

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Professional Ethics in Policing

**Unit code:** F0EF 35

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to enable candidates to recognise and respond to ethical dilemmas which they could face in a police environment in a manner which is consistent with ethical principles and with current standards and regulations.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Recognise ethical dilemmas
- 2 Analyse possible responses to an ethical dilemma in a policing environment
- 3 Evaluate action taken in response to an ethical dilemma in a policing environment

**Credit points and level:** 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8\*).

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Candidates should have a good working knowledge of general procedures gained through experience of working in a police environment. They should be aiming towards a promoted police post within the police service. Candidates should have good communication and analytical skills which could be demonstrated by successful completion of units Contemporary Policing, Criminal Justice System in Scotland and Professional Knowledge in Policing.

**Core Skills:** There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Problem Solving and Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

**Assessment:** This Unit can be assessed holistically by means of a report based on a case study or case studies. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate that they can recognise ethical dilemmas which those working in a police environment may face and apply their knowledge and understanding to select and evaluate a suitable course of action or actions to the dilemmas. The report could be supplemented by oral questions to ensure all aspects of the evidence requirements are fully met.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Professional Ethics in Policing

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Recognise ethical dilemmas

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Ethics and morals
- ◆ Principles of ethics
- ◆ Theories of ethics
- ◆ Relationship between justice, law and morality
- ◆ Types of ethical dilemmas — personal, professional, moral

### **Outcome 2**

Analyse possible responses to an ethical dilemma in a policing environment

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) Code of Ethical Practice
- ◆ Diversity
- ◆ Ethical decision making
- ◆ Ethical leaders
- ◆ Responsibility of managers

### **Outcome 3**

Evaluate action taken in response to an ethical dilemma in a policing environment

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Public trust and probity
- ◆ Police discretion
- ◆ Police corruption

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Professional Ethics in Policing

### **Evidence Requirements for the Unit**

Candidates must provide evidence which draws on knowledge and skills items from all three Outcomes to show that they can:

- ◆ recognise the existence of an ethical dilemma in a context relevant to those working in a policing environment
- ◆ give reasons to explain what an ethical dilemma is and why it may be significant for those working in a policing environment
- ◆ analyse an ethical dilemma in a police environment by comparing different ethical approaches and take account of moral and ethical principles and current police guidance
- ◆ evaluate a course of action taken in response to an ethical dilemma in a policing environment with reference to its impact on public trust and probity, its impact on the operations of the police and the extent to which it is consistent with moral and ethical principles and current police guidance

Evidence must be provided by responses to questions based on a case study or case studies of routine and non-routine ethical dilemmas of a type that would be faced by those working in a police environment. Candidates must obtain a mark of 50%, or more for their responses to the questions.

### **Assessment guidelines for the Unit**

Assessment for this Unit can be undertaken holistically using a case study assessment. The case studies can relate to a personal or a vocational scenario which covers routine and non-routine contexts. They could be presented in video format. It may be possible in some cases for candidates to make use of material based on actual police experience, including situations in which they have been directly or indirectly involved.

Candidates can present their evidence in the form of a report in which case it should be about 3,000 words long. It could be completed in their own time or during time allocated for the purpose during an integrated development session. The report could be supplemented by oral questions to ensure all aspects of the evidence requirements are fully met.

## Administrative Information

**Unit code:** F0EF 35  
**Unit title:** Professional Ethics in Policing  
**Superclass category:** DE  
**Original date of publication:** August 2006  
**Version:** 01

### History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

**Source:** SQA

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Professional Ethics in Policing

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 80 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

This Unit is intended for police officers who are seeking promotion in the police service in Scotland. Candidates will normally be following a recognised training and development programme such as that developed by the Scottish Police Service.

The Unit is one of two units which make up Module 2 of the Professional Development Award: Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management. The other is Decision Making and both are concerned with enabling those aspiring to promotion with the police service to manage dilemmas which they will face in a police environment.

The Unit is designed to improve the ability of candidates to respond to the ethical dilemmas which they could face as first line managers in the police service. It is predominantly an applied Unit and the focus is on the action that first line managers in a policing environment could take. Ethics is a critical aspect of police work. Abuses of the trust placed in a police officer can collectively damage the image of the police service. The Unit enables candidates to recognise ethical dilemmas which arise in a policing environment and to analyse possible ways of responding to them. It also enables candidates to evaluate actions taken in response to ethical dilemmas and in this way develop their own good practice. The ethical dilemmas cover both routine and non-routine contexts.

The following notes give some additional information on each Outcome. Throughout, the Unit should relate to legislation and practice, current at the time the unit is delivered.

#### **Outcome 1**

Ethics and morals

Principles of ethics: personal; organisational — police organisations, partner organisations; operational

Theories of ethics: ethical formalism; utilitarianism; virtue; care; absolute, consequentialist and pragmatist approaches

Relationship between justice, law and morality

Types of ethical dilemmas — personal, professional, moral

#### **Outcome 2**

ACPOS Code of Practice: ethical principles of — integrity, transparency, accountability, responsibility, impartiality; application of ethical principles to police practice

Other Codes of Ethical Practice — Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary (HMIC) 1999a Police Integrity, European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) etc

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title: Professional Ethics in Policing**

Major operations and enquiries the outcomes of which have led to changes in police practice and procedures which have moral/ethical links eg McPherson (Stephen Lawrence), Bichard, Operation Lancet, Dunblane etc

Diversity: disability; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity or reassignment; marital status; family status; age; racial group; religion; social class

Ethical decision making; standards and regulations; professional standards; police misconduct and efficiency regulations

Ethical leaders: standardised behaviour and practice; professionalism; honesty; integrity; trust; respect

Responsibility of managers: setting standards; providing direction and guidance; being transparent, open and ethical

### **Outcome 3**

This is a wide ranging Outcome which requires candidates to apply the principles and concepts from the first two Outcomes to evaluating an action taken in response to an ethical dilemma. Ideally, it should be based on current situations which will be meaningful to candidates.

Current newspaper and magazine articles may also contain useful examples which can be used for this Outcome.

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

This Unit can be delivered on a stand-alone basis or as part of a development programme for police officers seeking promotion.

Delivery of this Unit will involve ensuring that candidates do acquire the relevant underpinning knowledge in order that they can apply relevant principles, standards, codes of conduct and other guidance to the kind of ethical dilemmas they may face as holders of promoted posts within the police service. In this respect the Unit is ideally suited to distance learning particularly if this includes self-assessment tasks and opportunities for formative assessment. The Unit is about responding to ethical dilemmas and candidates will also need practice in applying the principles to ethical dilemmas. Candidates can be given short case studies or examples to help them to recognise ethical dilemmas and to decide on suitable actions in response to them. These case studies could form the basis of assignments which could act as formative assessments. Candidates could also make use of their own experience and consider ethical dilemmas which they have faced or of which they are aware. These, too, could form the basis of formative assessment. Candidates could, for example, write a brief report on an ethical dilemma known to them. The report could include possible ways by which action taken could be justified and an evaluation of the action.

This type of approach should help to prepare candidates for the final summative assessment for which they will be required to respond to a case study or case studies. In particular, the formative assessment referred to above is likely to assist candidates to develop the skills and ability to consider and evaluate action taken in response to ethical problems.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Professional Ethics in Policing

Delivery and assessment of this Unit should take account of the fact that it covers areas which can be difficult and challenging for candidates, who may be forced to confront fundamental attitudes and beliefs. The subject matter is politically and socially sensitive as well as susceptible to change which, at times, can be rapid. Candidates will need to be aware that the consequences of actions may be far-reaching and not always readily predictable.

#### ***Opportunities for developing Core Skills***

As candidates identify and analyse the essential components of ethical dilemmas which may arise in a policing context they will define criteria against which variables will be considered. They will determine the relative significance of each criterion before selecting, describing and evaluating the potential effects of a range of actions and approaches on police operations and public perceptions. This will provide opportunities to develop elements of critical thinking and general problem solving skills to an advanced level. Exemplifying, analysing and evaluating proposals which are consistent with moral and ethical principles and current police guidance will be a critical aspect of knowledge and understanding.

The Unit will develop skills in accessing and evaluating complex information on ethical issues arising in current practice within a policing environment. Candidates could identify and apply knowledge from a range of sources including text books, news archives, Internet sites and oral testimony. As different ethical approaches to dilemmas are analysed potential and actual outcomes would be examined.

Communication skills are not discretely assessed but candidates should be advised on the need to present accurate, analytical written responses which reach coherent and concise conclusions. Spelling, punctuation and terminology used should be accurate.

### **Open learning**

This Unit is particularly suitable for Open Learning as candidates should be able to acquire the relevant knowledge by working through the distance learning material which will be available for this unit. Appropriate arrangements would need to be made for assessment and quality assurance. For information on this, please refer to the SQA document *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning*, which is available on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

### **Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title: Professional Ethics in Policing**

This Unit forms part of Module 2 of the Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management which is a Professional Development Award accredited by SQA. It has been designed to offer developmental opportunities for police officers who aspire to promoted posts.

The Unit enables you to consider how you should respond to ethical dilemmas of the type that you could face in promoted posts in the police service in Scotland. It aims to enable you to recognise ethical dilemmas, to analyse possible responses to them and the consequences of these responses. You will also be expected to evaluate courses of action taken in responses to ethical dilemmas. The Unit gives the underpinning knowledge of ethical and moral principles as well as relevant police standards and other guidelines and you will have to apply this knowledge to the resolution of ethical dilemmas.

Acting in a professionally ethical manner is a crucial part of the work of members of the police service. This Unit will help you to deal with dilemmas which can be difficult and where actions taken can have repercussions for the work of the police service as a whole. However, the successful resolution of these dilemmas is vital to successful and effective police work. First line managers can make a significant contribution to this and have a responsibility to ensure that others behave in an ethical manner.

You will be given support material to help you work on this Unit on your own. It will give you the background knowledge and understanding that you need but will also involve you in reviewing your own experience and looking at case studies of ethical dilemmas. This will help you to develop the skills of decision making and evaluation which you will need for the assessment.

The assessment for the Unit is based on case study material which will cover routine and non-routine policing contexts. You will be given questions on the material and asked to provide a report which tests your ability to recognise and analyse ethical dilemmas and to evaluate actions taken in response to them. Your report should be about 3,000 words long and you will be expected to achieve a mark of 50%, or more.

You will have succeeded in meeting all the requirements of this Unit if you pass this assessment.