

Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire New University PCDA/DHEP pre-join reading guide

Firstly congratulations to you on securing a place on a Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire New University policing course.

Your course, whether that be PCDA or DHEP, will have a strong practical focus reflecting the practical nature of your chosen career. That said there will also be an important academic element, and one that you must embrace and be successful at if you are to succeed.

This reading guide is designed to help those who are new to the police environment and/or higher education to lay some useful academic foundations before your course starts. It is not a compulsory activity, indeed it is entirely optional, but if you choose to work through the following guide it will give you confidence that you are well prepared to start your studies.

Possibly the most important thing you can do before you start is appreciate what we mean by 'policing', and specifically to understand what we refer to as 'public policing'; the uniformed service you are joining. You will, no doubt, have heard the phrase 'policing by consent'. This concept characterises our collective consciousness and understanding the principles that underpin this idea is important. This Government website summarises these principles:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent/definition-of-policing-by-consent>

The history of policing in the UK is long and varied and has influenced other policing systems across the world. This history will be discussed on your course but having a basic grasp of the evolution of the modern policing function will be useful to you. You should conduct an online search for the origins and history of UK policing and access a selection of the resulting websites. You will notice that there are some common themes across these sources, such as the influence of Sir Robert Peel on the modern policing function, but you will also notice how the original and indeed contemporary purpose of the police is contested.

The tensions and controversies that have characterised, and continue to characterise, policing cannot be ignored as they have had a considerable influence over the shape and nature of today's police service. An appreciation of some of these tensions and controversies will help you to contextualise elements of your training and time spent researching this online would be of benefit to you. Do not ignore or dismiss article or comment that is critical of the police; it is part of the varied palette of attitudes toward policing that you will undoubtedly encounter in the future.

The course you will be undertaking is underpinned by the concept and practice of Evidence Based Policing (EBP) a policing style that, at least in part, is a response to the tensions and controversies you have already looked at. To understand what this means you should read a basic introduction to the concept of EBP such as that published online by the College of Policing:

<https://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Pages/What-is-EBP.aspx>

Having done this you can begin to familiarise yourself with academic writing concerning EBP by accessing and browsing articles published in the Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing:

<https://www.springer.com/journal/41887>

There is no need to spend time dissecting or attempting to fully understand individual articles, rather you should aim to understand the breadth of subject matter and research techniques and to begin to appreciate the writing style that characterising academic writing.

It is not necessary to go further in this subject, as we will be spending a significant proportion of the course looking at and practicing EBP, but should you wish to read in more depth you might find this book useful:

Lum, C. and Koper, C. (2017) *Evidence Based Policing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

You will have noticed that the details of the book given above is in a very specific format. This is called the Harvard referencing style, which is the system you will be using in all of your academic written work on the course. The definitive guide to this system, at least so far as the University is concerned, is the following book:

Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2019) *Cite them right*. 11th edn. London: Red Globe Press.

You will not necessarily need to purchase a copy of this book because you will have access to an online version. That said some students prefer to work using the printed version and if this is you may wish to acquire a copy. Whether you prefer online or printed format ahead of joining the course it would be advantageous to familiarise yourself with the general principles of referencing and specifically the Harvard system.

Referencing is just one of the many academic skills you will be developing throughout your course of study. These skills are wide-ranging, from time-management to critical thinking through to assignment writing and presentation skills. If you are one of the many to whom studying and writing does not come naturally, or if it has been some time since you were last engaged in formal study, you need not be concerned. You will get plenty of support in developing these skills but if you want to give yourself a head start you may wish to look at these two books and acquire copies if you think they may be useful to you.

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The study skills handbook*. 5th edn. London: Red Globe Press.

Day, T. (2018) *Success in academic writing*. 2nd edn. London: Palgrave.

In any additional spare time you might have you might usefully develop an ongoing relationship with news and social media output relating to policing. Policing is a very dynamic and rapidly changing subject and an understanding of trends that are dominating the news and social comment will undoubtedly help you to relate your studies to the 'real world' of policing.

Enjoy your reading and we look forward to you reaping the benefits of your preparation when we meet in the classroom.