



Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commission

Freedom of Information Act Request Response No. 19012017-1

Question

Could you please send me your Office of Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the College of Policing's consultation on the Policing Education and Qualifications Framework (aka degrees for police officers)? The consultation period ran from 2 February to 29 March 2016.

Answer

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested is held by this Department.

Proposal 1: The establishment of a qualifications framework for policing

"Qualifications at national level 6 (equivalent to a Bachelor's degree) suit employment requiring people to apply knowledge, transferable skills, problem-solving and personal judgement in complex and unpredictable contexts."

(Adapted from UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2014))

1.1 This description is relevant to the Constable role.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any further comments you may have below:

"Qualifications at national level 7 (equivalent to a Master's degree) suit employment requiring high level specialist knowledge and the creation of original responses to complicated and unpredictable problems and situations."

(Adapted from UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2014))

1.2 This description is relevant to the Superintendent role.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any further comments you may have below:

We are not convinced that the high level of a Masters equivalent qualification reflects the Superintendent role, and further work should be done to determine whether as high a qualification is required (for example, postgraduate diplomas appear to have been placed with Inspector roles but with little evidence or reasons as to why this is appropriate, and certain levels should not be placed with certain ranks simply to fit the structure).

1.2 There should be minimum education qualification levels for each rank or level of practice in policing.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any further comments you may have below: n/a

Proposal 2: The development of opportunities for existing officers and staff to gain accredited and publicly recognised qualifications equivalent to their level of practice or rank

2.1 There should be a national, standardised framework of recognised and accredited qualifications for policing.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any further comments you may have below:

The qualifications must be flexible and open to change. Law and policing priorities change rapidly and the content of the education should therefore be flexible and reviewed regularly as to what police service is required to meet future demands of the service.

2.2 The College should develop a non-mandatory mechanism by which officers and staff can be externally accredited for their existing skills and expertise.

Please provide any further comments you may have below:

We welcome the proposal that qualifications would be a choice for existing officers and staff. It is a very good idea to provide opportunities for existing officers to gain qualifications that will not only develop their policing career but also provide more opportunity to enter other professions. It provides an exciting opportunity to consider what the content and training of the degree and other routes could be in equipping and teaching future officers. We would also like to stress that experience must remain as relevant and worthy of recognition than a qualification, given the many of the existing workforce will have entered the profession without these entry requirements, and the absence of a qualification should not be a barrier to future promotion where demonstrable experience is offered.

Proposal 3 – The development of initial entry routes

3.1 There should be multiple entry routes into policing at Constable level, for example: via vocationally focused degrees; graduate conversion courses; and higher level apprenticeships.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any further comments you may have below:

The best organisations have a range of experience and backgrounds. We do not think all police officers should have come through the same specific academic routes. Equivalent qualifications in other areas should also be deemed valuable to bring in wider expertise and experience, particularly in leadership roles.

3.2 Entry routes into policing should be consistent across all forces.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any further comments you may have below: n/a

Overview – the education qualifications framework for policing

4.1 Overall, how would you describe your opinion of the proposals to develop an education qualifications framework

- In favour
- Undecided
- Opposed

4.2 Please outline any other issues you would like to raise about the proposals, along with any ideas for action the College could take in relation to these issues.

The Special Constabulary has not been considered in this consultation. It is important to establish whether entry routes into the Special Constabulary would change at all in line with the proposed changes for regular officers, whether promotion to senior Special ranks would be reviewed, and also to consider the routes into policing for those who have experience in volunteering as a Special Constable should they choose to apply to become a regular officer. Would the College of Policing envisage education opportunities to Special Constables as well?

If no changes are made to entry into the Special Constabulary, it would be important to consider the impact this may have on perceptions of the skills and qualifications of the volunteer workforce and regular workforce.

4.3 If relevant, please outline the main benefits you think an education qualification framework will offer policing, along with any ideas for action the College could take to maximise these benefits.

4.4 Please outline any further information you think people might find helpful in relation to the consultation proposals.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to: Martin Scoble,

Chief Executive, Office of the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner, West Wing, Force Headquarters, Wootton Hall, Northampton, NN4 0JQ

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.