



## **Module Specification**

# Ethical Policing: Conduct, Challenges, Consequences

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## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Ethical Policing: Conduct, Challenges, Consequences

**Module code:** UZSYG9-15-3

**Level:** Level 6

**For implementation from:** 2024-25

**UWE credit rating:** 15

**ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

**College:** College of Health, Science & Society

**School:** CHSS School of Social Sciences

**Partner institutions:** None

**Field:** Sociology and Criminology

**Module type:** Module

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Excluded combinations:** None

**Co-requisites:** None

**Continuing professional development:** No

**Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements:** None

## Part 2: Description

**Overview:** Organised around a range of real-life case studies, this module allows learners to delve into the ethics at the heart of policing practice and the challenges arising from misconduct at an organisational and societal level.

**Features:** Not applicable

**Educational aims:** This module provides learners with opportunities to review examples of high-profile critical and major incidents for the purpose of establishing

best policing practice and reflecting on the lessons learnt from these incidents. The module explores the effects of joint interoperability in future similar incidents and places emphasis on emotional intelligence, the values, ethics, and norms within diverse communities, and identifying potential barriers experienced by individuals, based on personal characteristics to include language barriers, physical, psychological, and physiological barriers, and knowledge of UK law.

The module promotes critical evaluation on how multicultural differences may affect interaction between individuals, groups, organisations, and the effect of multiculturalism on police ethics and values., and details how to apply professional approaches to policing, demonstrating fairness, ethics, and integrity by explaining the roles and responsibilities of those charged with ensuring the police deliver an unbiased, ethical, and fair service while distinguishing the balance of maintaining the law versus supporting the public.

By defining the terms 'letter of the law', and 'essence of the law' the module illustrates how these apply within the public interest, criminalisation, and how ethical decisions such as the justification and application of discretion, can conflict with standard operating procedures, policies and procedures, accepted practice, performance standards and legislation. The module provides learners with the basis to debate how adopting a professional approach that values inclusivity and diversity with the organisation, community, and wider society, along with the application of professional judgement can influence public perceptions of policing.

The module examines instances where law enforcement personnel have misused their position of authority and police powers to commit sexual offences through study of Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) reports. Focusing on the psychology of an offender's use of position of authority to commit sexual offences will illustrate and explain why the police developed policies and procedures to reduce the possibility of professional malpractice and increase community confidence and are detailed in reports regarding thematic inspections into police force integrity. Independent bodies such as the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) play an important role in holding the police accountable to the public and the module

highlights when the IOPC/HMICFRS would act as the lead investigative body, including post-incident management, critically analysing the advantages and disadvantages of an independent investigating body, and relate the investigation process in comparative professional contexts.

Examining why people in positions of respect, power or authority may commit criminal offences by failing to comply with policies, procedures, protocols or legislation, will provide a basis to review how instances of misconduct/malpractice can influence future professional policing, understand the impact of police misconduct hearings being held in public, and evaluate lessons learnt from past instances of misconduct/malpractice. The module acknowledges the progress being made within the police service to improve professional standards through the identification of organisational factors that have contributed to inappropriate behaviour/negative case outcomes and provides learners with a platform to debate the perceptions of the police service as having a 'blame culture' including strategies for mitigation. The module employs several real-life case-studies and offers learners with opportunities to critically review policing incidents in which ethical considerations have been crucial to the decision-making process and judging the rationale and justification of those decisions in the context of judicial reviews.

**Outline syllabus: Cop Curriculum:**

Valuing Diversity and Inclusion:

4 Critically evaluate the impact upon policing of differing values, ethics and norms within diverse communities

4.1 Values, ethics and norms within diverse communities

4.2 Potential barriers experienced by individuals, based upon personal characteristics, including:

- Language barriers
- Physical, psychological and physiological barriers
- Knowledge of UK law

4.3 How multi-cultural differences may affect interaction between individuals, groups and organisations

4.4 Effect of multi-culturism on police ethics and values

4.5 Working with diverse communities

5 Explain how to apply professional approaches to policing, demonstrating fairness, ethics and integrity

5.1 Roles and responsibilities of those charged with ensuring the police deliver an unbiased, ethical and fair service, including exploration of:

- Racial profiling and its impacts
- Challenging racism within policies, structures, and organisational culture
- Accountability for failings, learning the lessons and restoring public confidence

5.2 Maintaining the law versus supporting the public

5.3 Maintaining and increasing internal and external confidence, perceptions and experience of a fair and unbiased police service

5.4 Interpretation of the law:

- Letter of the law
- Essence of the law

5.5 Public interest and criminalisation

5.6 How ethical decisions (e.g. the application of discretion) can conflict with standard operating procedures, policies and procedures, accepted practice, performance standards and legislation

5.7 Justifying the application of discretion

5.8 Adopting a professional approach that values inclusivity and diversity (within the organisation, community and wider society)

5.9 How police actions and activities can influence public perceptions of policing, including exploration of:

- Differences in members of the public's experience
- The public confidence gap
- Disproportionality and inequalities in policing

Maintaining Professional Standards:

3 Explain the professional standards to be maintained as a member of the police service

3.1 The level of professional standards required in both professional and personal

life

3.2 Areas where professional standards may impact upon personal life:

- Use of social media, including considerations arising from Case Law in Scotland: B C and Others v Chief Constable of Police Service Scotland
- Use of own digital products to record photographs e.g. smartphones
- Friending anonymously on social media for investigation purposes
- Personal life influences e.g. appropriate personal relationships; financial stability
- Abuse of position/'integrity agenda'
- Corruption threats

3.3 Importance of transparency in policing, including candour/being candid when things have gone wrong

3.4 Potential impact of policing targets on professional standards

3.5 Potential consequences of failing to comply with strict professional standards e.g. Police Barred List

3.6 Difference between 'reflective practice' and 'reflective practice review process' and when to apply, including:

- Practice Requiring Improvement (PRI)
- Reflective Practice Review Process (RPRP)

4 Analyse how the police have developed policies and procedures to reduce the possibility of professional malpractice and increase community confidence

4.1 Reports detailing the thematic inspections into police force integrity:

- 'Without Fear or Favour' (2011)
- IOPC/IPCC reports

5 Explain the process for dealing with external complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction against members of the service

5.1 Role of the Independent Office for Police Conduct

5.2 Recording evidence

5.3 Dealing with public complaints effectively

5.4 Instances when informal/service recovery, otherwise than by investigation (OTBI) or investigation of a public complaint is appropriate

5.5 Appropriate guidance relating to the complaint:

- IOPC Statutory Guidance
- Police Reform Act (2002)
- Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations (2020)

6 Analyse the role that independent bodies such as the IOPC or HMICFRS play in holding the police accountable to the public

6.1 Instances when IOPC/HMICFRS would act as the lead investigative body, including post-incident management

6.2 Advantages and disadvantages of an independent investigating body

6.3 Investigation processes in comparative professional contexts

7 Examine why people in positions of respect or authority may fail to comply with policies, procedures, protocols or legislation, and commit criminal offences

7.1 Reasons why people in positions of respect or authority might act unprofessionally

7.2 Case studies: abuse of power/authority

8 Review how previous instances of misconduct/malpractice can influence future professional policing

8.1 Impact of police misconduct hearings being heard in public

8.2 Lessons learnt from past instances of misconduct/malpractice

9 Review the progress being made within the police service to improve professional standards

9.1 Organisational factors that have contributed to inappropriate behaviour/negative case outcomes

9.2 Perceptions of the police service as having a 'blame culture'

- Strategies for mitigation

9.3 Reviewing improvement to the professional standards of the policing profession

Evidence-based Policing:

5 Identify potential sources of evidence that can be used as part of an evidence-based policing approach

5.1 Sources of research and evidence (and support) for evidence-based policing:

- College of Policing (What Works Centre, Knowledge Hub (formerly POLKA), National Police library, global policing database)

- Other police forces
- HMICFRS

- Campbell Collaboration
- Academic sources and journals
- Government (ONS, Home Office)
- Alliance for Useful Evidence/NESTA
- Society of Evidence-Based Policing
- Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (US)
- Center for Problem-Oriented Policing (US)

#### Decision-making and Discretion:

11 Critically review policing incidents in which ethical considerations have been crucial to the decision-making process

11.1 Review of relevant policing incidents where critical ethical decisions were made

11.2 Rationale behind decisions

11.3 Justification of decisions in the context of judicial reviews

#### Response Policing:

11 Review examples of high-profile critical and major incidents to establish best policing practice

11.1 High profile examples of critical and major incidents

11.2 Lessons learned from these incidents

11.3 How this affects joint interoperability in future similar incidents

11.4 Use of emotional intelligence

### **Part 3: Teaching and learning methods**

**Teaching and learning methods:** The module will employ a combination of lectures, seminars, and workshops. Our pedagogy is interactive, discussion-based, and student-facing. Students are an active part of the learning process, and will be asked to contribute ideas, questions, and critical standpoints. The learning



environment is designed to promote peer-to-peer support and exchange.

While teaching and learning will be predominantly classroom based, appropriate use will be made of online resources and learning environments.

**Module Learning outcomes:** On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

**MO1** Critically evaluate multi-cultural differences and how they might affect interaction between individuals, groups, and the police.

**MO2** Analyse a range of high-profile critical and major investigations, the effects of multiculturalism on police ethics and values, and the lessons learned from these incidents.

**MO3** Critically examine instances where law enforcement personnel have misused their position of authority and police powers to commit offences.

**MO4** Ascertain why people in positions of respect and authority may fail to comply with policies, procedures, protocols, or legislation, and commit criminal offences.

**MO5** Critically review relevant policing incidents where critical ethical decisions were made and the rationale behind the decisions made.

**Hours to be allocated:** 150

**Contact hours:**

Independent study/self-guided study = 112.5 hours

Lectorials = 37.5 hours

Total = 150

**Reading list:** The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsyg9-15-3) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsyg9-15-3>

## Part 4: Assessment

**Assessment strategy:** Summative assessment for this module will be a written report.

2000-word review of an IPCC Investigation.

Building on the real-life cases studies provided throughout the module, this assessment will focus on a real case that was subject to an IPCC investigation where the code of conduct has not been upheld. Learners will be supported to identify and analyse that case in line with the module learning outcomes and produce a report that tests learners' academic research and writing abilities, and highlights the lessons learned from the case study by providing recommendations for future improvement.

Formative assessment of learning will be provided during scheduled teaching activities through quizzes, taking part in discussions, debates and questions and answers during taught sessions. Additional formative support will be provided in study skills workshops on research, literature reviews, creation of abstracts, referencing, and utilising the services of the UWE Library.

**Assessment tasks:**

**Report (First Sit)**

Description: 2000-word review of an IPCC Investigation.

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

**Report (Resit)**

Description: 2000-word review of an IPCC Investigation

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

## **Part 5: Contributes towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Professional Policing [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Applied Criminal Justice {Top Up} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2024-25