



College of
Policing

Entry routes for police constables

How is entry changing for police constables?

Existing officers and staff will be aware that entry to policing and initial learning for constables can be inconsistent across forces with some applicants held to different standards. The College of Policing has worked with chief constables to introduce three new police constable entry routes.

Apprenticeship. Join as a constable, and follow an apprenticeship in professional policing practice – you earn while you learn. This route normally takes three years with both on and off-the-job learning. On successfully finishing the programme, you complete your probation and achieve a degree.

Degree-holder Entry. If you have a degree in any subject, you can join and follow a work-based programme, supported by off-the-job learning. This route normally takes two years, and the learning you have undergone is recognised with a Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice when you complete your probation.

Pre-join Degree. If you want to study first, you can do a three year Degree in Professional Policing at your own expense, and then apply to a force and follow a shorter on-the-job training programme. Being a special constable can be included in this route.

Why have these routes been chosen?

The curriculum for new recruits is 12 years old and required updating. For example, when the curriculum was designed in 2006 there were no iPhones but now officers are expected to routinely include digital data in investigations.

When the College of Policing reviewed the curriculum it found the work being done by officers met the same standard as a degree:

As a police officer, to which statement do you most relate?

Statement one

I apply my skills in a range of situations to solve complex problems and I have to exercise personal judgement. I have to use my initiative, take personal responsibility and make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations.

Statement two

The problems I face are already well defined and to solve them I can use approaches that are already established. In terms of personal responsibility and decision-making, I am responsible for my own work within broad guidance and sometimes need to be self-directed.

Anyone who most identifies with statement one is probably already working at degree level.

As policing has never had a system for recognising the expertise of officers, the College of Policing believes it is time that happened.

The three routes and the learning they provide were chosen after a two-month consultation within policing and the wider public to ensure entry to the service appealed to the widest group of people including those who preferred an apprenticeship, those who wished to attend university, and those who already have a degree (it is estimated that 48 per cent of current officers are in this category).

Will serving officers now require a degree?

Serving officers will not be required to obtain a degree as they are likely to be already working at this level.

The College of Policing is helping officers to get a recognised qualification for their previous years of experience and training if they wish to do so.

For more information, please see the **recognition for previous experience and training** section.

How will training for new recruits be different to the current system?

The majority of areas that serving officers were taught when they joined will remain the same but will be updated.

The main differences between current training and the new material is a reflection of the changes we have seen in the past 12 years. The new curriculum will include digital policing, wellbeing and vulnerability.

Every aspect of the new curriculum has been created by the College of Policing working with forces and serving police officers.

For new recruits doing an apprenticeship, how much time will be spent doing the job?

A common misconception is that a degree just means sitting in lectures but for the majority of time the new apprentice recruits will be in force on frontline duties in the same way probationers work now.

A criticism that officers have made of police training is that it does not contain sufficient face-to-face training. Taking that on board, there will be face-to-face training for new recruits that may include attending a higher education establishment some of the time.

The minimum amount of time spent off the job training will be 20 per cent but each force will work with the higher education establishment to agree an exact figure. Off the job could include work-related projects, which could help tackle local crime or anti-social behaviour problems.

Will this affect pay for existing officers or police staff?

The introduction of new entry routes will not change the pay of any existing officers or staff.

Pay for officers is set by the government following independent recommendations made by the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB). Read more **here**.

What will potential new recruits be assessed on?

New recruits will largely be assessed on their practical work, similar to the current system.

Before new recruits can apply to join one of the new entry programmes, they will be required to attend the same

assessment centre which current recruits go through to test for initial abilities including common sense approaches, reading and writing skills.

How inclusive are these entry routes?

The College of Policing has noted that the introduction of this kind of system could increase the diversity of those joining. Participation in higher education is rising amongst ethnic minority applicants, faster than their 'share' of the population, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds have increased their participation in higher education at a faster rate than those from more privileged backgrounds. Market testing carried out by some forces has also shown encouraging signs. A number of forces have already begun to adopt the new routes.

Applicants from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds who applied for the police apprenticeship in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire made up 15 and 22 per cent of applicants. It is hoped this will increase BAME representation in the service which is currently at six per cent.

What happens next?

The College of Policing is now working with forces on implementation of the new entry routes.

It will be for each police force to decide which combination of entry routes they want to use, as well as the starting dates of cohorts for the new entry routes. Applications are submitted through your preferred force, and you should check eligibility and recruitment windows locally.

Where can I get more information?

If you have a specific question, the College of Policing is happy to respond to you. Please email Policingeqf@college.pnn.police.uk

Recognition for previous experience and training

What is recognition for previous experience and training?

It's a process where serving or retired police officers and staff can have their career experience and on the job training and learning recognised as academic credits.

These credits can then be put towards achieving a recognised qualification.

Officers and staff across England and Wales have been gaining academic qualifications while working for many years.

This is an individual process between the prospective learner and the higher educational institution/awarding body they are applying to.

You can read an example on the following page:

Case study – Inspector Roger Pegram

Roger is an inspector with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and has been an officer for 18 years.

He is responsible for a team of 50 evidence-based champions within GMP and explains how he balanced studying for a qualification with working full-time.



Why did you want to get an academic qualification while working as a police officer?

I joined the police in March 2000 and my qualifications at the time were four GCSEs at grade C and above and a GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism. At the start of my career, I worked in a variety of different uniformed and plain-clothes roles.

In 2009, I wanted further qualifications so I started my journey because I thought it would be a good thing to help progress my career. I wanted to understand more about what led people to come into contact with the police and what happened to them after we arrested them. The more I have learnt, the more I have wanted to find out. I've got the bug now and I've been in further education for different qualifications non-stop since.

What's the benefit of doing it this way?

The process may allow you to cut down the length and cost of studying by starting an academic course or learning programme part-way through, and you may not have to complete certain modules.

Will serving officers and staff have to get a degree to continue in their current role?

Serving officers and staff don't need to get a degree.

Recognition for previous experience and training

Recognising that officers work at degree level doesn't mean they need a qualification to stay in their current role, but they can use their experience to get one if they want.

Will you need a degree to get promoted to sergeant or beyond?

A consultation on the education provisions for sergeant to chief officer ranks has recently been completed. Updates on this consultation will be provided via the College webpages.

Do I have to study for a degree or are other qualifications available?

You don't have to study for a degree. You can use your career experience and learning against any qualification you want to achieve. For example, you could choose to study for a non-degree management and leadership qualification. However, if your force is paying the costs they may specify which qualification you would be able to study for.

How much will it cost and will I have to pay for it?

If you are doing it for your own personal development you will have to pay for it. If you are developing evidence-based policing in your study and are a member of the College, you might be eligible for a **College Bursary**.

How much will it cost?

The cost of study will vary from course to course. This is because each university will set their own fees. Universities are allowed to charge up to £9,250 (2017/18) per year, but it is important you check the exact cost with the university you are wishing to attend.

You may also need to pay a fee to the university to have your prior learning and experience recognised. Again, different universities will charge different amounts and it could range from no cost to 50 per cent of the full module cost.

There may be other associated costs you need to consider, such as:

- Travel expenses
- Residential events
- Course materials

- Equipment, for example laptop/printer
- Other related incidentals

Forces may be able to offer some support but each will have to make a decision based on local demands and priorities.

There are also a number of other funding options open to working students.

Some examples include:

- College of Policing Bursary – over a two-year period the College awarded 105 bursaries
- Government loans
- Career Development Loan
- Police Mutual Loans
- Grants, bursaries and scholarships

When can I start to get this recognition?

The process for recognising previous experience and training is currently available for all serving and retired police officers and staff in England and Wales.

The College of Policing has developed an **online 'credit estimator'** so officers and staff can work out how many credits they might be able to claim for their previous experience and training. The tool uses the information entered to work out the number of credits and these may then be 'cashed in' for some academic courses.

You can find out more by visiting the **College's professional development platform website**.

If you have a specific question e-mail: RPL@college.pnn.police.uk

About the College

We're the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.

college.police.uk



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