Policing in Scotland: the role of higher education in supporting police officer development and partnership work

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Outline

- Why look at police learning and development?
- What skills and knowledge are important within the policing context?
- Higher Education, Professionalization and the Police
- What do we think we know?
- My Project
  - Research Aims & Questions
  - Methodology
- Conclusions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field training during education</th>
<th>Field training during education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 years probation after training</td>
<td>2 years probation after training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of in-school training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years (at police university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years (at University)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total length of programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
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<td>3 Years</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No (possible SCQF7 modern Apprenticeship in future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree in Public Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Police Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma option to get a Bachelor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question:**
How do police officers assess their engagement with internal and external training and education opportunities in relation to rank, years of experience and educational background?
What skills and knowledge are important within the policing context?

Research Question:
What are police partner professions perspectives on their own learning opportunities and the role of education and learning in police officer development and partnership work?
Why growth in higher education within police training?

Graduate Attributes in Scottish Higher Education (Hounsell, 2011)

Scottish Police Officer Attributes (Police Scotland, 2019)

Attributes of a Profession (Green & Gates, 2014)

Research Question:
How do policing students understand the role of education in police officer development in Scotland?

Graduate Attributes in Scottish Higher Education (Hounsell, 2011)

Attributes of a Profession (Green & Gates, 2014)

Community Focus & Global Citizenship

Higher Education

Socialization into the profession, 'exclusive' membership

Research Question:
How do policing students understand the role of education in police officer development in Scotland?

Communication Skills

Problem-solving skills

Team working skills

Emotional Resilience

Continuous Professional Development & Lifelong Learning

Personal and Professional Autonomy

Code of ethics & ethical, social and professional understanding

Body of knowledge & research, scholarship and enquiry
## Police – Science Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces complexity</td>
<td>Introduces complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on hierarchical thinking</td>
<td>Trying to irritate hierarchical structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactionary</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term planning</td>
<td>Long term planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little systematic evaluation</td>
<td>Constant systematic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices often implemented with little evidence</td>
<td>Practices based on clear evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill type training</td>
<td>Andragogy and innovative learning approaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Police & Higher Education partnerships: new pathways?!

- Not new – so what needs change to make them meaningful?
- Not a priority
- Luxury not essential
- Magnifying glass
- Need to learn from police research
  - find shared language
  - Shared spaces, terminologies
- Complacency: the death of progress
- “the shared culture, the shared space is worth it” (Bartkowiak-Theron, 2018)
Aim:
Critically assess the role of education in the training and development of police officers in Scotland

1. How do police officers view their engagement with internal and external education and training opportunities in relation to rank, years of service and educational background?

2. In what way does Police Scotland see themselves as a professional learning organisation and how are possible changes to police education and their impact understood by police officers?

3. What are police partner professions' perspectives on the role of education within Police Scotland, police officer development and partnership work?

4. How do policing students understand the role of education in police officer development?
Conclusions

- Police education needs to adapt to modern approaches to learning and teaching
- Higher Education might not be the answer to all police problems but could support

Questions left to be answered

- Does Police Scotland have a realistic understanding of where they are now and how innovative and relevant their training is?
- How can we ensure that education and learning is happening from the bottom-up and top-down to ensure that not only leadership positions benefit from further engagement with learning?
- How can we make police learning, training and education a priority for Police Scotland, the government and other key stakeholders?
Questions?

If you’re a professional working with the police or a Scottish Police Officer and want to be part of this study, please get in touch.

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References