

Follow-up Review
Police Science
University of Akureyri
-Summary-

February 2023

Preface

This is the report of a commissioned follow-up review of Police Science at Akureyri University undertaken at the behest of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation and executed by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education.

Commissioned reviews are designed and executed by the Quality Board in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations. In executing these reviews, the Board maintains full independence in all phases of the review, from the selection and appointment of the experts to the responsibility for the final review report. The work is carried out based on Terms of Reference that are congruent with the Quality Board's "Principles and Values"¹ and emphasises an improvement-orientated and fitness-for-purpose approach. The expert Team works on the basis of evaluation guidelines that are anchored in this philosophy.

Further information on the activities of the Quality Board is available on the website of the Icelandic Quality Enhancement Framework (www.qef.is).

Dr Andrée Sursock

Chair

¹ <https://qef.is/about-us/principles-and-values/>

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Glossary and List of Abbreviations

Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Akureyri
Lota	Mandatory weeks which students are expected to spend in attendance at UNAK
PTPD	Centre for Police Training and Professional Development
QEF	Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education
QEF2	Second cycle of the Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education, scheduled for 2017-2022
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SU	Student Union
UNAK	University of Akureyri

Review Team

Prof. Dr Rachel Cragg, Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Digital, Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), England (Team chair)

Dr Kimmo Himberg, former Rector, Police University College, Tampere, Finland

Kolbrún Lára Kjartansdóttir, MEd candidate in Early Childhood Education, University of Iceland

Prof. Dr Karen Willis, Professor Emerita and former Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, University of Chester, England (Team secretary).

1. Executive Summary of Judgements

Following its consideration of the Status Report and associated evidence submitted by the University of Akureyri (UNAK), and the site visit to the institution from 21-22 November 2022, the Review Team commissioned by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education concluded that:

- The judgement from the March 2021 report that “Limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its award of Diploma in Police Science”, can be alleviated.

And

- The judgement from the March 2021 report that “Limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience for the Diploma in Police Science”, can be alleviated.

The Team therefore arrives at the following judgements:

- Confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its award for the Diploma in Police Science.

And

- Confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience for the Diploma in Police Science.

The Review Team noted considerable improvements and positive change in many areas. However, the Team was concerned about the slow pace of enacting some changes, as detailed in this report. For progress to be timely and effective, a formal mechanism or body which holds responsibility for the active oversight and monitoring of progress should be

quickly identified and established, with a degree of externality in the interest of the learner experience and the expectations of the police service and the Ministry of Justice.

2. Introduction to the review

2.1 Background to the review

This review was conducted according to agreed terms of reference in order to follow-up on progress on the recommendations and outcomes of a *Commissioned Review of the Police Science Programme at the University of Akureyri*. The University of Akureyri (UNAK) offers two 2-year 120 ECTS Diploma Programmes in Police Science, in partnership with the Police Training and Professional Development Centre (PTPD) in Reykjavik. One Diploma route is open to employed police officers and the other is designed for prospective police officers without this experience. Students who graduate from the Diploma Programmes can apply to a 1-year 'top-up' programme leading to a 180 ECTS BA Degree.

The initial review, conducted in autumn 2020, had been required by the then Ministry of Education, Science and Culture as part of the renewal process for the contract between it and the University of Akureyri (UNAK) for providing Police education in Iceland. The report was published in March 2021.

The main purpose of this follow-up review was to assess whether sufficient progress had been made on recommendations put forward in the March 2021 review to alleviate two limited confidence judgements outlined in the report. These judgements related to:

- the soundness of UNAK's present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its award of Diploma in Police Science
- the soundness of UNAK's present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience for the Diploma in Police Science.

2.2 The review process

This follow-up review of the Police Science programme was organised by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education, with specific guidelines developed for the expert Team. In preparation for the follow-up review, UNAK prepared a Status Report and Education Action Plan, responding to each of the recommendations made in the March 2021 review report.

The Status Report and Action Plan document was sent to the follow-up Review Team on 17 October 2022, with further supporting documents received 21-24 October. The Review Team visited UNAK on 21-22 November and held meetings with internal and external stakeholders, including students. Some participants attended meetings in person and others attended online.

The Review Team (hereinafter the Team) thanks the Rector, Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, and the staff and students of both UNAK and the Police Training and Professional Development Centre (PTPD), for their warm hospitality and for their open discussions, and is grateful to the National Police Commissioner, and to representatives of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, as key partners and stakeholders, for their valuable contributions. The Team would also like to thank Þorgerður Edda Hall, Senior Adviser, Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education, for liaising with the Institute over the organisation of arrangements for the visit.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Judgements

Following its consideration of the Status Report and associated evidence submitted by the University of Akureyri (UNAK), and the site visit to the institution from 21-22 November 2022, the Review Team commissioned by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education concluded that:

- The judgement from the March 2021 report that “Limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its award of Diploma in Police Science”, can be alleviated.

And

- The judgement from the March 2021 report that “Limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience for the Diploma in Police Science”, can be alleviated.

The Team has therefore arrived at the following judgements:

- Confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its award for the Diploma in Police Science.

And

- Confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK’s present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience for the Diploma in Police Science.

3.2 Summary of commendations and recommendations

The Team commends

- the significant progress made in improving communication, sharing of ideas and joint activities, including through the regular online meetings between the academic and practical teachers in the programme team;
- the central development of a systemic, evidence-based approach to annual monitoring of programmes, and strongly encourages the programme team to use this process immediately to drive decisions and actions on enhancement of the programme and the academic experience of its students; and
- the proposal on student feedback, and encourages the University to move forward on embedding a structured process for communicating with students on staff responses to their feedback.

The Team recommends that

- the programme team should
 - (a) structure programme team meetings and notes to ensure actions are identified and followed through to completion, possibly with joint co-chairs;
 - (b) prioritise the completion of work of teachers on sharing and collectively scrutinising content and learning outcomes of each Diploma course;
 - (c) determine collectively how best to act on the outcomes of this activity, together with the mapping of learning outcomes to ensure alignment with the profile of an Icelandic police officer, in order to deliver a more integrated programme which will help students make the necessary connections between their academic and practical preparation; and
 - (d) synchronise the delivery schedule to ensure all learners can participate fully in both the academic and the practical domains of learning.

- the agreement between UNAK and the National Commissioner of Police regarding the arrangements for the Police Science Diploma should be urgently reviewed and renewed, in order to maintain its currency and validity;
- both the Strategic Steering Group, and also the proposed Practitioners Group, be convened and terms of reference formally agreed for each without further delay;
- the programme team should escalate the momentum of its work to map the role profile to course content and learning outcomes, and to make these links explicit to students;
- UNAK and the PTPD staff should identify ways to ensure that students do not experience any timetable clashes which inevitably cause them to miss sessions;
- the programme team should evaluate the value and effectiveness of the UNAK Lota as it is currently implemented, with a view to redesigning the week-long programme in order to maximise from the learner's perspective the benefits of in-person attendance. The Team wishes to emphasise that social and teamwork skills are exceptionally important in the police profession and therefore the rare opportunities to focus on these during Lotas at UNAK should be efficiently utilized;
- UNAK, in cooperation with the PTPD, should promptly progress the design and delivery of a brief education programme for supervisors, to include making assessment judgements of a student's performance against the internship competency framework and role profile;
- UNAK and the programme team should identify ways of strengthening proactive oversight of each individual student's experience and engagement with the Police Science programme as an integrated whole, and of each and every student's progress through the overall programme;

Annex 1: Meeting Schedule

Monday 21 November

Time	Meeting	Attendees
08:30-09:00	Briefing with Rector	Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, Rector
09:05-10:00	Senior Management	Andrew Paul Hill, Programme director of Police Sciences Birgir Guðmundsson, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) and former head of Faculty of Social Sciences Elin Dianna Gunnarsdóttir, Pro rector and former Dean of SHSS Ólafur Örn Bragason, Director of Police Training and Professional Development and an assistant professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences
10:15-11:30	Weekly meeting group of UNAK and PTDP programme	Guðmundur Ásgeirsson, Superintendent Hildur Þuríður Rúnarsdóttir, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Logi Jes Kristjánsson, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Sverrir Guðfinnsson, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Inga María Warén Árnadóttir, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Hlynur Gíslason, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Leifur Gauti Sigurðsson, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Ólafur Örn Bragason Director of PTPD and an assistant professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences Heiðrún Ósk Ólafsdóttir, Study Line Administrator for Police Science Guðmundur Ævar Oddsson, Associate Professor Eyrún Eyþórsdóttir, Assistant Professor Bjarni Halldór Sigursteinsson, Adjunct Birgir Jónasson, Adjunct Hrannar Már Hafberg, Assistant Professor Andrew Paul Hill Programme director – Police Sciences
11:35-12:05	National Police Commissioner	Sigríður Björk Guðjónsdóttir, National Police Commissioner
12:50-14:00	Quality Management and Enhancement	Lísbet Hannesdóttir, Project manager of Quality and HR Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Director of Quality and HR
15:00-15:45	Academic staff	Sigurður Kristinsson, Professor Guðmundur Ævar Oddsson, Associate Professor Eyrún Eyþórsdóttir, Assistant Professor Bjarni Halldór Sigursteinsson, Adjunct Birgir Jónasson, Adjunct Hrannar Már Hafberg, Assistant Professor

16:00-16:45	Supervisors from the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD)	Guðmundur Ásgeirsson, Superintendent Hildur Þuríður Rúnarsdóttir, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Logi Jes Kristjánsson, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Sverrir Guðfinnsson, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Inga María Warén Árnadóttir, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Hlynur Gíslason, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector Leifur Gauti Sigurðsson, Police Trainer/Detective Chief Inspector
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Tuesday November 22

Time	Meeting	Attendees
08:00 - 8:45	Students in later stage of studies and recent graduates	Not disclosed. N=3
09:15-10:00	Follow-up with PTPD staff	Ólafur Örn Bragason, Director of PTPD and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences
10:15-11:00	Students who have recently started the programme	Not disclosed. N=3
11:15-12:15	Heads of Support Services	Dr. Auðbjörg Björnsdóttir, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning Pia Susanna Sigurlina Viinnikka, Library Árný Þóra Ármannsdóttir, Counselling service Bára Sif Sigurjónsdóttir, Registry Sólveig María Árnadóttir, Marketing
12:15-12:45	Police Student Union	Not disclosed. N=2
13:15-14:00	Representatives from Ministry of Justice and Ministry of HE, Science and Innovation	Not disclosed. N=3
14:00-14:45	Follow-up with UNAK staff	Andrew Paul Hill, Programme director of Police Sciences Heiðrún Ósk Ólafsdóttir, Study Line Administrator for Police Sciences Sigurður Kristinsson, Professor Guðmundur Ævar Oddsson, Associate Professor Eyrún Eyþórsdóttir, Assistant Professor Bjarni Halldór Sigursteinsson, Adjunct Birgir Jónasson, Adjunct Hrannar Már Hafberg, Assistant Professor

Annex 2: Review Terms of Reference

COMMISSIONED REVIEW OF POLICE EDUCATION AT UNAK: ALLEVIATION OF LIMITED CONFIDENCE

I. Scope of the review

The focus of the review will be an action plan presented by the University of Akureyri (UNAK) in response to a commissioned review² of Police Education provision conducted by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education, published in March 2021. The March 2021 review focused on a two-year police education diploma programme and concluded with limited confidence judgments in (a) standards of degrees and awards; and (b) quality of student learning experience. The current review will be conducted to determine if sufficient progress has been made on recommendations put forth in the March 2021 review to alleviate limited confidence.

II. Methodology of the review

The general approach of this review will respect the philosophy of the Quality Enhancement Framework, as spelled out in the in the 2017 version of the *Quality Enhancement Handbook for Icelandic Higher Education*³ (hereinafter, the 'QEF2 Handbook').

The review will be based on a Status Report and a site visit (described below). The status report, prepared by UNAK's Faculty of Social Sciences, will focus on progress made on action items arising from the recommendations listed in Section 6.3 of the review report for Police Science (March 2021). The recommendations are summarised below.

- The resourcing of the programme should be considered by both the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Justice, as well as UNAK.
- There should be more transparency at institutional level about the allocation of the financing for the programme.
- A formal agreement between UNAK and PTPD should be drafted and signed as soon as possible in order to clarify roles and expectations. Such an agreement is required by the contract between Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and UNAK.
- Structural cooperation is hampered by a complex environment of two ministries and two institutions: clear structures that enable communication and decision-making between ministries, between institutions and between ministry(ies) and institution(s) should be developed.
- There should be more integration of the programme in terms of its synchronisation of aims, workload and academic and professional training and learning outcomes; this

² <https://qef.is/assets/UNAK-Police-Studies-Review-Summary-For-Publication-26-3-2021.pdf>

³ <https://en.rannis.is/media/gaedarad/Final-for-publication-14-3-2017.pdf>. Since then the Handbook can be found at: <https://qef.is/assets/PDFs/Others/QEF2-Handbook-for-website.pdf>

should be communicated through the formal agreement between UNAK and PTPD and should be communicated to students.

- A clear communication strategy should be developed at institutional level to ensure that communication between support services and students is effective to ensure that students are aware of the services and that the services are able to provide accurate information.
- There should be discussion between all relevant stakeholders, including the National Police Commissioner for Iceland, of the profile of an Icelandic police officer, including an integrated set of knowledge and skills. This could lead to reconsideration of the credit system.
- Although there is value in the Distance Learning element of the programme, nonetheless the programme team should ensure that, from a pedagogic perspective, it is the best approach. This should include consideration of the effectiveness of the 'lota'.
- The internship is being increased from 200 to 280 hours. This is an improvement but should be monitored closely to ensure that it is sufficient to allow students to achieve its goals.
- The University should increase its oversight of the training of police educational supervisors and of the assessment of the internship which is currently carried out by those supervisors.
- The University should disseminate its policy for recognition of prior learning.
- The University should further develop its assessment feedback/response system between teaching staff and students.
- There should be an institutional HR policy that enables staff to undertake regular appraisal processes that are not solely in relation to student evaluations. The process should be a supportive one that seeks to clarify development needs and allow staff to set personal goals.
- The University quality management system does not support the programme team. The need for space to reflect on the programme, its mission, goals, objectives, content and structure should be provided outside of the requirements of the curriculum committee. A regular (annual?) monitoring process should be developed on the lines of Plan-Do-Check-Act to provide both the programme and the institution with a more enhancement-focused oversight of the programme.
- The University quality management system should provide the programme team with a solid process to effectively utilize student feedback for improvements and to close the loop by providing responses to that feedback to increase constructive communication between teaching staff and students.
- The University's quality management system should incorporate PTPD to further assist with integration.

It is understood that progress on some of the recommendations listed above is not under the sole control of UNAK and its Faculty of Social Sciences. There may also be cases where changing circumstances have resulted in a recommendation in the March 2021 review becoming irrelevant. In either case, the Status Report should provide commentary on progress of action items to address all recommendations and provide context, where applicable, for possible delays in or barriers to closing any such items.

The Status Report should be accompanied by the main sources of evidence for progress made on action items (key statistics, committee minutes, etc.) and other documents readily available which will demonstrate progress made.

All documentation relevant to the alleviation review should be made available to the team in electronic format, either as hyperlinks in the Status Report, by granting access to the institution's intranet, collecting them on a USB, or by some combination of the foregoing. Whichever means are adopted, there needs to be clear references in the Status Report of the related evidence base.

Following the submission of the Status Report (which is due a month before the scheduled site visit), team members might request further information from the institution. If significant problems are identified with the Status Report, the institution would be asked to revise its submission.

A two-day site visit by a team of experts will be organised by the Quality Board. The programme of the visit will be agreed in advance with the institution. The team will interview the UNAK senior leadership, students, teaching and administrative staff as well as any other partners and stakeholders who are external to the University and whose views are deemed important for gaining a good understanding of the programme.

III. Outcomes of the review

The review will result in a report that will be delivered to UNAK after the University will have had the opportunity to correct any factual errors. The report will include commentary on progress made on action items arising from recommendations in the March 2021 review (see above) and conclude with confidence judgments on a) standards of degrees and awards and b) quality of student learning experience. The Quality Board will provide a summary of this alleviation review and post it on its website as an addendum to the March 2021 review. The summary will also be included as an annex in the full report.

UNAK will have the possibility to lodge a complaint or an appeal, as specified in § 90 of the *QEF2 Handbook*. UNAK will share the review report with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation as part of its original contractual agreement to offer this education programme and to have it reviewed.

Follow-up from this alleviation review is at the discretion of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

IV. Human resources and timing

- The Review Team will consist of four members: two international experts, a Secretary and an Icelandic student. One of the international experts will serve as Chair. The Team will be assembled with a view of providing the following combination of experience:
 - Knowledge of the subject area.
 - Senior experience in higher education, particularly in managing quality and standards.
 - Evaluation experience.
- One international expert and the student member will have served on the Team that conducted the March 2021 review.
- The Board Secretariat will provide coordination and support during all phases of this exercise.
- The Quality Board will train the Team (face-to-face and online, plus access to all relevant Quality Board documents, such the *Guidelines for Team Chairs and Team Members*) and supervise this review. The Board will take responsibility for the final confidence judgments and the liaison with UNAK and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.
- The project will be conducted in Autumn 2022 and concluded in the first part of 2023⁴.
- Training of the Review Team will take place online before the site visit. The Review Team will conduct in-person interviews solely in Akureyri. Online meetings with stakeholders not based in Akureyri may be scheduled on Days 2 and 3 (see below). The Review team will meet online following the site visit to finalise its conclusions. The schedule of the site visit is as follows:

Day 1:

Arrive in Keflavík

Evening: Fly to Akureyri

Day 2:

All day: Review

Day 3:

All day: Review and arrive at preliminary conclusions

Evening: Fly to Reykjavík

Day 4:

Depart from Keflavík

⁴ The schedule is developed for a face-to-face visit, which will require ammendment if the visit is virtual.