

Taking responsibility for your professional development

Investigators have a personal responsibility for their knowledge, skills, learning and experience.

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Investigators have a personal responsibility for their knowledge, skills, learning and experience in relation to investigations and should:

- understand and continually reflect on what their skills are
- recognise their limitations and knowledge gaps, and understand when to seek support
- reflect on their experience and the application of skills in the workplace, seeking feedback from peers and supervisors

Evidence summary

The research evidence supporting this guideline is moderate. Research indicates there are specific skills needed for an effective investigation. These skills and attributes include:

- good communication
- motivation and commitment
- good decision making
- tenacity
- thoroughness and attention to detail
- good teamwork

Experience was found to have positive effects on investigations. Some studies, found that investigators with more experience conducted more effective investigations and:

- remained more open-minded than less experienced investigators over the course of an investigation
- considered more hypotheses and sources of evidence
- were more flexible in the strategies they used in triage decision making of complex cases
- derived more inferences from crime scenes

Some research suggests that greater experience is associated with a greater scepticism of the reliability of all forms of evidence.

Research evidence also suggested that training is important for effective investigations. Some research suggested that investigators with significant investigative training may often outperform investigators with lower levels of investigative training, generating more investigative hypotheses and investigative actions. This includes those with considerable experience.

Empirical evidence

Moderate

Practitioner evidence

Available

Responsibility for continuing professional development

Investigators have a responsibility towards their continuing professional development (CPD). Reflecting on one's knowledge, skills, learning and experience can highlight limitations and knowledge gaps, and can help investigators recognise where they need support.

Knowledge, skills and experience can be maintained and developed in a number of ways. These include through:

- formal learning and development programmes, such as the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP)
- forces' investigative awareness training
- specialist training programmes, such as the serious sexual assault investigator development programme (SSAIDP) or serious child abuse investigator development programme (SCAIDP)
- online training resources found on [College Learn](#), such as [Operation Modify](#) (you will need to log in)

Increasing one's investigative skill set and knowledge can also be done in other ways, such as:

- working with, and seeking support from, colleagues and peers to overcome inexperience more quickly
- secondments (in specialist units or in other departments involved in the investigation process)

- receiving mentoring
- formal academic education, which exposes investigators to academic evidence, facilitating approaches to evidence-based policing
- [reviewing authorised professional practice \(APP\)](#)

Supporting resources

The responsibility for the CPD of investigators is shared between the individual, their force and the College. As such, the College also provides a number of resources and tools to help with this. These include:

- [College Learn](#) (you will need to log in)
- [Knowledge Hub](#) (you will need to log in)
- [CPD toolkit](#) and [professional development platform](#)
- [What Works Centre for crime reduction](#)
- [National Police Library](#)
- [access to knowledge sharing events and peer support](#)

Investigators should also consider engaging with research relating to conducting investigations to develop their knowledge. Engaging with research may also assist investigators to develop innovative approaches to investigations (where appropriate). College resources that may assist with this include resources like [evidence briefings and guides](#).

Professional development reviews (PDRs) can be used as an opportunity for investigators to reflect on their skills, strengths and weaknesses. The [National PDR principles and process expectations](#) is a useful tool for this.

Tags

Managing investigations Investigation