

Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) implementation

Frequently Asked Questions

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This guidance should be read within the context of individual force policies and approaches, especially local elements such as:

- management of protected learning time
- timing of attestation as a constable (See Branch Board Circular 002-2019 [here](#))
- location of learning and academic training provisions (whether on force premises or university campus) and whether uniform is to be worn during those times
- if relevant, whether travel costs are to be paid for journeys to and from university sites

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1. What is the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF)?

The PEQF is a new national framework for the professional training and qualifications of police officers by rank from constable to chief officer. It will also incorporate Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and special constables as well as some police staff. It forms part of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and College of Policing (College) [Workforce Transformation in the Police Service plan](#) which in turn supports the NPCC and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' (APCC) [Policing Vision 2025](#).

The main element of this is the introduction of three new entry routes (see below) at the rank of constable.

PEQF also includes educational qualifications for progression to ranks from sergeant to chief officer, but this element was largely put on hold earlier in 2018 after the NPCC reviewed and clarified their workforce transformation priorities.

2. Why is PEQF being introduced?

PEQF is designed to take account of the fact that policing today is more complex and diverse than it ever has been, with the development of digital technology, for example. It is based on a new updated policing curriculum which will replace the existing Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP).

The policing curriculum has been reviewed, and serving officers at constable rank were found to be working at degree (National Qualification Level 6) level.

As part of this initiative, the College wants to provide consistent national education and accreditation levels for policing roles, which they believe will also reassure the public about the level of training police officers have.

PEQF also now forms one of the four key NPCC Workforce Transformation priorities (See below).

3. What are the NPCC Workforce Transformation priorities, and how does PEQF fit into these?

Four main workforce transformation priorities were set by the NPCC in May 2018 and are linked to the pay reform proposals that the NPCC have been working on.

In turn these govern the priorities of the College in terms of its work. The priorities are:

- new recruitment processes;
- New Entry routes (with differing requirements for training and development once in post);
- Advanced Practitioner (AP) (a lateral career progression proposal currently being developed); and
- the Professional Development Programme (including Assessing and Recognising Competence (ARC), and Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs)), which form part of the proposals to link pay with competence.

Since PEQF includes the new entry routes, it forms a key aspect of the Workforce Transformation priorities.

4. What are the three entry routes?

Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP)

- A pre-join degree-holder entry route for those who have a degree in *any* subject other than the accredited degree in professional policing below.

These recruits will be required to achieve a graduate diploma in professional policing practice as well as work-based competence requirements while they are on probation. Probation will last for two years.

A pre-join degree in professional policing

- A self-funded pre-join undergraduate degree in professional policing, accredited by the College of Policing. This entry route will require no additional academic accreditation for the recruit. While the probationary period remains two years, this route involves a shorter on-the-job training programme to satisfy the work-based competence requirements.

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)

- A Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship scheme (PCDA), which will enable those who join without a degree to study for a policing degree while on probation. These recruits will be required to achieve this, along with satisfying work-based competence requirements, within their probation period, which will last three years. An overview of the educational requirements can be found [here](#).

5. What are the timescales?

These new entry routes are due to come into effect fully from 2020. However, the College, who are responsible for maintaining IPLDP (which will be replaced by the new entry route curricula) announced at the end of November 2018 that they will allow forces experiencing minor implementation delays to continue to use IPLDP for an additional six months, to 30 June 2020. There will also be provision for an extension of up to 18 months (until 30 June 2021) for those experiencing exceptional implementation difficulties, but this will be managed and supported by the College.

The first entrants starting with the PCDA scheme commenced in September 2018, and many forces anticipate taking on their first PCDA cohorts mid-to-late 2019.

The DHEP curriculum has been finalised, but recruitment using this entry route is unlikely to take place until at least mid-2019.

The first starters under the pre-join policing degree arrangements will not complete their degrees until mid-2022.

6. What will this mean for new recruits?

Once all three entry routes are available forces will be able to choose the proportion of officers entering through the different routes.

Some elements of induction will not change from the current arrangements:

- All new starters (including those under the PCDA route) will be warranted officers on appointment, with all the responsibilities that come with the office of constable.
- Apart from differences in regulations regarding pay and probation periods for those commencing under the PCDA route, all regulations governing terms and conditions of service will be the same as for current officers.
- All officers will need to achieve Independent Patrol Status and Full Operational Competence during their period of probation.

Some elements will be different:

- While probation periods for the DHEP and Policing degree-holder routes will remain 2 years, the probation period for PCDA recruits is three years, to provide for the academic study requirements.
- In addition to demonstrating operational competence, DHEP and PCDA recruits will be required to undertake a two or three year (respectively) course of study and achieve an accredited qualification before completing

their probation. This study commitment will require at least 20% learning time, which is a core requirement of the apprenticeship programme.

- Although forces will have the option to set a higher starting salary than the PCDA minimum of £18,000, those who have recruited under the PCDA route so far have set the salary at £18,000. Those entering through the other routes, including the current arrangements, will commence with a salary of anything from £20,300 up to £23,500. So there may be a significant pay differential between PCDA recruits and the current arrangements or either of the other new entry routes. PFEW has challenged the authority to set a starting salary of £18,000 before finalising the appropriate determination providing for this, but the outcome of this challenge is not yet known. Further, the progression salary for PCDA entrants has not yet been set out by the NPCC.
- There may be some benefits for PCDA and DHEP recruits as academic students. For example, they will be entitled to a number of discounts if they take up National Union of Students membership.

7. What will this mean for existing members?

- Existing officers will not have to study for a degree or additional qualifications within their current rank. If they wish to study there are provisions for academic recognition of prior learning in policing. This enables police officers to receive academic credit for experience, courses and learning programmes completed in service.

Through the College web site officers can access a credit estimator tool, to identify what their personal prior skills and experience may typically give them in academic credits. In turn, this might contribute academic credit towards achieving a recognised academic or professional qualification. Participating colleges and qualification details are set out here.

Some forces may pay or assist in paying costs towards additional study, but they may specify the qualifications they are willing to contribute towards.

- Existing officers with roles as mentors, tutors and managers of their new degree apprenticeship scheme colleagues will be required to provide support during the longer probation period. PFEW consider that there is a need for training and guidance to support them in those roles, as PCDA recruits will enter with different training and education requirements and expectations. We are working with the College on this.
- After introduction of PEQF, officers seeking promotion may need to achieve accredited qualifications or learning modules before confirmation in their new rank. The College consulted widely on qualifications on promotion to ranks above constable in mid-2018. However, as this does not form one of the four main Workforce Transformation priorities timescales have now been put back to at least 2021/2022. In the meantime the present Work Based Assessment processes will continue.

8. What will this mean for forces?

The curricula for the different entry education programmes are national ones. However, individual forces will need to work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to agree how the learning will be delivered, so practical arrangements for delivery are likely to differ between forces.

Negotiations between forces and HEIs will include consideration of whether education will be delivered on police or university premises, and/or include e-learning. This might also include whether learning will take place in blocks of time or, for example, day-release. Learning may be organised to avoid particular times of the year when it might be difficult to release student officers. Some HEIs might offer learning blocks outside of traditional university term-times to fit force business needs, but forces negotiating for small groups of recruits may have less negotiating flexibility.

Forces in England will be able to draw down a maximum £24,000 per PCDA student from the Government apprenticeship fund. This must be used to contribute toward the costs of the apprenticeship training over the three year induction period. Some of it can be used towards covering eligible internal force costs of providing such training as well as for direct payment to HEIs.

For Welsh forces, although policing responsibility rests with the Home Office, skills policy is devolved to the Welsh Government, who do not have to spend the revenue received from the levy on Welsh apprenticeships. The Home Office has confirmed that it will provide funding to Welsh police forces to enable them to commission apprenticeships from 2019, but full details of these provisions are not clear as at January 2019.

9. What about specialist constable entry routes?

In addition to the three entry routes above, other specialised routes will be incorporated within PEQF. In particular, specialist detective entry routes are being developed (also known as fast-track or direct detective entry) which are designed to train recruits to become fully operational detectives by the end of the standard two-year probation period. Some specialist detective recruits have already started in the Metropolitan Police Service.

[Police Now](#) (a charity which currently runs a two-year graduate recruitment and training programme for neighbourhood policing) have also been asked by the Home Office to design a bespoke programme specifically directed at the detective entry route based on their current community policing approach.

The College is working to coordinate these routes with the other PEQF learning programmes.

10. What do the new training and education terms mean?

- **Evidence-based** policing describes the use of theoretical and research-based information as justification to underpin decisions officers make on a day-to-day basis, and how these can be adapted in new situations.
- **Reflective practice** is a form of learning which takes place in the workplace before, during and after practical placements. Learning occurs through opportunities for reflection and discussion as opposed to traditional lecture-style teaching and **learning**.
- **Blended learning** is used to describe co-ordination of training and education between the higher education provider and the force. This is designed to encourage clear links between theory and practice supporting evidence-based policing.

11. What is PFEW doing about PEQF?

While PFEW do not accept that academic accreditation is necessary to prove that a recruit is a good police officer, it does support recognition of policing, including the challenges it presents, as a profession. Police work demands skills and abilities at least as well developed as those within other front-line professions such as nursing or social work and should be recognised as such. However, essential policing skills include emotional intelligence, compassion and common sense, which are at least as important professionally as academic policing accreditation. PFEW regularly remind the College of this, both in correspondence and at meetings.

PFEW is engaging with the College to represent the interests of members, including those of recruits. This includes ensuring that Protected Learning Time

is secured for recruits, challenging the unfairly low starting salary for PCDA entrants and emphasising the need for appropriate training and support for their colleagues, mentors and managers.

While PFEW opposes the principle of specialist and direct entry routes it recognises that whatever their method of entry all these officers are our members. They all have the same terms and conditions, have to work in the same policing environment, and deal with the same demands and challenges, as those who have been in service for many years and entered via different pathways. They, as well as our existing officers, deserve appropriate professional support and encouragement as well as the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

This guidance is intended to answer general questions and provide links to further information. It does not necessarily reflect PFEW views or policy position. We intend to update and provide more detail periodically, and as issues emerge. Please e mail jo.strong@polfed.org if there are specific questions you consider should be included in future updates.