

POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ELIGIBILITY - EDUCATION

Do I need a degree to join the police?

No. We have three different entry routes for police officers – for those without a degree we offer the Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP), the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) (completion of this programme results in a Degree in Professional Policing Practice), and the Detective Constable Entry Programme (DCEP). We also offer the Professional Policing Degree (PPD) for those who have already obtained that degree at university.

Do new recruits require A-levels?

Candidates applying for the PCEP, PCDA and DCEP require a minimum of two A-Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications OR relevant professional experience OR a combination of the two. Suitability of your 'relevant professional experience' will be assessed by TVP.

What qualifies as Relevant Professional Experience?

Relevant Professional Experience is at least one year of working in areas such as those below. *Note:* this is not an exhaustive list and all previous experience will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- armed forces
- border force
- criminal justice sector/CPS/courts
- cyber/digital and financial fraud crimes
- dedicated investigation or analytical role
- emergency services
- health and social care sectors
- justice and law enforcement sectors
- police staff, particularly custody, public contact/demand hub/enquiry office roles and investigative roles
- PCSO or Special Constable
- prison service
- professional services/project management
- teaching
- youth work

Do I need GCSE English and Maths?

Candidates for all entry routes must have English GCSE (A*-C/9-4) or an equivalent such as Functional Skills Level 2. For the PCDA you will also need Maths GCSE.

Note: if you have studied English overseas as a second language, this is usually not equivalent so you will probably need to obtain Functional Skills Level 2 in English.

My qualification is from outside the UK, can I still apply?

You should send your qualifications to the recruitment team to review, then you will be advised whether they are equivalent. If the recruitment team are unable to verify them, you may be advised to go to ENIC for a statement of comparability.

Why do I have to go to UK ENIC?

The College of Policing have set strict criteria for qualifications. Some courses that are studied outside the UK have the same title but do not match the level if studied in the UK. If a candidate has studied outside the UK they may be required to provide a report from UK ENIC which shows whether their qualifications are comparable to UK qualifications. To check whether your certificates are equivalent to a UK one, you will need to apply to UK ENIC who will then provide you with a Statement of Comparability. Please note there is a cost to doing this.

This is the link to the UK ENIC website: [Home Page \(ecctis.com\)](http://ecctis.com). Once you have received the result from UK ENIC, you should send that statement to us for consideration and progression of your application.

ELIGIBILITY - RESIDENCY

I am not a British Citizen can I apply?

The College of Policing requires that if candidates are not British citizens, then they must have Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK, or have Settled or Pre-Settled status under the EC/EEA Settlement Scheme with no restrictions to live and work in the UK. You will be asked to provide evidence of your residency status at application stage.

I have only lived in the UK for one year, can I apply?

For Vetting purposes, you must have lived in the UK for three years so there is enough 'checkable' history for you. There are some limited exceptions for military postings, short-term studying abroad, etc.

I've been travelling overseas for more than three months, can I still apply?

If you spend more than three months outside of the UK in the last three years, and within those three months you spent more than 28 days in one country, then you must obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct from each country you spent 28 days or more in. These can take some time to obtain so do not delay requesting them once you are back in the UK.

ELIGIBILITY - GENERAL

Are tattoos, piercings and ear tunnels permitted?

These all come under the Standards of Dress Policy. Tattoos will be assessed on an individual basis at eligibility stage and your application may be rejected if they are considered offensive or are too prominent. Most piercings are not a reason to reject an application but they will need to be removed when you are on duty. We will request a colour photo of ear tunnels and will then be assessed with our Training Dept on a case by case basis for any potential health and safety issues.

Do I need a driving licence?

By the time we make you a formal offer for a police officer role with us, you must have a full manual UK driving licence. However, you can obtain it during the recruitment process so you can apply to us with only a provisional, or no, licence.

Does a criminal record stop me applying?

Each application is made on a case by case basis and it is therefore not possible to identify a prescriptive list of convictions and cautions that could lead to a vetting rejection. However, it should be noted that The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 does not apply to police officers.

RECRUITMENT - GENERAL

I have previously passed the National Sift / Online Assessment Centre with another force, do I have to re-do the assessments?

These assessments are valid for two years so if they are still in date, then you will not need to re-do them. On your application form you will be asked for your previous Assessment Centre feedback report. This will then be checked to ensure you met TVP's pass mark.

When does the fitness test take place?

This happens after you have received a provisional offer and during the pre-employment stages of the recruitment process (along with medical and vetting). Generally you will be asked to complete a fitness test 2-3 months prior to starting on an intake.

How often are intakes and are they during term time only?

We generally run at least one PCEP intake per month. The PCDA, DCEP and PPD intakes are less often. Intakes can start at any point of the year and do not follow academic term times.

EMPLOYMENT

How much do student officers get paid?

Please refer to the careers page for the up-to-date starting salary for new recruits. The salary is the same whichever entry route you join on and your pension contributions are based on this pensionable pay. The South East Allowance (currently £3,000 p.a.) is paid in addition and each month in 12 equal payments.

What date will I be paid on?

- You will be paid on the last working day of the month.
- Any overtime worked is paid in arrears so overtime worked in April will be paid in May

When will I know which station I'm posted to?

We ask you for your preferred posting locations and will try to match this with your postal address. However, you must be prepared for a degree of flexibility because we have to post primarily on operational need and vacancies at the time. You will be told your posting in your formal offer at about five weeks before your start date.

I need to relocate to TVP area, when do I have to have moved by?

Ideally you will have moved before you receive your formal offer. If this is not possible, then you must move during the initial training (classroom-based) phase which is about 20 weeks from your start date. This is a force requirement that you must re-locate within this initial classroom phase and will be part of your formal offer.

INITIAL TRAINING AND TUTORSHIP PHASES

When will students be given laptops, radios and mobile phones?

All student officers will be given a force issue laptop, radio and mobile phone upon arrival at the force training centre at Sulhamstead or Kidlington.

Where will the learning take place?

The majority of the initial learning will be undertaken at Sulhamstead or Kidlington, the TVP Force Training Centre. However, there are also a number of weeks during the initial learning period that is undertaken remotely, utilising interactive online learning platforms. This blended approach to delivering learning will continue throughout the full programme length, with further online, remote delivered learning during the later stages of the overall programme.

Do I have to stay at Sulhamstead or Kidlington during my initial learning?

Accommodation is available during the week to all student officers who live in excess of 30 crow miles from the Force Training Centres at Sulhamstead or

Kidlington for all parts of the initial training that is delivered in person. Please note that there are limited links to public transport directly to the Force Training centres. Accommodation is not provided for the elements of the initial training that is delivered remotely by way of virtual delivery. It is recommended that all students who are eligible, make use of this free accommodation during the in-house training, however it is not mandatory and students can choose to return to their home address during the training courses. Travel expenses for mid-week commuting will not be covered. It is also worth being aware that the days can be long and tiring and therefore you should bear in mind the additional impact of driving home mid-week. Staying at Sulhamstead or Kidlington also allows students to focus on their programmes of learning without distraction as well as build camaraderie with the other student officers, an essential part of joining the Police family.

How many weeks is the training?

The PCEP and DCEP are 24 weeks of initial training which will be classroom-based at Sulhamstead or Kidlington and the hours are 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. After initial training, you undertake the 'tutorship' phase at your base station for 10 weeks. This is when you start the full rolling shift pattern of your team.

For the PCDA the initial training period is 22 weeks and the PPD is 14 weeks, then 10 weeks tutorship for both.

Will I have to work shifts, weekends and Bank Holidays?

Once you go to your base station for the tutorship phase, you start the shift pattern of your team which will include a combination of earlies, lates, night shifts and rest days. The current shift pattern for uniform officers is six on then four days off as here: two early shifts, two late shifts, then two nights followed by four rest days.

What annual leave can I take during initial training and tutorship?

You will have set weeks of annual leave planned into the training programme during these periods and they cannot be altered. This means that during this time, you cannot take any annual leave if it is not pre-planned into the programme. During the initial training period you may be required to work one or two Saturdays, to accommodate any Bank Holidays that you get off. Additionally, annual leave cannot be taken during Protected Learning Time later in your probation period.

PROBATION AND LEARNING

Do students remain on emergency response during their probation?

Yes although most student officers also spend some time on attachment to different teams.

Will students spend time on attachment to different teams and depts as part of their training?

There will be a number of weeks of attachments to other departments during your probation and these could include attachments to Neighbourhood, CID, Priority Crime and the Domestic Abuse team, amongst others.

What length of time will my probationary period be?

PCEP, DCEP and PPD – probation period of 2 years. The aspiration is for all students to achieve Full Operational Competence at the end of Year 2. PCDA - probation period of 3 years.

What happens if a student officer fails to reach operation competence on the PCEP, DCEP and PPD?

Students must successfully achieve operational competence to move onto the next stage. Where necessary, reasonable extra support and development will be given in relation to any areas that are not being achieved as below. However, if unsuccessful they are unlikely to be able to remain with the organisation.

PCDA-SPECIFIC

Do PCDA students pay university tuition fees?

No

How will performance be managed in this period?

The aspiration is for you to achieve Full Operational Competence at the end of Year 2 and completion of the degree and apprenticeship by the end of Year 3. Learning will be accredited with a Degree in Professional Police Practice. All performance will be assessed and where required, additional support will be given.

What is learnt within the protected learning time in years 2 and 3?

Continuation of learning within Response Policing at Levels 5 and 6. Years 2 and 3 will include more critical thinking and reflective practice. Protected Learning Time (PLT) has been calculated to best meet operational, student and curriculum minimum requirements.

Will PCDA officers be given time to complete academic assignments?

There is sufficient protected learning time (PLT) built into all the PCDA programmes throughout the second and third years in order to successfully complete the course and achieve the relevant qualification. Part of this PLT is reserved for learning (off the job training) to be delivered to the student and part is reserved as independent study time to assist in the completion of the academic assignments. However, students may choose to spend additional time on training outside of these allocated hours

What happens if a student fails any part of the PCDA academic programme or does not reach operational competence?

Students must successfully achieve both operational and academic assessments to move into the next year. Where necessary, extra support and development will be given in relation to any areas that are not being achieved as below. However, if unsuccessful they are unlikely to be able to remain with the organisation.

- If relevant to Academic assignments:

There are opportunities for retakes of assignments throughout the 2/3 years and additional support will be provided for those students who require it.

- If relevant to Operational competence assessment:

Independent patrol must be achieved to complete year 1 and pass through into year 2. Full operational competence must be achieved by week 40 in year 3 for PCDA students.

There are regular tri-partite reviews scheduled throughout the programmes. These reviews will include the student, line manager, DAO and apprenticeship provider; they will allow close monitoring of student progress. Development plans will be quickly put in place by the line manager and support will be provided by TVP and the apprenticeship provider.

In the PCDA what is assessed within the End Point Assessment (EPA)?

There will be a presentation of the student officer's research project followed by a professional discussion. There will also be a professional discussion against the Operational Competence Portfolio. The panel will consist of an independent assessor from the university, along with a member of the academic course team and a representative from TVP.

Can PCDA officers leave after achieving their degree?

Yes, once officers have achieved their degree they can leave the Force. Research from other organisations offering Apprenticeships has shown students as having an increased commitment. We would hope that once student officers have passed their programme they will be committed police officers looking forward to a career which offers variety, consistent skill development and longevity.