

# Police constable entry routes

Consistent high standard training for all police officers, whichever way they choose to join the force.

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The police constable (PC) entry routes aim to provide a range of opportunities for applicants while allowing forces to satisfy workforce planning requirements. Each route is based on the national policing curriculum, and aims to develop critical thinkers for a challenging and complex environment.

This page is aimed at those already in policing, providing guidance on each entry route for forces to consider during the recruitment process.

If you are new to policing and looking to understand the different routes into the service before you apply, go to our [joining the police section](#).

## Police constable degree apprenticeship (PCDA)

This programme:

- is a three-year programme
- is funded primarily through the apprenticeship levy
- is delivered by a police force in collaboration with a higher education provider (with taught degree awarding powers)
- provides an opportunity to specialise in one of the core areas of policing
- gives the individual a degree in professional policing practice

## Entry requirements

- As set out in [Police Regulation 10](#), entrants are likely to need two A levels or an equivalent [level 3 qualification](#) as defined in the Education and Skills Act 2008.

## Key facts

The PCDA is subject to policies and guidelines by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (to become Skills England in 2025) and Education Skills Funding Agency (to be retired on 31 March 2025 and thereafter owned by the Department for Education in England) and Estyn (Wales). These include:

- a requirement to achieve [level 2](#) English and maths, before or during the programme
- a minimum level of off-the-job/protected learning time for the duration of the programme
- completion of an evidence-based research project

There is a requirement to complete an evidence-based research project prior to the gateway for end-point assessment in England.

The project outcomes, once assessed and deemed to be of sufficiently high quality, can be shared via the College academic support network and What Works Centre. This enables other forces to benefit from and build upon the research.

## Probation

- Three years.

## Degree holder entry programme (DHEP)

The DHEP is:

- a two-year programme
- fully funded by the police force
- gives the individual a graduate diploma in professional policing practice (120 academic credits at level 6)
- provides an opportunity to specialise in one of the core areas of policing

## Entry requirements

- A [level 6](#) degree in any subject (other than the degree in professional policing licenced by us).

## Key facts

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

- it follows the national policing curriculum but with some elements removed, such as research and study skills, as these are generic to degree-level programmes
- it is delivered and assessed at academic level 6 throughout

## Probation

- Two years.

## Degree in professional policing (PPD)

The PPD is:

- usually a three-year programme, though some higher education institutions offer an accelerated two-year version
- fully funded by the student
- delivered by a higher education institution only
- encourages students to interact with local forces to enrich their learning experience
- provides an opportunity to specialise in one of the core areas of policing

## Entry requirements

- Applicants should meet the standard UCAS entry requirements set out by the higher education institution offering the degree.

## Key facts

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

- the PPD is based on the national policing curriculum, but in its standard format is a knowledge-only programme with no operational practice
- students need to apply to join the police service after successful completion of the degree. This involves successful completion of an assessment centre, fitness testing and security vetting
- students being recruited into a force need to follow a short programme covering specific areas that are not part of the degree – this ensures they are safe and lawful before being deployed into

an operational role

Additional operational practice can be achieved by the students becoming special constables. Students can become a special constable (SC) in one of two ways.

- The higher education institution can seek to enter into formal arrangements with a local force to offer special constable (SC) places. Here, the force contributes to the programme by managing the SC work to coincide with learning outcomes in the degree programme. This option would need force agreement.
- Students can seek to become a SC with any force without any formal arrangement between the force and the higher education institution. This can enable practical application of learning from the programme, but may not be as structured as a formal arrangement.

[Read more about the degree in professional policing](#) 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 degree in professional policing you can find out more from our [guidance for universities that want to offer a professional policing degree](#).

## Police constable entry programme (PCEP)

PCEP is:

- a new programme available for forces to use from April 2024
- delivered within force

## Entry requirement

As set out in [Police Regulation 10](#), entrants are likely to need two A levels or an equivalent [level 3](#) qualification as defined in the Education and Skills Act 2008.

## Key facts

- Two-year programme.
- Delivered by a police force.
- Does not provide an individual with a qualification.
- Applicants become PCs on successful completion of probation.
- The training equips officers with the skills needed to meet the complex policing challenges faced today whilst contributing to a positive policing culture.

## Probation

- Two years.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality impact assessments relating to the PEQF, considering any potential inequalities in the training framework.

- [PEQF PC entry routes – equality impact assessment \(pdf\) 188.23 KB](#)

For more information contact [implementation@college.police.uk](mailto:implementation@college.police.uk)

## Tags

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