

Education and Study

POLICY & PROCEDURE

OFFICIAL

Government Security Classification Scheme	<i>Policy section:</i> OFFICIAL - Force website approved <i>Procedure section:</i> OFFICIAL - Force website approved
Department of Origin	People Services
Policy Holder	Head of People Operations and Service Delivery (PO&SD)
Policy Author	Author/s: People Partner
Related Information	Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) Business Link – Time to Train Direct Gov Leadership College of Policing
This Version	3.3
Created / Modified	04/06/2026
Last Approved (SMB)	27/09/2024
Review By	27/09/2027

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Policy

Statement

Merseyside Police is committed to the provision of effective learning and development opportunities to enable all members of the workforce to develop their knowledge and skills to perform their duties to a high standard. At Merseyside Police, we will ensure we create a great place to work and have a consistent approach through our policies, which is necessary to deliver against our Force Strategy.

As a professional organisation we aim to create a culture of continuous learning and it is essential there are a variety of appropriate and effective learning activities and techniques for individuals to maintain and enhance their capacity to practice legally, safely, ethically and effectively.

This policy, which assists the delivery of the organisation's People Strategy, details the arrangements for maintaining and developing the workforce on an individual and organisational level. This policy should ensure a consistently fair, supportive and flexible approach to applications for support with educational study.

Aims

The main aim of this policy is to promote opportunities for individual personal and professional development in line with organisational priorities in support of delivering the force strategy. The policy is underpinned by procedures designed to provide clear, definitive and unambiguous direction for all those involved in its deployment. The procedures make clear what assistance is available and under what conditions.

Objectives

A broad objective is to provide a mechanism through which the organisation will provide facilities and financial assistance to individuals engaged in work related learning or the requirement for individuals to undertake required learning to undertake specific roles. Associated objectives are:

- Support those individuals for educational study.
- Support those individuals for Leadership development.
- Support those individuals to enable successful completion of educational study or leadership development.

- Co-ordinate, identify and develop talent within the organisation.
- Increase numbers of professionally qualified individuals relevant to their role or role aspirations.
- Increase number of Apprenticeships as per local and national priorities.
- Increase number of Apprenticeship starts to utilise apprenticeship levy.
- Improve recording, monitoring and quality assurance of training / development received.
- Provide an approval process for managers to enable investment in professional development of individuals.
- Allow the organisation to target areas of academia in line with the force priorities.
- Allow the organisation to standardise approach and control expenditure.
- Allow the organisation to benefit from individuals' knowledge and experience as a result of the investment in individuals training and development.

Application and Scope

All individuals must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

The policy applies to all police officers and police staff, both full-time and part-time. Any individual is eligible to apply for this scheme and both police officers and police staff will be considered under the same terms. Student officers as an exception to the above, will not be included in the scope unless it forms part of the apprenticeship scheme.

Outcome Evaluation

The Education Board is responsible for the governance and overall evaluation of the policy and procedure with a focus on inclusivity, value for money and benefits to the organisation including the ability to direct study.

Procedure

Version History

Version Number	Date	Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure.	Policy Owner Details	Policy Author Details
2.0	01/12/12	Para 10.7.3 inserted to cover officers on existing programme. Front Logo updated	Head of People Services	
2.1	18/11/13	Full review and revision update	Head of People Services	
2.2	2/12/19	Full review and revision update: Introduction of PEQF and apprenticeships.	Head of Org. Dev.	Education and Qualifications Officer
3.0	12/11/24	New policy designed with change of process linked to centralisation to ensure fairness and equity, org learning and savin and efficiencies.	Head of Org. Dev.	Capability, Leadership and Talent Lead
3.1	16/12/24	Removed section 1.6 which has been superseded by a guide for discussion.	Head of Org. Dev.	Capability, Leadership and Talent Lead
3.2	04/04/25	light amendment: Paragraph 4.12 removed on advice from Apprenticeship Officer	Head of Org. Dev.	Capability, Leadership and Talent
3.3	04/06/26	Revised terms and naming conventions following implementation of Force Operational Review and 2025 Force Strategy; formatting refresh (no change to review date)	Head of PO&SD	People Partner

1. Principles of the Education Study Policy

- 1.1 Continuous professional development (CPD) should be discussed during the annual performance development review (PDR) process and any application for further learning will need to be evidenced via meaningful PDR discussions with line manager. CPD is a process that helps people develop and maintain their knowledge and skills throughout their careers.
- 1.2 The Education Board is a centralised board, chaired by the Head of OD, would have a feed in from key areas including the Head of the Academy, the Capability, Leadership & Talent Lead, the Force Apprenticeship and Qualifications Officer, Finance, and the Chair of the Evidence Based Policing Board. BCU/Command Leads, would also be invited, and **all** attendees would be required to send a deputy if they were unable to attend. UNISON, GMB and the Federation will also be invited to attend.
- 1.3 All bids for CPD courses at any level which require financial investment of any kind, must go forward to the Education Board from Merseyside Police. This does not include role standard courses offered by the force e.g. public order or role specific professional courses e.g. legal courses that would not normally be undertaken by someone outside of that role/profession. This does not apply for self-funded investment arrangements. Applications must be on the electronic Force Education Application Form and submitted with the individual's line manager comments. The application will outline the course costs, provider, benefits to the force / individual and how these align with organisational priorities and strategies. Line managers should endorse the application by indicating whether they support the course of study (this should be via email to the individual so it can be uploaded within the form). The Command Team should be notified of the application prior to being submitted electronically to the Apprenticeship and Qualifications Officer and BCU/Command Lead / Departmental Head should also be made aware for their information. The budget will be set initially through the Chiefs Constables priority fund and will be reviewed annually. The application form can be found here: [Training & Education Form](#)
- 1.4 The Apprenticeship and Qualifications Officer will check all applications, ensuring that all required information is provided prior to the application being shared with the Capability, Leadership and Talent Team (CLT) and taken to the Education Board to be discussed and approved or declined.
- 1.5 Additionally, applications for College of Policing Leadership Stage 4 and Stage 5 courses will be coordinated and considered by the Board in the same manner and

process. Individuals returning from leadership courses will seek the CLT's co-ordination and approval for any further studies associated or recommended from the College of Policing. Further College information can be accessed via this link: [Leadership | College of Policing](#).

- 1.6 Each application should be considered on its own merit by the Board through a set criterion and is subject to the overall educational budget position at the time of application.
- 1.7 Decisions in respect of financial assistance must be confirmed in writing with any reason for refusal provided. In the event that funding for a particular qualification is refused, the Apprenticeships and Qualifications Officer must be informed in the event that a suitable alternative qualification may be available with attached funding. Academic (Higher Education) qualifications once agreed will be **directed** via the Evidence Based Policing Board / Coordinator.
- 1.8 A record of the request by an individual and the subsequent approval or refusal of the request, will be noted on Oracle by the Academy Training Administrators (Academy.Training.Administrators@merseyside.police.uk).

2. Eligibility Criteria

- 2.1 The chosen course must have clear outcomes and benefit both the applicant and Merseyside Police and be relevant to the applicant's current or prospective role/post within the organisation. Best value and appropriate longevity within role will need to be demonstrated by applicant and supported by the Command Team and will form part of the panel's consideration process.
- 2.2 In the event that funding is provided for training that is role specific, there would be an expectation that the individual must remain in that post for a period of time following the completion of training. Should the individual not be able to do this, this will be reviewed by the Education Board, and any decision communicated to the candidate, this will not include individual who wish to progress through promotion.
- 2.3 Individuals may not be considered if:
 - They have previously failed to complete a course successfully when given financial assistance.
 - They have a live formal capability or UPP or Conduct case ongoing.
 - They have not completed all mandatory training relevant to their role.

- The knowledge, skills and competencies can be gained by other more cost-effective means.

3. Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning (RPEL)

- 3.1 RPEL is a process that may potentially give individuals academic credits for the learning they have gained through their experience and the courses they may have completed. Credits can be used to help achieve an academic qualification. This can reduce the amount of time required to undertake training and therefore reduce funding. This option should be explored prior to any funding request being submitted.

4. Funding Arrangements

- 4.1 There is a central fund for qualifications and College of Policing Leadership programmes stage 4 & 5 to ensure a consistent approach for all individuals, supported or not. Funding for external qualifications will be agreed by the Board and all applications will be discussed at this Board.
- 4.2 When funding is awarded and provided by the Force, individuals are required to provide regular updates on their academic progress as per the learning contract.
- 4.3 For role based higher and further education qualifications including apprenticeships, if the individual moves to another role which does not need the qualification/educational requirement, then dependent upon circumstances funding may be withdrawn for subsequent years.
- 4.4 Apprenticeship applications will be assessed on the suitability of the qualification, the benefits to the individual and to the organisation. Apprenticeship funding can change regularly therefore decisions will be made based on what is available at the time of application. To meet the requirements of an apprenticeship, the individual will be required to undertake 6 hours of off the job learning per week for the duration of the apprenticeship. Applications should make it clear how this can be accommodated within their current role and have this confirmed by their line manager and Head of BCU/Command.
- 4.5 Once approved by the board, the individual will receive notification of the decision from the Apprenticeship and Qualifications Officer or the CLT Lead who will also notify the

BCU/Command/Departmental Head and then they should proceed with the application for study with the appropriate educational establishment.

4.6 Individuals can appeal the decision where an application has been refused. An individual should appeal within 10 calendar days of receipt of the outcome. Appeals will be dealt with by an independent SLT member within People Services.

4.7 Funding may include the following fees associated with the course:

- Course registration fees
- Module fees
- Tutor fees
- Distance learning package/ e-learning module fees
- Examination fees
- Course fees to professional bodies (not memberships)
- Other associated course fees

4.8 Fees that are excluded from funding include:

- Student union membership fees
- Fees relating to membership of a professional body or society
- Fees and costs associated with graduation ceremonies and/or awards ceremonies
- Fees for examination re-sits.

Merseyside Police will not pay travel and accommodation to cover course attendance unless covered under their Apprenticeship agreement or critical to their employment. Any exceptions will be agreed by the board.

4.9 Textbooks and other associated course material will not be funded by Merseyside Police.

4.10 Any change to the proposed course of study must be agreed by the Education Board. Failure to adhere to this may result in the offer of funding being withdrawn.

4.11 If individuals are granted part funding by the Force, any applications for additional funding e.g. College of Policing bursary, must be submitted through to the Head of the Academy.

5. Reimbursement of Tuition and Course Fees to Force

5.1 Within the conditions of this policy and procedure funding may be withdrawn / recovered under the following circumstances:

- Failing to complete the course of study without good reason.
- Failure to sit an examination without good reason.
- Failure to show satisfactory progress without good reason.
- Failure to maintain satisfactory attendance without good reason.
- Failure to observe or perform any of the conditions contained in this policy.
- Resignation from Merseyside Police during the course of study.
- Any candidate that is dismissed from the force, recovery will be discussed in the Education Board.
- Leaving the organisation, of their own volition, within a specified timescale on completion of the course of study.
- Academic Misconduct that results in a sanction.
- Failing exams / assessment resulting in inability to complete the course.

5.2 Where an individual (with the exception of funding for apprenticeships) leaves the organisation, or fails to complete study as per 5.1 within the periods set out below, they will be required to reimburse Merseyside Police for all fees and course expenses paid on a sliding scale as shown below:

Before completion of the qualification or up to 3 months after	100%
3-12 months after completion	50%
12 – 24 months	25%
24 months and over	0%

5.3 If an individual, without good reason, fails to complete the course of study satisfactorily (e.g. by failing examinations, poor attendance or discontinuing the course as per 5.1) repayment of all financial assistance is required. Repayment will be expected to be made within the timescale of the course duration (e.g. if the course was 18 months long, individuals would have 18 months to make re-payment). Any repayment can be facilitated through a salary re-payment plan which will be discussed with the candidate. In the event of an individual re-sitting an examination, all associated examination and tuition costs are the liability of the individual. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Education Board.

- 5.4 The CLT Lead, Apprenticeship and Qualifications Officer, together with the Finance/Payroll department, will pursue the recovery of costs unless there are exceptional circumstances, which will make recovery inappropriate.
- 5.5 The method of repayment should be discussed with the individual and where possible arranged to suit both the needs of the individual and the organisation.
- 5.6 If an individual resigns from the organisation any debt will be recovered via the debt recovery process through finance and payroll. Individuals will receive an invoice outlining the outstanding amount to be paid in full.
- 5.7 Any payment not settled will be covered under the debt collection service.

6. Time Off for Study

- 6.1 Up to a maximum of 1 day paid study leave per module / unit assessment, in any academic year to include the purposes of preparing for examinations or completing written or practical work associated with an approved course of study, this is up to a maximum of 5 days. Exceptions to this are only through corporate agreement, via the Education board in conjunction with BCU/Command leads.
- 6.2 Where a corporate agreement is in place and includes day release additional study leave will not normally be granted for the purposes preparing for examinations or completing written or practical work.
- 6.3 For full time apprenticeships, apprentices will be afforded 6 hours per week pro rata off their employed time undertaking off-the-job training, as set out within the apprenticeship funding rules. Off-the-job training is defined as learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day working environment and leads towards the achievement of an apprenticeship. Additional study leave as detailed will not normally be granted for the purposes of writing assessments / assignments in addition to the 6 hours off the job training. Time to undertake assessment meetings and exams will be awarded in addition to the 6 hours.
- 6.4 Study leave can be considered for the following reasons; however, this is not an exhaustive list:
- Attendance at lectures
 - Completion of course assessments / assignments in lieu of an examination (normally one day per assignment/assessment)

- Revision time for examinations (normally one day per examination)
- Attendance at examinations

- 6.5 All study must be clearly recorded by supervision on the Force Resource Management System (DMS) and in the individuals pocket notebook / pronto / daybook where applicable.
- 6.6 Individuals must notify their line manager, in writing, at least 2 weeks prior to the requirement for time off to study.
- 6.7 Individuals must use their flexi time, time due (TOIL), annual leave entitlement or rest days for any further study leave. Allowances should be made enabling students to have their leave, when necessary, subject to operational requirements.
- 6.8 Individuals should plan any study leave with their Line Manager in advance to enable cover to be arranged, where possible within the Force 12.5% abstraction rate guidance.

7. Research Requirements & Intellectual Property Rights

- 7.1 All research projects (unless not practicable), assignments and dissertations should link to organisational objectives and be directed by the EBP Board.
- 7.2 Individuals will be expected, during the course of their studies, or immediately afterwards, to give a presentation or written report on key elements of their course to a selected panel from Merseyside Police.
- 7.3 Individuals are expected to make available any dissertation or published work that is a result of their studies to Merseyside Police for internal use, with due cognisance being paid to the management of sensitive force data. The work will be submitted to and retained by the Force Knowledge repository (under development).
- 7.4 The intellectual property rights of the work for publication purposes will still remain with the individual. Anything that is being considered for publication must be reviewed by EBP Board prior to publication. All research conducted through universities must also adhere to the bespoke Information Sharing agreement and university ethical agreements.

8. Graduation / Award Ceremonies

- 8.1 Attendance at such events is expected by all successful individuals.
- 8.2 Attendance at such events will be classed as duty time / working time and will be protected. This will be for a maximum of 1 day in duration.
- 8.3 Subject to the awarding organisation requirements and depending upon the role that the individual currently holds, the attendance dress code will be either dress uniform or business dress with cap and gown. Students should check with the Academy as to what their dress code requirement is. Cap and gown requirements are to be funded by the student.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Process Flow Map

