

A photograph showing the backs of two police officers in uniform. They are wearing dark blue shirts with 'POLICE' written on the back in white letters on a blue background. They are also wearing black tactical vests with 'POLICE' written on the back. The background shows a parking lot with police cars and a building.

Subject Benchmark Statement: Policing

The Basics

This document is a summary of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Policing. It is specifically designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the main Statement for students, employers and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Subject Benchmark Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. Section 1 outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape, and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals, specifically in relation to: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); the requirements of disabled students; education for sustainable development (ESD); and enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. Section 3 explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. Section 4 describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject, with some subjects also including achievement at master's level.



Why study a degree in Policing?

A degree in Policing aims to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the profession, along with the regulatory, legal and criminal justice system within which policing operates. Some programmes are licensed by the College of Policing, the professional body for the police service across England and Wales. Policing as a subject is a key component in recognising and standardising the profession of policing, which in turn helps to serve policing's core mission to make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice.

Policing is a fascinating and varied career, with numerous opportunities for police constables, staff and volunteers. Initial entry as a police constable is achieved through different routes such as knowledge-based degrees, work-based programmes and apprenticeships; there are also degrees in England and Wales that are not licensed by the College of Policing. In Northern Ireland, there is a degree-level qualification as well as a graduate certificate; and in Scotland there is no higher education route into professional policing. The Subject Benchmark Statement recognises these differences across the four nations and sets them into a UK-wide context.



What are the main teaching and learning approaches in policing?

Teaching and learning in policing has a student-centred approach, embracing the concept of student as producer. Through the production of knowledge in collaboration with police professionals and academics, students experience openness, enquiry, ownership and empowerment. Academic skills may also be applied in an evidence-based way through application to problems in practice. Modern teaching and learning approaches in policing value the importance of self-reflection; critical thinking; decision-making; skills of communication; ethics; equality, diversity and inclusion.



How are students assessed?

The assessment of Policing students is partially determined by whether the degree is a licensed programme of study in England and Wales. Those that are, require assessments which integrate theoretical learning with professional practice. Other licensed and non-licensed programmes may not require the practical application of policing skills.

Whether a licensed programme through the College of Policing, or non-licensed programmes in Policing, assessments focus on applied learning and providing students with opportunities to demonstrate a grounding in blended theory and applied skills. They include a varied mix of methods - written, oral and visual - that are accessible to all students.

Where individual students may be disadvantaged by assessment methods, adjustments to those assessments are considered while ensuring fairness across the full cohort. The procedures used for assessment cover the subject knowledge, abilities and skills developed through the degree course.



Benchmark Standards

The minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Policing are outlined on **pages 16 and 17** of the Subject Benchmark Statement. The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours: 1st, 2:1, 2:2 and 3rd.

The Statement was developed by a group of subject experts drawn from across the sector. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on **page 20** of the Statement.

Read the full Subject Benchmark Statement

The [full Subject Benchmark Statement](#) is available on the QAA website.



Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as a membership organisation on behalf of the higher education sector.

Published - 30 March 2022

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557000 Web: www.qaa.ac.uk