

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/7b

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

13 March 2019

Agenda Item 11.2

INSTITUTIONAL RE-APPROVAL: NORTHERN IRELAND POLICE COLLEGE
(NIPC)

COVER SHEET

To receive the report for the Institutional Re-approval of NIPC and to endorse the recommendation for continuing approval.

INSTITUTIONAL RE-APPROVAL: NORTHERN IRELAND POLICE COLLEGE**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Northern Ireland Police College (NIPC) submitted an IA2 Form on 14 August 2018 requesting institutional re-approval from Ulster University. An initial assessment by Quality Enhancement (QE) recommended that the NIPC be deemed 'low risk'. This recommendation was endorsed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) resulting in a desk-based review undertaken by QE, supported by the Faculty Partnership Manager (FPM) and the subject expert.

A detailed Institutional Re-Approval Document (IRD) with supporting documentation was provided by the NIPC and the Faculty. This report details the findings of the review.

2. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) came into force on 4 November 2001. The first PSNI-trained officers took up duty in April 2002.

For operational purposes Northern Ireland is divided into three Areas and eleven Districts to mirror local Council boundaries. The PSNI is divided into ten Departments:

- Corporate Communications
- Crime Operations
- Corporate Governance
- Discipline and Anti-Corruption Branch
- District Policing Command
- Finance and Support Services
- Human Resources
- Legacy and Justice Department
- Legal Services
- Operational Support

The NIPC falls within the remit of the Operational Support Department.

3. SCOPE OF ACTIVITY

In 2014 the PSNI and Ulster University commenced a new contract to deliver the Advanced Diploma in Policing for student officers. Between 2014 and now a further three Advanced Diplomas have been accredited in partnership between PSNI and Ulster University:

- i) Advanced Diploma in Policing (108 students) - (Garnerville)
- ii) Advanced Diploma in Professional Teaching (45 students) – (Garnerville)
- iii) Advanced Diploma in Intelligence Policing (24 students) – (Lisnasharragh)
- iv) Advanced Diploma in Intelligence Management (39 students) – (Lisnasharragh)

The NIPC also works with a number of other external organisations in order to deliver its Business Plan, including the College of Policing, the Chartered Management Institute, the Institute of Leadership and Management and the Department of Health and Social Care.

4. PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

The strategic purpose of the Northern Ireland Police College is to develop and inspire resourceful and flexible police officers and police staff who:

- Consistently demonstrate Policing with the Community behaviours
- Are accountable, keeping people safe by preventing harm, protecting the vulnerable and detecting offenders whilst upholding human rights and treating all with fairness, courtesy and respect
- Are collaborative, dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of communities in Northern Ireland.

This is delivered through key training principles:

- Training will be developmental, accountable and supportive to maximise the potential of every officer and staff member
- Training will be operationally and functionally aligned, providing recipients with the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills to fulfil their potential
- Training will develop confident decision makers who innovatively solve problems and build sustainable partnerships
- Leadership skills will be specifically developed and refreshed within the training environment
- High standards and an ethos of continuous improvement will be embedded within the training culture.

5. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The Senior Management Team within the College consists of the Head of Training and Development, the Head of Operational Programmes, Grade 7 Learning Support and leads for specific training areas.

The Chief Constable is supported by the Service Executive Team comprising a Deputy Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Constables and senior staff from each Department.

The NIPC is integrated into the PSNI governance framework which is underpinned by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum issued by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB), which is a non-departmental public body and separate from the PSNI, scrutinises the work of the PSNI (including the NIPC) through its Board and Committee structure. It provides a governance statement to the DOJ.

The Governance structures within the NIPC include:

- Weekly Pacesetter Meeting
- Monthly Senior Management Team Meeting
- Monthly Demand and Delivery Meeting
- Monthly External Training Budget Meeting
- Monthly Overtime Management Meeting
- Quarterly College Quality Assurance Meeting
- Annual Section 78 ACC Accountability Meeting
- External Institution and Course Accreditation and Review Meetings

6. STANDARDS MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The NIPC has in place a Performance Management Framework (PMF) to ensure that academic standards are maintained and students have a high quality learning experience. The Framework comprises six key themes, namely:

- Strategic Planning and Commissioning
- Design
- Delivery
- Assessment
- Evaluation and Performance Outcomes
- Governance

Each training specialism within the College has its own specialist Quality Assurance Operating Manual based on the Training and Development Cycle agreed in the Police Service Quality Assurance Scheme Handbook 2015. The quality processes within the Manual ensure the continuous improvement and oversight of course structures, content delivery and assessment. The College provided the Quality Assurance Manual for the Advanced Diploma in Policing with their IRD.

The Performance Audit and Assessment (PAA) Unit within the Police College is responsible for ensuring that academic standards are met and that quality assurance processes are being followed. This Unit undertakes annual quality assurance audits.

The External Examiners on the programmes approved by Ulster University confirm that academic standards are being met. They comment on the good blend of HE practice and a traditional training environment. Students speak positively about staff dedication and the high level of support they get on the programme.

The NIPC engages fully in the University's annual course review process. The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is completed by the Course Team and the

Institutional Overview Report is completed by the Head of College. No areas of concern have been identified and the course teams respond to issues identified. The University's subject expert from the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences confirms that he meets with the senior management team within the NIPC and that all quality assurance processes within the Police College are working effectively.

The Faculty has no concerns with regard to academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement arrangements with the NIPC. There is a good working relationship between the subject expert and staff within the NIPC.

7. STUDENT SUPPORT

The NIPC has a Learning Support Department which provides support to the programmes approved by the University.

Students are admitted on to training programmes following a selection procedure for the role. For example to be admitted onto the Advanced Diploma in Policing students go through a selection process overseen by Deloitte and the Human Resources Department. For other specialist roles students go through an internal selection procedure overseen by the Human Resources Department. The PSNI comply with Equality of Opportunity and SENDO legislation.

Provision is made to facilitate any student who has Special Educational Needs. Students are asked to bring it to the attention of the Head of Specialism or the trainer if they have any special requirements, for example, reasonable adjustments.

In order to comply with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 Deloitte have put in place an Outreach Programme designed to recruit people from minority backgrounds. Images in recruitment publications have included people from minority groupings; advertisements and publications are sent to minority groups, posters are circulated for each campaign to representative organisations for ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland.

At the commencement of the course students receive joining instructions and a course handbook. The joining instructions include details of the course, tutors, dates, times, location, dress code, allowances and special requirements.

The Course Handbook provides the following:

- Course aim and learning outcomes
- Summary of module information
- Description of main teaching and learning methods
- Criteria for assessing and marking assessments
- Number of hours per module
- Reading lists and other resources
- Course regulations
- Attendance and extenuating circumstances
- Failures and appeals procedures

- Staff/Student Consultative Committee, the role of Ulster University and Associate Student status.

Each student has a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for their programme of study. The SPOC deals with any issues or questions about the training programme and any welfare or performance issues. Students are given the names and contact details of their SPOC at the induction.

Students are provided with support on study skills, referencing and academic writing at induction and throughout the programme.

The trainers meet regularly with student representatives as part of the Staff/Student Consultative Committee. This is the principle mechanism to get feedback from the students in relation to the programme and to address any issues that arise.

At the end of the Training Programme students give feedback on the training programme by completing an Evaluation Questionnaire. Generally the following key areas are evaluated and the feedback is used to develop the training programme:

1. Content of training programme
2. Confidence to conduct key police duties
3. Methods of delivery
4. Methods of assessment
5. Training delivery

The Course Handbook outlines the regulations and procedures in relation to discipline, appeals and complaints. These regulations and procedures are covered as part of the Induction Programme. In addition, students are made aware of the appeals procedure in relation to examinations and assessments. At the commencement of the training programme students sign an assessment agreement to demonstrate their understanding of the assessment processes and appeals procedure.

The Faculty subject expert has confirmed that the student support mechanisms in place within the NIPC are appropriate and that the academic appeals and student complaints arrangements meet the requirements of the University.

8. RESOURCES

8.1 Human Resources

There are approximately two hundred full-time trainers who are required to successfully complete the minimum trainer qualification (Advanced Certificate/Diploma in Professional Teaching or equivalent specialism specific qualification) that has been established for their role before being confirmed in post.

The subject expert has confirmed that all trainers/lecturers on the programmes approved by Ulster are suitably qualified.

The work of the Police College is supported by the College Administration Unit which provides administration support to the course team. A Course Administration System (CAMPUS) assists in course planning, monitoring and review.

8.2 Physical Resources

Training within the Police College takes place across the following seven training centres

- Garnerville
- Steeple
- Lisnasharragh
- Ballykinlar
- Magilligan
- Maydown
- Enniskillen

There are a large number of general classrooms and IT classrooms across the training centres. Classrooms are reviewed regularly to take into account changing requirements. The layout, furniture, equipment and IT provision meet the needs of students and staff. All classroom rooms have a lite pro (to project computer presentations onto a screen), video and viewing screen fitted as standard. A range of other audio-visual services are available if required. Trainers and students also have access to a Lecture Theatre, Assembly Hall and Conference Rooms available for talks from visiting speakers and teaching staff when it is necessary to address large numbers of students.

There are a number of multipurpose rooms available for practical exercises and assessments. They are soundproofed and are equipped with close circuit television. The rooms represent rooms within typical houses such as living rooms and bedrooms. Additionally there is a monitor room where a trainer can view and record students' performance during exercises.

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) requirements within the PSNI are managed by Information and Communications Services (ICS). ICS have developed a strategy for ICT services called Digital Strategy to 2020 and Beyond. This strategy sets the direction of travel for the PSNI's plans to accelerate digitisations across the organisation and prioritise investments in technology.

Within the Police College there are a number of Interactive Learning Centres and classrooms which contain Multimedia PCs, all networked with printing facilities and access to the Internet, to facilitate student research and lesson presentations. All students within Garnerville will have access to wifi.

The Library is located in Garnerville Training Centre, Belfast and is accessible to all trainers and students. The Library is open continuously and it is staffed by a Librarian in a part-time basis.

In the event of the material not being available from the Police Library, referral will be made to the National Police College Library, Bramshill.

The subject expert has confirmed that Library and IT resources are sufficient to meet the needs of students.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The review of documentation provided by the NIPC, together with the Faculty and University's ongoing monitoring and review arrangements, continue to provide broad confidence in the ability of NIPC to fulfil the requirements of the Memorandum of Recognition.

Committee is asked to endorse the recommendation that the NIPC be approved as a collaborative partner of Ulster University for a further period of five years (2019/20 – 2023/24).