

Policing education qualifications framework (PEQF)

Creating a consistent high standard of training for all police officers whichever way they choose to join the force.

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About the PEQF

Definition

This is a professional training framework for police officers and staff. It's based on a modern curriculum of dynamic operational training, underpinned by sound theoretical education. Currently focused on new joiners to the police, the PEQF is being developed to cover the range of professional training, including some voluntary roles, and staff and officers at all levels.

Why we need it

Policing Vision 2025 – written and agreed by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners – highlighted:

- a need for consistency, accreditation and defined roles
- that roles need specific skills and knowledge, backed by qualifications

For a long time forces have recruited differently, without standard entry requirements, learning provision and support. The service recognised the need to standardise these areas as a priority. The PEQF also supports the recruitment of 20,000 new police officers, widening the gateway to, and broadening the appeal of, joining the service.

There is increasing demand on the police to do more than just solve crime and 'catch the bad guys'. It's understood that learning and support for new recruits will help them to start well and stay in a job that recognises their level of expertise and values their contribution.

What the PEQF will do

Its aims are to:

- address the long-held deficiency in recognising the level at which police officers operate
- provide a framework within which the College can revise the learning provision for all officers and staff, starting with the initial entry routes, to ensure these meet the needs of forces and the expectation of the service as set out in Policing Vision 2025
- standardise the learning provision across all forces, in particular the initial learning for newly recruited officers
- include processes and guidance to help existing officers and staff achieve their potential, for example by taking their prior experience and learning as a basis for further learning and achievement of transferable and recognised qualifications

What we have learnt so far

[See our report on PEQF learning to date.](#)

The PEQF programmes

Police constable degree apprenticeship (PCDA)

The basics

Individuals can join the force as an apprentice:

- for a minimum of three years
- earning while they learn
- gaining a degree in professional policing practice
- potentially specialising in their third year

Educationally they will need:

- two A levels, or an equivalent level 3 qualification, as defined in the Education and Skills Act 2008
- competence in written and spoken English

Key aspects of the PCDA programme

When considering this type of programme, forces should note that:

- it is subject to Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules
- it must be delivered in collaboration with an organisation that holds taught degree awarding powers (TDAP)
- forces enter into formal contractual arrangements with a TDAP provider, following a procurement exercise
- it must include a minimum of 20% off-the-job learning, averaged across the programme
- all learning and support aspects must be delivered collaboratively, and as holistically as possible – bringing theory and practice together
- in addition to the academic requirement to achieve 360 credits (with 60 of these credits being achieved within the End Point Assessment) candidates must also evidence occupational competence to independent patrol status in year 1 and full operational competence by year 3
- an additional end-point assessment must be undertaken by an independent assessor in year 3
- it is funded through apprenticeship levy funds, with potential for co-investment and transfer of levy funds from other employers to support more apprentices

Degree-holder entry programme

The basics

This programme:

- is for anyone who already has a degree in any discipline other than the pre-join degree in professional policing licenced by the College
- gives the individual a graduate diploma in professional policing
- offers specialist pathways in neighbourhood policing and investigation (leading to accredited detective constable status)

Key aspects of the degree-holder programme

When considering this type of programme, forces should note that:

- it covers the whole of the PCDA curriculum but with aspects relating to research and academic study removed (as they are already covered in previous degree study)

- it has the potential for specialist pathways:
 - neighbourhood policing (currently only offered via Police Now)
 - detective (Police Now programme or in-house delivery) – includes the requirement to successfully pass national investigators exam (NIE) and to create a portfolio of evidence to specifically meet PIP 2 requirements
 - Successful students achieve PIP2 accreditation as well as Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing
- there is no external funding stream to support this route

Degree in professional policing

The basics

The degree:

- is completed prior to joining the service
- can be a three-year or a two-year version
- can be taken alongside special constable voluntary service to develop operational competence alongside knowledge and skills

Key aspects of the pre-join degree in professional policing

When considering this type of programme, forces should note that:

- most are three-year programmes, but a two-year version was developed in 2020
- some universities are able to transfer students on pre-existing policing related degrees onto the second year of this programme to facilitate earlier finishes – subject to very specific criteria
- university funding is by the individual with no cost to a force
- there is potential for a university to work with a force to offer special constable roles, students gain operational competence alongside knowledge and skill – where this is offered there may be some cost to a force in terms of supporting assessment of operational competence
- successful students can apply to join the service and, if accepted, will follow an operational competence focused programme to achieve independent patrol status and full operational competence over a two-year probation period

[Read more about the pre-join degree](#) in the section on joining the police.

[See a list of universities that offer a professional policing degree.](#)

Universities who want to offer this degree

If you are a university or higher education provider that wants to become licensed to offer the pre-join degree you can find out more from our [guidance for universities that want to offer a pre-join degree](#).

Programmes for people not joining as constables

There are also programmes for police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables.

PCSO learning programme

Using the curriculum developed for the police constable initial learning programmes, the College has also developed PCSO initial learning. This follows the first year of the PCDA, but has been adapted to focus on community policing.

The programme:

- is set at academic level 4
- takes 12 months to complete
- can be delivered as an apprenticeship or standalone qualification
- culminates in a Level 4 HE Certificate or Diploma in Community Policing Practice
- can be mapped across to the PCDA should a PCSO who has completed the programme transition into a PC role

Special constable learning programme

This is based on the first year of PCDA, but the content can be focused on the particular role in which a force intends to deploy a special constable. This could be in any of the five core areas of policing practice – response, communities, roads, intelligence and investigation.

The programme is:

- set at academic level 4, although it is not an accredited programme
- phased in line with accompanied patrol, directed patrol and qualified special constable status
- can be mapped across to the PCDA when someone completes the programme to directed patrol status transition into a PC role

[See more about the SCLP](#)

Maintaining quality and standards

Internal quality assurance

We have developed a quality assurance process for the entry routes into policing.

Each force and the higher education institute it is working with:

- must adhere to a series of core requirements, which are set out in the programme specification for each entry route
- will be asked to provide evidence to show how they meet each criteria
- will have this evidence reviewed by subject matter experts within the College and an external independent assessor from another force
- the programme development team then attend a quality assurance panel to provide more detail and respond to any queries arising from the document review

The panel may set conditions on the programme which must be addressed before it can start to be delivered, and may also make recommendations for how the programme could be improved, as well as highlighting any identified strengths.

Subsequently the programme must also be validated through the HEIs' normal programme validation process, and any conditions set by the College panel are carried forward into that process.

External quality assurance

Programmes may also be scrutinised by other external agencies as well as the College.

The [Education & Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) – audits against funding rules

The [Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education \(IfATE\)](#) – measures performance against the standard and end-point assessment

[Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\)](#) – measures against quality of delivery

Wales specific

There are different rules and guidance about apprenticeships in Wales and the Welsh Government has a central role in monitoring quality of provision.

Quality is assured by [Estyn](#) – the education and training inspectorate for Wales

For more information contact policingeqf@college.pnn.police.uk

Tags

Career pathways Police recruitment