate advanced and specialist knowledge and in managerial roles might expect to attain Level 7 or 8 qualifications, the equivalent to a master's degree or PhD.
- 2.6 Individuals working in policing who want to achieve an accredited and publicly recognised qualification would need to be accredited for their existing learning and expertise by an education provider, then, depending on what additional evidence of their advanced knowledge and skill was needed, they would take part in 'top-up' activity.
- 2.7 Some police forces have already introduced a practical policing degree as part of officer recruitment. To ensure national consistency, the College needs to consider whether and how potential officers might reach Level 6 before joining; this would equate to degree-level entry. At the same time, the College is proposing a higher level apprenticeship entry route, whereby people could reach a Level 6 qualification while working in policing.
- 2.8 The introduction of a Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) is seen by the College as a key step toward establishing policing as a profession and supporting the professional development of those working in policing. The key proposals for this consultation are as follows:
1. The establishment of a qualifications framework for policing, working in partnership with the higher education sector to set minimum education levels by level of practice or rank.
  2. The development of opportunities for existing officers and staff to gain accredited and publicly recognised qualifications equivalent to their level of practice or rank.
  3. The development of initial entry routes which involve self-funded undergraduate programmes, police-force funded graduate conversion programmes for graduates in other disciplines, and higher level apprenticeships (HLAs).

## 3 Introduction

- 3.1 The College of Policing is seeking views on its proposed introduction of a Policing Education Qualifications Framework. The framework is a system for awarding credit for equivalent levels of learning and expertise, which helps employers and education providers recognise and compare individuals' achievements.
- 3.2 This paper explains the reasoning behind the introduction of a PEQF and offers the opportunity for respondents to contribute views that will shape its development. The College welcomes views from those within policing, the public, academia and any other interested parties.
- 3.3 The College will analyse all feedback from this consultation before issuing a consolidated response but will not be replying to respondents on an individual basis. The feedback received will inform our decisions on any future development and implementation of the proposals.

The Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) is proposed as a standardised national framework that sets minimum education qualification levels by level of practice or rank.

### The context

- 3.4 In January 2015, the College published an analysis of demand on police services which highlighted changing patterns of crime and public protection. The evidence showed that while the number of crimes may have fallen, the level of demand on police resources has not reduced to the same degree. The changing mix of crime means that over the past 10 years, investigating and preventing crime has become more complex, with crimes such as child abuse and domestic violence taking up an increasing amount of police time.
- 3.5 This analysis of demand is also reflected in changes affecting the future context for police leadership. The Leadership Review conducted by the College identified five major trends: economic challenges, shifting demographics, rising citizen expectations, rapid technological advances, and the arrival of the internet as a social space. Together these trends are driving complexity and change at unprecedented rates.

- 3.6 The Leadership Review also identified implications for individuals. The demands of the future require more emphasis to be placed on what police officers and staff know rather than what rank or grade they hold. All police officers and staff should be reviewing the evidence of ‘what works’ in policing and have a high degree of professional discretion. Increased career flexibility may mean more opportunities for people to move in and out of the service, acquiring and applying different skills and experience.

## Developing the profession

- 3.7 The use of discretion is a common attribute of all professions. The criteria set out in the associated literature vary but common core elements are a specialist knowledge base, a distinct ethical dimension and continuing professional development (CPD).
- 3.8 A specialist knowledge base means that decisions on standards, ways of working and practice are each informed by evidence of what works. Upholding a distinct ethical dimension allows a profession to act in the best interests of the public to build trust. CPD encourages professionals to see development as a continuous process. Education standards can be set to recognise the complexity of roles in a profession, equip those in the profession with the appropriate skills and knowledge they require, and encourage consistent delivery standards.
- 3.9 Policing has made significant progress towards achieving three of these criteria. The College has collated the crime reduction knowledge base and is reviewing research to inform each new set of College guidance. The nine principles published by the College in the Code of Ethics can guide decision-making in increasingly challenging situations. The College is introducing a CPD framework for everyone who works in policing, beginning with new recruits and chief officers this year, including an emphasis on the knowledge and skills needed to use, understand and build the profession’s research evidence base.
- 3.10 Policing does not currently have consistent, national education levels for all policing roles or ranks that reflect its current and future challenges, or an entry level qualification that would be considered commensurate with that of a profession. There is wide-ranging, variable and inconsistent practice in terms of the implementation, assessment and accreditation of initial police education across the 43 forces in England and Wales. While some forces have already developed foundation or bachelor degree entry programmes, others deliver training to the appropriate level but do not require or enable officers to achieve the externally accredited diploma qualification. Consequently, some officers have no publicly recognised, accredited qualification.

- 3.11 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 both to the public and to the members of the profession itself. The police service remains considerably out of kilter with other professions, particularly those who work to protect the public, with regard to its formal education standards.

## What does implementing a PEQF mean for policing?

- 3.12 Many in the policing workforce already take decisions in complex and unpredictable settings, with limited information, meaning they tend to operate at the equivalent of Level 6 in the UK national qualifications framework, itself equivalent to graduate level. The College is seeking to work with the higher education sector to facilitate the recognition of prior learning and experience so that individuals can achieve formal graduate and/or postgraduate qualifications via a range of options including bridging work<sup>1</sup>, top-up programmes, direct entry and via advanced standing<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.13 In developing these initial proposals, the College has reviewed the existing research evidence base on creating education qualifications frameworks. There is currently limited empirical evidence available on the impact of frameworks. On the issue of introducing graduate level recognition for police officers, however, the best available research suggests potential benefits that include the following:
- The desire to be a police officer ranks below the desire to be a chef or a farmer, while professions such as medicine, teaching and law rank significantly higher (polling on career desirability, YouGov, 2010). Degree status may change attitudes and allow policing to become more attractive to the 42 per cent of the UK working population who already hold degrees (Office of National Statistics, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> 'Bridging work' is work students undertake to 'bridge' the gap in their learning and to enable them to progress to the next level. For example, foundation degree students will often need to complete and pass some additional work (to cover any gaps and/or demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding) before progressing on to the Level 6 degree top-up programme or entering the final year of a degree programme.

<sup>2</sup> 'Advanced standing' is the process by which a student or group of students who have completed a prior qualification are given direct entry to the next level of a programme. For example, postgraduate diploma to the dissertation stage of a master's programme.

- Research conducted as part of the leadership review found that in the United States ‘college-educated’ officers were better at dealing with complexity, had a wider understanding of their role in society, used force more appropriately and had wider belief systems.

3.14 Furthermore, Level 6 qualifications would align policing with:

- the vast majority of professions which require a full bachelor’s degree as an entry standard
- a number of European countries which have moved to graduate-level qualification for all police officers.

## How could this affect entry to policing for the future?

3.15 In the future, it is important that those who are entering the service have the skills and abilities to perform their roles to the appropriate level and that these qualities are recognised at the appropriate level of education. In order to do this, the College is considering the development of three principal entry routes:

- an undergraduate degree in policing
- a graduate conversion programme
- higher level apprenticeships.

## What are the next steps?

- 3.16 The College recognises that the establishment of a fully implemented and functional PEQF is a significant ambition. Implementation will require substantial, wide-ranging engagement and consultation with stakeholders to ensure that the PEQF is of practical benefit to the profession. This paper represents the first step in what will inevitably be a complex programme of work.
- 3.17 While this document attempts to provide key information to enable a constructive consultation process, there remain some unanswered questions around how the PEQF would be implemented. This will need further consideration and discussion. The College will undertake to continue consultation and engagement throughout the programme of work, continuing to the implementation of any proposals.
- 3.18 A project of this magnitude and importance will take a number of years to implement. The national implementation of any new (graduate-level) programmes, for example, would not start before September 2019.
- 3.19 This consultation paper provides further details on these proposals as well as an explanation of the key drivers and rationale behind the proposals.

As part of the consultation process, we will be seeking and examining further evidence. Respondents are invited to contribute any further information by way of evidence or research findings for consideration in this regard to **[PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk)**

# 4 Proposals

## Proposal 1: The establishment of a qualifications framework for policing

- 4.1 The PEQF will set minimum qualification levels by level of practice or rank that will underpin professional development and career pathways with the prerequisite qualification clearly identified at each point. It is proposed that a master's level qualification would be required at the superintending ranks. Further consideration will be needed to determine whether this would be a specific, bespoke master's programme that all superintendents would take (as per the model for the Strategic Command Course which all aspiring chief constables must pass) or whether a range of relevant master's programmes would be more appropriate.
- 4.2 The qualification levels for ranks between constable and superintendent also need to be determined. It is suggested that this might be at the level of postgraduate certificate for sergeants and postgraduate diploma for inspectors but other Level 7 professional programmes/awards will also be considered in line with the leadership review work to develop a new model for leadership development.
- 4.3 The introduction of externally accredited qualifications will enable individuals to achieve qualifications that have meaning, credibility and transferability within and beyond policing. It will also allow individuals to move in and out of policing more effectively and has the potential to make policing a more attractive career option.
- 4.4 While there is a range of awarding bodies for qualifications, the College view is that moving to a PEQF approach as outlined above can only be achieved through partnership with higher education (HE). HE institutions have a fundamental civic mission to develop students' critical awareness to prepare them for citizenship and leadership in society. This mission is well matched with the aims of police education. Delivering initial police education and offering continued professional development in partnership with higher education can therefore have a number of benefits, for example:
  - HE is well placed to develop the underpinning core attributes needed to meet future demand, such as critical thinking and analysis, communication skills, reflection, independent decision-making, problem solving and research skills.

- HE can play a role in developing skills and attributes that underpin the Code of Ethics and are associated with understanding citizenship, such as tolerance, willingness to embrace alternative perspectives, empathy, and moral and ethical reasoning.
  - Working with HE should more effectively facilitate and embed the ‘what works’ and evidence-based approach to policing advocated by the College, and provide opportunities to link research to operational skill development.
  - Universities are awarding bodies and can therefore ensure that all learning is accredited and leads to an appropriate qualification.
- 4.5 The vision is that, having benefited from a higher education experience, practitioners will be better supported with the skills and knowledge to act with greater autonomy and discretion at the frontline. This will include making informed, intelligent analyses of intervention options based on the best available evidence without needing to refer to a senior officer.

## Proposal 2: The development of opportunities for existing officers and staff to gain accredited and publicly recognised qualifications equivalent to their level of practice or rank

- 4.6 Of fundamental importance to the PEQF proposal is the priority to create opportunities that enable serving officers and practitioners, **who choose to do so**, to gain accredited qualifications that the public recognise.

**The proposed PEQF does not require current officers and staff to obtain a degree.** It will, however, provide opportunities for those officers and staff who wish to do so to gain a publicly recognised qualification at the relevant education level. The College of Policing will work with higher education institutions to seek recognition of the knowledge, learning and experience that officers and staff have acquired through their service in the form of academic credits towards externally recognised academic qualifications.

- 4.7 The PEQF would apply to police staff as well as police officers, 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, Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) for HR and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for finance. There is, however, an aspiration to offer similar academic qualification opportunities to police staff in policing-specific roles such as community support, investigation and call handling. The ultimate aim is to establish an inclusive framework that integrates and aligns all police officer and staff roles.
- 4.8 Further planning is required to develop the means for current police officers and practitioners without graduate qualifications to obtain them. The College would seek to work with the higher education sector for national consistency in the recognition of prior learning and experience and in the provision of appropriate 'top-up' options to achieve formal graduate and/or postgraduate qualifications.
- 4.9 Formal recognition of such learning alongside appropriate experience (ie, professional practice and work-based competence) and some form of 'bridging' work should enable existing officers and staff to either gain a publicly recognised qualification or be permitted direct entry to the later stages of a programme that leads to qualification on successful completion. The College also proposes to engage with higher education partners to explore any financial or funding opportunities that may be available for those officers or staff seeking to maximise such opportunities.

## What is the rationale for a degree-level recognition?

- 4.10 The proposal for a PEQF suggests recognition at graduate level as the minimum at constable rank, progressing through to a master's-level qualification for promotion (or direct entry) eligibility at the level of superintending rank.
- 4.11 Degrees are publicly recognised academic awards which have value and transferability beyond the policing sector. The introduction of graduate-level qualifications raises the educational qualification level of police constables and recognises the challenges inherent to their role.
- 4.12 The existing learning for officers on completing their initial training is set at Level 3 (the Diploma in Policing linked to the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme). Policing increasingly requires its professionals to think critically, reflect and deliberate effectively, exercise judgement, challenge accepted norms, contribute to the evolving evidence base, work with a high degree of autonomy, communicate effectively and make decisions independently. The lack of recognition of the current demands on officers is illustrated in the table below which compares higher education qualification level descriptors for 'problem solving' and 'personal responsibility and decision-making' at Level 3 and Level 6. Considering the level of knowledge, skills and attributes required of those working in policing, the College considers the majority of police officer work to fit Level 6 (graduate degree standard) descriptors.

	Level 3	Level 6
<b>Problem solving</b>	Apply established approaches to solving well-defined problems and show emerging recognition of the complexity of associated issues	Apply transferable skills and problem solving strategies to <b>a range of situations and to solve complex problems; and exercise personal judgement in a range of situations</b>
<b>Personal responsibility and decision-making</b>	Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring some self-directed activity with broad guidance and evaluation and responsibility for quality of output	Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring <b>the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts</b>

Adapted from QAA (2014) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards*. Gloucester: QAA.

- 4.13 While Level 6 (graduate equivalent) requirements will already be achieved by skilled police officers, the demand for officers to operate at this level will only increase in the future, to the extent that it makes sense to recruit and equip those entering the profession with these higher-level skills.
- 4.14 This level also aligns policing more closely to other professions. Police officers and staff will increasingly work alongside professionals from social services, probation, environmental health, the CPS, and the NHS. These professions have introduced graduate qualifications as part of modernising and developing their profession in recognition of the increasing complexity of the work involved. Policing is at least, if not more, complex and police officers are as capable and professional as those working in other professions and display the attributes required with limited formal or external academic recognition. This current lack of parity with other professions not only disadvantages the individuals concerned but also reflects on the police service as a whole in terms of gaining legitimacy as a profession. The College needs to support those within the profession in gaining recognition for the job they currently perform as well as helping to ensure that there is appropriate professional development available for the future.
- 4.15 A degree-level award might be more attractive to potential recruits who may not otherwise consider policing as a profession. It may also attract candidates to consider policing as a career if they recognise that the qualification they have gained has widely accepted credibility and transferability in the wider job market should they wish to change career at a later date. Local recruitment trends in a number of universities who offer both foundation and full bachelor degree programmes in policing have seen an increase in applications to the full degree and a drop in applications to the foundation degree. This suggests that the status associated with a full degree is more attractive.

## Proposal 3: The development of initial entry routes

- 4.16 The development of three principal entry routes (at the rank of constable) is proposed:
- an undergraduate degree in policing
  - a graduate conversion programme
  - higher level apprenticeships.
- 4.17 All three entry routes will result in a graduate-level qualification but this will be achieved in different ways, over different timeframes and via different funding mechanisms.

### Scope for graduate entry

- 4.18 Degrees are no longer purely academic with a focus solely on abstract, theoretical knowledge in traditional disciplines. A wide range of new professionally and vocationally focused degrees now exists with a strong emphasis on the development and application of professional practice in the workplace (eg, teaching and subjects allied to medicine and health). A degree programme of this nature would be equally relevant to policing.
- 4.19 Graduate entry is a widespread entry point for the majority of professions. Approximately 42 per cent of the UK working population hold degrees (Office of National Statistics, 2014) and recent changes to the law mean that all 16- to 18-year-olds must now stay in some form of education or training until the age of 18, with the majority therefore attaining Level 3 qualifications. Evidence within a recent report (The Association of Chief Police Officers Submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (January 2015)) indicates that the greatest proportion of candidates coming into policing in recent years are aged between 21 and 25 (45 per cent) with 38 per cent of all candidates already holding a degree or postgraduate qualification.
- 4.20 Higher education is no longer an elitist system. Participation in higher education has increased significantly: participation figures for 18-year-olds entering HE has risen continuously over the past 60 years from 3.4 per cent in 1950 to 47 per cent in 2014. Likewise, the nature of a degree has changed and evolved as higher education has expanded and diversified.

- 4.21 Participation in higher education is rising amongst ethnic minority applicants, faster than their 'share' of the population and these patterns appear similar across broad ethnic categories. 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 (HESA (2013) *Census 2011*). There is evidence that the status of professions can be important to people from minority ethnic backgrounds and thus the raising of education standards may attract higher numbers of people from some under-represented groups who see the status of policing raised through formal qualifications. Evidence from nursing indicates that the introduction of graduate entry had no negative impact in terms of ethnic minority groups – no differences were found in the National Nursing Research Unit (NNRU) cohort studies of nationally representative samples of non-degree and degree qualifiers.
- 4.22 Students from disadvantaged backgrounds have increased their participation in higher education at a faster absolute rate than those from more privileged backgrounds. Almost 33 per cent of UK domiciled entrants to full-time first degree courses came from households where the principal earner was from one of the four lowest (of seven) 'employed' categories within the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification classes (NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7). In subjects areas such as teaching and those allied to medicine (eg, nursing) the proportion rises to 40 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.

## Undergraduate degree in policing

- 4.23 The degree would be vocationally oriented, similar to the concept of a Bachelor of Education degree for teaching or a nursing degree which integrate theoretical and applied work-based practical learning into one professional programme of study. Students would spend time as a special constable or trainee constable in work-based placements that expose students to aspects of real-life practice and link action-based learning with academic accreditation.

### Case study

Several forces already operate successful partnerships with universities where potential applicants to the police service undertake a foundation degree in policing (Level 5).

Individuals are encouraged to join the partner force as special constables and undertake work-based placements to meet nationally agreed police learning requirements and complete initial training up to independent patrol. This has resulted in benefits that include the following:

- Offers individuals the opportunity to look at the service without having to commit to it. They have continued education alongside work placements and developed life skills.
- The force can assess the suitability of students before they join and students are able to see if policing is a profession of choice.
- In one force, each cohort of 36 students contributes in excess of 15,000 hours of visible police patrol in the community as volunteers.
- Significant cost savings in training and wages for local forces.
- An evaluation conducted in one force identified that at the end of the tutor constable phase, sergeants had slightly more confidence in the foundation degree students than those who had been trained through the traditional route.
- By using police training and university lecturing there is focus on obtaining a wider understanding of the policing role in diverse communities through an innovative blend of coursework, projects and operational policing.

- 4.24 While further consultation with stakeholders and universities is required, such degrees could form part of a wider public services framework in which operational policing would be one potential clearly defined pathway. This route will be self-funded, ie, individuals will fund themselves, and there would be no guarantee of employment upon successful completion of the degree. Self-funded graduate-level qualifications are now the norm throughout the public services. Policing is unusual in that there is no substantial pre-qualification before employment and the service pays trainees a full salary and covers all training costs.

- 4.25 Flexibility could be offered in terms of the mode of delivery and the length of the study period. Potential options include standard, full-time three-year degree programmes as well as two-year accelerated degrees, distance and part-time programmes. The accelerated degree could be an attractive option as it effectively fast-tracks the training. In doing so, it is a more intensive programme which may be more akin to and reflective of the demands of policing and so help in building resilience.
- 4.26 The College would set the national standards and requirements to ensure there is an appropriate level of consistency and standardisation across all 43 forces in England and Wales and partner universities. Universities in partnership with the respective force(s) would design, deliver, assess and accredit the programme. Within this broad framework there would be sufficient scope and flexibility for force-specific differences to meet local and regional priorities and/or reflect specialist areas. Indeed, one very significant benefit to this option is that the extended training period (over three years) would enable individuals to develop skills and experience in specialist areas in the latter phases of the degree programme. Students could opt to take a particular career pathway at this point and begin developing knowledge and expertise in particular roles (eg, investigation and neighbourhood policing).

## Graduate conversion programme

- 4.27 A second entry route would be via a conversion programme (similar in concept to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in teaching) for individuals who are already graduates in a subject other than policing. The length of this conversion programme needs further consideration but is likely to be approximately six months. This route would be funded by the forces (ie, the university tuition or accreditation fee would be paid by the force) and a training salary would be paid for the duration of the conversion programme. Successful completion of this programme would lead to guaranteed employment and for this reason it is recommended that all candidates must have passed SEARCH (or any future alternative selection process for the police service) prior to their acceptance on the conversion programme.
- 4.28 As outlined above, the College would set the national standards and requirements, and universities and forces would design, deliver and assess the programme. With sufficient planning and creativity the conversion programme may be able to use elements of the undergraduate programme to enhance the learning experience, viability and resource efficiency. The programmes could be designed to cover only core learning requirements but could also be extended along the lines of the Police Now concept in the Metropolitan Police Service whereby the programme is focused specifically on a particular role or specialism. Forces could target niche areas and channel resources where they have specific workforce needs.

## Higher level apprenticeships

- 4.29 There is an evidence base beginning to emerge that suggests that the routes to gaining professional qualifications are becoming more diversified and flexible. Creating a higher (degree) level apprenticeship (HLA) in policing will provide a third route. This may counter some of the concerns that requirements for a university education prior to joining may have a negative impact on the recruitment of specific community groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have previously seen policing as an opportunity for social advancement. An HLA would therefore create an alternative route into policing which would enable individuals to earn while training and gaining their degree-level qualification. Differentiation in terms of responsibility and pay would be needed between those who are effectively 'in training' and not yet qualified (ie, as an apprentice constable) and those who enter as 'qualified' via the degree route.
- 4.30 HLAs are co-funded by the Government and the employer, with some incentive payments available to employers, depending on the age of the apprentice, the size of the organisation and the number of apprentices fully completing the apprenticeship. The HLA option would therefore enable forces to take advantage of professionally delivered programmes through higher education institutions at lower costs while individuals will gain a recognised accredited qualification at the required level. HLAs can be used not only for the development of new staff (ie, the initial learning programme) but can also be utilised where organisations identify a need to upskill current employees. Thus there is potential to explore a range of options in the use of HLAs in policing at a number of levels, in specific areas for both police officers and staff, and as a mechanism for accrediting existing officers and staff.

Entry routes	Qualification timing	Training period
Professional degree in policing	Pre-join and self-funded (via student loan)	Approximately three years but could vary depending on the mode of delivery (eg, part-time)
Graduate conversion programme	Post-join available to graduates only	To be determined but likely to be approximately six months
Higher level apprenticeship	Post-join	To be determined but likely to be from three to five years  Will enter as an apprentice constable and will study for degree and work concurrently

# 5 Other considerations

## Funding of initial police education

- 5.1 Gaining a graduate qualification usually necessitates a period of study of at least three years and, apart from a few exceptions, in most professions this process is self-funded. Self-funded graduate-level qualifications are now the norm throughout the public services. The College recognises policing's unique position of requiring little or no substantial personal funding for pre-qualification before employment, with the service paying 'trainees' a full salary and covering all training costs. It should be noted, though, that more recently the adoption of the Certificate of Knowledge in Policing by a number of forces has, in some cases, placed some funding requirements on individuals.
- 5.2 The table below provides some comparative data in terms of entry qualification, training period, cost of training, and starting salary for a range of professions. Doctors complete five years of medical training while paying tuition fees before receiving a salary. The teaching profession has recently introduced some salaried routes for initial teacher education, but these are only available to graduates, so there is an expectation that individuals will have funded themselves through at least three years of higher education to gain a degree. The majority of teachers will qualify through other non-salaried routes which require them to pay for their training. The NHS does not pay a salary during the training phase (three years) but has, until now, funded the university tuition fee for the allied health professional training. It has, however, been announced recently that they will no longer be paying the tuition fee which will now be down to the individual. Other professional careers, such as law, expect individuals to cover the costs of their initial training.

Training and salary table for comparative purposes<sup>3</sup>

Profession	Degree requirement	Approx. cost	Length	Starting salary
<b>Medicine</b>	Medical degree	£37,000	5 years plus ongoing on-the-job training	£28,821
<b>Nursing</b>	Nursing degree	Cost borne by NHS but changing (£27,000)	3 years	£22,524
<b>Policing</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>6 months</b>	<b>£19,000 to £22,000</b>
<b>Probation officer</b>	Graduate degree plus Level 5 graduate diploma	£18,000 to £27,000	3 years	£21,391
<b>Social worker</b>	Graduate degree – Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)	£18,000 to £27,000	3 years	£19,623+
<b>Solicitor</b>	3 years undergraduate, 1 year Legal Practice Course (LPC)	£35,000 to £50,000	4 years	£19,246 average
<b>Teaching</b>	Undergraduate degree, 1 year postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	£27,000 to £36,000	3-4 years	£22,023

<sup>3</sup>Source: <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/careers/what-do-graduates-do/what-do-graduates-earn/> and <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

- 5.3 It is likely therefore that the PEQF and associated graduate entry routes would pass the financial burden of initial training onto individuals in line with other professions. The College will, however, review 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.
- 5.4 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.

## Police workforce implications

- 5.5 Officers entering the service having completed a degree in policing will have devoted considerably more learning time to their police education and will have covered a more extensive curriculum than the current diploma permits. Opportunities may be presented through appropriate design of the degree whereby officers will enter the service having already gained knowledge in specialist roles. Individuals could have already developed specialist knowledge in, for example, investigation, cybercrime, or neighbourhood policing, by taking specialist modules as part of the degree programme depending upon the individual’s career aspirations, the university’s particular expertise and the needs of the force in terms of workforce planning.
- 5.6 Some forces might expect substantial cost savings on the initial learning programme. There will also be real opportunities to make further savings on specialist training by integrating elements of this into the final year of the degree programme and, at the same time, address any specific skills gaps within the force. New recruits will therefore enter the force ready to ‘hit the ground running’, having completed all their initial/core learning prior to employment. They will have already completed some of their specialist/role-specific training in areas of need for the force. There would also be the additional benefit of the considerable additional volunteer hours they have undertaken of as special constables.

## 6 Potential outcomes

- 6.1 The College of Policing anticipates several outcomes from the introduction of a qualifications framework which formally identifies and recognises the levels of learning required in modern policing. It is intended that establishment of a PEQF will:
- enable current officers and staff already working at graduate level to obtain publicly recognised and transferable qualifications
  - support the development of policing as a profession, providing the foundation and building blocks for greater legitimacy of autonomy and use of discretion
  - facilitate greater national consistency and provide transferable qualifications, in line with requests from pre-registering members of the College and supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Leadership Review
  - provide the structure to develop progressive career pathways and continuing professional development (CPD) requirements
  - create a more highly skilled workforce capable of working more autonomously and efficiently with less supervision
  - facilitate and embed evidence-based policing more effectively
  - attract higher numbers of people from some under-represented groups who might see the status of policing raised through formal qualifications.

## 7 Consultation questions

- 7.1 In order to facilitate feedback, the College has identified specific consultation questions which can be found at <http://www.college.police.uk/peqf>. The question form also presents an opportunity for respondents to provide overall feedback on the proposal. Feedback is welcomed from individual and corporate respondents and all responses will be treated as public unless specifically stated otherwise.
- 7.2 All responses will be subject to analysis in due course. Please note, however, that the College of Policing will not be responding on an individual basis to any respondents.

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## Protecting the public Supporting the fight against crime

As the professional body for policing, the College of Policing sets high professional standards to help forces cut crime and protect the public. We are here to give everyone in policing the tools, skills and knowledge they need to succeed. We will provide practical and common-sense approaches based on evidence of what works.

[college.police.uk](https://college.police.uk)



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