



College of
Policing

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Policing Education Qualifications Framework: National Pre-join Degree in Professional Policing

An Introduction

Version 1.0

OFFICIAL

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Contents

Purpose of this document.....	4
Introduction to PEQF entry routes: police constable rank	4
Educational principles of the PEQF	5
An overview of the pre-join degree entry route	5
National curriculum for pre-join degree in professional policing	7
The professional capability of the pre-join recruit	8
How to obtain further information	10

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to introduce the newly-established **national pre-join Degree in Professional Policing** entry route for the police constable role.

This new entry route into policing constitutes an essential component of the College of Policing's *Policing Education Qualifications Framework* (PEQF). The PEQF is a standardised national framework, setting professionally-related qualification levels for the police service, by rank or organisational level of responsibility.

In this document you will find:

- A brief introduction to the three new professional entry routes into policing at the rank of police constable
- A summary of the principal educational and professional parameters of the pre-join degree entry route
- National statements of the policing-related knowledge and skills that a pre-join degree candidate will be expected to acquire as part of their professional education
- An overview of the key areas of learning and development covered by the national policing curriculum for the police constable role, and the relevance of this national curriculum to the pre-join degree entry route
- An outline of an additional professional option whereby police forces (subject to capacity and resourcing) can opt to work in collaboration with HE providers, enabling pre-join degree candidates to obtain practical professional experience in policing, through membership of the special constabulary.

Introduction to PEQF entry routes: police constable rank

Policing Vision 2025 sets out the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and National Police Chiefs' Council long-term professional development strategy for policing until 2025. This strategy articulates the police service's own plan for transformative change across the entirety of policing, and identifies the development of an improved service for the public as its core professional aspiration.

In particular, the vision emphasises the critical reliance of the police service upon the quality of its people, and establishes the workforce principle that policing needs '*to be delivered by a professional workforce equipped with the skills and capabilities necessary for policing in the 21st century*'.

Introduction of a new benchmark of professional education and training for those undertaking the role of police constable is key to the successful implementation of *Policing Vision 2025*. Modern policing is facing new professional challenges and the communities served by the police are increasingly diverse and complex, with differing needs and priorities. The nature of crime is also evolving, taking on new forms and presenting new and ever more immediate threats to the public. The constable role, through the very nature of its function, sits at the heart of effective professional policing, and requires application of high levels of professional knowledge and skills across a range of complex and challenging situations and contexts, as well as demonstration of appropriate behaviours congruent with effective and appropriate front-line policing.

In acknowledgement of the complexity of this key policing role the College of Policing, as the professional body for the police service, has developed a new, degree-based, professional

framework for the education of the police constable. Based upon a new, modern curriculum, this framework is professionally transformative, covering a breadth, depth and range of professional training and education for the police constable that is not to be found in any previous national specifications of the training required for effective performance of the role.

The new framework is comprised of three new national (England and Wales) entry routes into the policing profession at the rank of **police constable**. These are:

Initial entry routes into policing at the rank of police constable

- A (pre-join) knowledge-based **degree in professional policing**, to be achieved prior to formal recruitment into the police service
- A **degree-level apprenticeship** entry route, based upon achievement of a degree in professional policing practice
- A **programme for degree-holder entry** to the policing profession for those whose first degree is in a subject area other than policing

Educational principles of the PEQF

The above portfolio of new entry routes for the police constable role forms the educational and professional foundation for the newly-established *Policing Education Qualifications Framework* (PEQF). The sequence of national programmes of professional education which, in its entirety, constitutes the PEQF is being developed in accordance with the following professional education principles:

- 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 within the policing profession
- Developing a high-quality, evidence-based education for the policing profession
- Promoting a collaborative approach to education within the police service
- Enabling continuing professional development in policing roles.

An overview of the pre-join degree entry route

This document is primarily concerned with the pre-join degree entry route into the police service. The principal educational and professional parameters of this entry route may be summarised as follows:

Pre-Join Degree Entry Route

Overview:

- This entry route involves completion of a three-year knowledge-based **Degree in Professional Policing**. The degree is achieved **prior** to the candidate's recruitment to the police service. Candidates who subsequently apply to join the service and are

recruited as police constables will have acquired all of the *knowledge base* relevant to performance of the role, prior to joining.

National curriculum:

- The curriculum for the pre-join *Degree in Professional Policing* is based upon the knowledge elements of the national curriculum for the police constable role (for further information please see later in this document)

Programme delivery:

- The programme is delivered by a Higher Education Institution with taught degree awarding powers, that is licensed by the College of Policing and which is offering a *Degree in Professional Policing*.

Achievement of operational competence:

- Practice-based operational competence in order to perform the role of police constable is achieved during the **post-join** probationary period. Recruits will be assessed against national assessment criteria in order to demonstrate achievement of two stages of professional competence: *Independent Patrol Status* and *Full Operational Competence*.
- Police forces who have sufficient capacity and resources to do so, can work in collaboration with HE providers, offering opportunities for pre-join degree candidates to gain practical experience of policing through membership of the Special Constabulary. This will lead to achievement of the performance criteria for Independent Patrol Status, *prior* to the recruit joining the police service.

Entry into the police service by any recruit is, of course, subject to force recruitment and selection processes.

Programme accreditation:

- Recruits will have successfully achieved a *Degree in Professional Policing*.

Confirmation in post (post-recruitment):

- A successful recruit to the police service via this route is subject to a two-year probationary period post-join, as specified in Police Regulations.

The above summarises the principal educational and professional parameters. An additional option is also available, whereby police forces (who have the appropriate operational capacity and resourcing to do so) can collaborate with HE providers, offering opportunities for pre-join degree candidates to obtain practical experience in policing through membership of the Special Constabulary (SC). SC membership as part of their degree studies will enable degree candidates to work towards achieving national assessment criteria for Independent Patrol Status (IPS) in respect of the police constable role, whilst simultaneously developing their knowledge and understanding of policing as part of their degree studies. The professional outcome (for forces offering this direct link to the special constabulary) will be a candidate in possession of practice-based skills, eligible for recruitment to the regular police

service and for early deployment on an IPS basis within the recruiting force, subject to minimum post-join local force orientation.

National curriculum for pre-join degree in professional policing

A new national policing curriculum for the professional education of the police constable has been developed by the College of Policing in respect of each of the three new entry routes.

The version of the curriculum relating to the pre-join degree entry route sets out in detail national learning standards that must be covered by a degree in professional policing. Mapping of pre-join degrees to this curriculum is established as a **core requirement** for programme approval in the College’s national programme specification for this entry route.

The new national curriculum is professionally transformative, in that there is comprehensive, modern and up-to-date coverage of areas of knowledge, skills and professional approaches that have been identified as critical to the 21st century policing role of the constable.

The following table summarises the principal areas of professional knowledge, relevant to the role of a police constable, which are specified in full detail in the national curriculum for the police constable role:

National Policing Curriculum for Police Constable Role	
Principal Areas of Professional Education	
General learning and development applicable across a range of professional contexts	
•	Understanding the police constable role
•	Valuing difference and inclusion
•	Maintaining professional standards
•	Evidence-based policing
•	Problem solving
•	Research methods and skills
•	Decision-making and discretion
•	Communication skills
Key areas of professional policing responsibility	
•	Criminology and crime prevention

National Policing Curriculum for Police Constable Role	
Principal Areas of Professional Education	
• Vulnerability and risk	
• Public protection	
• Digital policing	
• Counter terrorism	
• Criminal justice	
Learning and development relating to core areas of policing relevant to the PC role	
• Response policing	
• Policing communities	
• Policing the roads	
• Information and intelligence	
• Conducting investigations	

The professional capability of the pre-join recruit

The national curriculum for the pre-join degree has been developed with the professional aim of specifying in the round the knowledge-based education relevant to professional performance of the police constable role. This will permit holders of a degree in professional policing, who are subsequently recruited to the police service, to pursue a career as a police constable.

Based upon the learning and development specified in the national policing curriculum, it is anticipated that a pre-join degree candidate will acquire a broad range of policing-related knowledge and skills as part of their professional education. These may be summarised under the following headings:

I. Learning and development applicable across a comprehensive range of policing professional situations and contexts.

This will enable the learner to:

- Understand the legal and professional responsibilities of policing as a profession, and modern policing strategies, moving forwards
- Understand ethical approaches to policing, and how to maintain the highest professional standards in providing a service to the public
- Proactively consider equality, diversity and human rights considerations as a core function of professional practice

- Acquire appropriate research skills in order to understand how to put evidence-based policing initiatives into practice
- Understand and evaluate evidence-based initiatives in the context of preventative policing and problem-solving
- Understand how policing-related decisions can be made, founded upon critical thinking, in complex professional situations and contexts, demonstrating appropriate knowledge of powers, legislation and Authorised Professional Practice
- Understand concepts of autonomy and professional discretion, as appropriate to policing
- Engage in continual self-reflection, evolving strategies to improve their own professional knowledge.

Acquisition and confirmation of the above 'cross-cutting' knowledge areas/skills sets will be essential both in ensuring that police constables recruited via this entry route can discharge their duties and responsibilities effectively, and also in setting the frame for the professional *approach* by which they can fulfil these duties and responsibilities.

II. Learning and development relating to the role of a police constable in key, specific areas of professional policing responsibility.

This will enable the learner to:

- Develop knowledge of criminology, with particular emphasis upon community policing and crime prevention
- Understand the fundamental responsibility of the police service to identify and provide professional support to those who are vulnerable and at risk, whatever the context
- Understand how to support individuals in need of public protection
- Understand the concepts of effective digital policing, with specific reference to cyber-enabled crime
- Understand national strategies in relation to countering terrorism
- Understand the criminal justice system as relevant to policing
- Understand how to engage in lawful, safe and effective front-line policing in specific professional areas of response policing, policing communities, policing the roads, information and intelligence, and conducting investigations
- Research and develop practical, evidence-based initiatives to improve policing performance in these areas.

In addition:

III. Policing Professional practice (based upon Special Constabulary membership only)

The national curriculum specifies a range of additional practice-based outcomes, enabling those degree candidates who are also members of the Special Constabulary to gain practical professional experience of the police constable role. Professional development under this heading will enable the learner to:

- Perform the professional duties of a police constable, leading to achievement of Independent Patrol Status.

In instances where this option is available (through professional collaboration between a HE degree provider and a police force), assessment and confirmation of achievement of Independent Patrol Status will be the responsibility of the Special Constable's own force.

IV. Higher level skills

Last, but by no means least, in a wider educational context, the professional benefits of the pre-join degree entry route into policing extend well beyond the confines of the curriculum itself, embracing the higher-level skills that a degree-based educational approach can import to the profession of policing. Those learners who have successfully completed this degree and who progress to become police constables will contribute to the policing profession by being ever more capable problem-solvers, communicators, negotiators and leaders, as well as being increasingly socially and emotionally intelligent individuals in the performance of their professional role. The curriculum provides the essential foundation for the education of such potential police constables of the future.

How to obtain further information

- If you require any further information regarding any of the new entry routes, or have an enquiry or wish to provide feedback to the PEQF team, you may contact us at any time via this e-mail address: PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk
- Further information on the PEQF can be obtained via this web-link: <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Pages/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework.aspx>
- If your Higher Education institution is interested in offering the pre-join Degree in Professional Policing, a copy of our Provider Guidance can be obtained via this web-link: <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Pages/Provider-Information-Pre-join-Degree.aspx>
This document provides guidance on the 'end to end' process that a potential provider would need to follow, to offer the pre-join degree.