

**Commissioned Review of the Police  
Science Programme at the  
University of Akureyri**

March 2021

## Preface

This is the report of a commissioned special review of the Police Science programme at the University of Akureyri undertaken at the behest of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and executed by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education.

Special 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"<sup>1</sup> and emphasise 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](http://www.qef.is)).

Dr Andrée Sursock

Chair

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

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## Glossary and List of Abbreviations

ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015 edition - also known as European Standards and Guidelines
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Akureyri
IWR	Institution-Wide Review. Board-led review of institution, based on QEF
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
PEAB	Police Education Advisory Board
PTPD	Centre for Police Training and Professional Development
QC	Quality Council at University of Akureyri
QEF	Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education
QEF2	Second cycle of the Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education, scheduled for 2017-2022
RA	Reflective Analysis report produced by University of Akureyri in preparation for the review
SLR	Subject-Level Review. Institution-led review of an individual department, based on QEF
SU	Student Union
UC	University Council at University of Akureyri
UNAK	University of Akureyri

## Review Team

The following experts comprised the Team:

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Dr Kimmo Himberg. Director and Rector of Police University College, Tampere, Finland.

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Ms Fiona Crozier, Panel Secretary. Independent consultant. Former Head of International, Quality Assurance Agency, UK

## 1. Introduction: The review in context

### 1.1. Overview of review process

This special review was conducted based on agreed terms of reference (Annex 3) and on guidelines to the expert team that were developed for this specific review. The review was required by the 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 basic Police education in Iceland. UNAK offers two 2-year 120 ECTS Diploma Programmes in Police Science, with one being open to working law enforcement officers (*'starfandi lögreglumenn'*) and the other being open to prospective students who do not have this experience (*'verðandi lögreglumenn'*). Students who graduate from the Diploma Programmes can apply to a 1-year 'top-up' programme that culminates in a 180 ECTS BA degree.

The review process was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and began in autumn 2020. Members of the review panel were provided with the University's Reflective Analysis (RA) and associated evidence at the end of September 2020. Additional information was requested by the review panel on 8 October 2020 and received on 23 October 2020. The virtual site visit was held from 2nd-6th November 2020 and involved meetings with 24 groups of internal and external stakeholders including students (see Annex 1).

### 1.2. About the University and Police Science Programme

UNAK was founded in 1987 with study programmes in Nursing and Industrial Management. UNAK was the second university to be established in Iceland. Today it is the third largest university in Iceland and the largest higher education institute outside of the Reykjavík area. It is a teaching and research institution, offering programmes at the undergraduate and graduate level, including PhD programmes in selected areas. All Bachelors degrees are primarily taught in Icelandic, with some Masters programmes being taught in English.

Over the past 32 years, the University has grown substantially and currently has 2600 students across three Schools: Humanities and Social Sciences (in which the Police Science programme is located), Business & Science and Health Sciences. There is a total of 9 faculties and 59 different diplomas and degrees at all three levels of tertiary education. Since 2014, student numbers have grown by more than 50%. The University employs about 200 members of staff of which 110 are academic staff members, 70 are service and administrative staff members and 20 work in external research and continuing education.

UNAK is committed to offering study programmes in a flexible learning environment which it defines as “student-centred learning without the requirement of a daily presence at the University campus in Akureyri”. Students can study independently, regardless of their place of residence, because teaching and assessment are managed online through the Canvas™ learning management systems as well as Moodle™, which is being phased out over the next academic year.

Initially, the Police Science programme was placed within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. In 2019, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law was split into three discrete faculties: the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Psychology. The Police Science Programme has been located within the Faculty of Social Sciences since this time.

### 1.3. Key committee and managerial structures

At the university level, UNAK operates under the Higher Education Institution Act No. 63/2006 and the Act on Public Higher Education Institutions No. 85/2008. The University Council (UC) is the highest authority in the University and is chaired by the Rector. It sets the overall strategy for teaching, learning and research; it shapes the structure of the University, carries out general supervision and is responsible for ensuring that the University complies with current laws and regulations. It includes two representatives of the academic community, appointed by the University Assembly, one student member, appointed by the Student Union, one representative appointed by

the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and two members assigned by representatives of the University Council.

The Rector is appointed for five years by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, in accordance with the UC's recommendation. The Rector in turn appoints a Dean of each of the Schools for a four-year term.

The day-to-day management of the University is located in the Management Board, which has responsibility for cooperation and information sharing at the highest level in UNAK and for the daily operation of the Schools, the Administrative Office and the Rector's Office. The Management Board acts in an advisory role to the Rector and/or the University Council. It is composed of the Rector, Deans of Schools, and the Managing Director of the University. The Director of Finance and the Director of Quality and Human Resources are also members.

The University Office, under the direction of the Managing Director, provides the Schools with units for finance, staff, computing and administration, student registration, student counselling and library and information services. A Quality Council (QC) is responsible for the implementation and application of UNAK's quality management system.

At the school and faculty level, each School is responsible for the administration of its faculties; the administration of the Faculty of Social Sciences (Faculty) operates according to the Regulations on the Organisational Structure of the School of Humanities and Social Science, with Chairs of Faculty and Programme Directors. The Faculty Meeting group elects the Chair of the Faculty and the Programme Directors for each programme of study for a two-year term.

The Chair of the Faculty (Deildarformaður; "Head of Faculty" in English) handles communication with students, plans the teaching load, makes suggestions for new appointments, selects supervisory teachers for each academic course in consultation with the Dean of School, and is involved in the class schedule in consultation with the School Office. The Chair presides over Faculty Meetings and follows through on meeting actions and agreements.

#### 1.4. Funding/resourcing

Funding for the programme is on the basis of the contract between the University and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The budget, however, originates from the Ministry of Justice, which, due to the Icelandic legislation on higher education, is not a partner to the contract. While there is structural communication between the Ministry of Justice, the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD) and the national police commissioner, the communication with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is *ad hoc* and there is no structured communication with UNAK. Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice is not represented in the Police Education Advisory Board (PEAB). Consequently, although it is a stakeholder and principal donor, the Ministry of Justice has little insight into the budget allocation and the use of budgets.

The initial contract between UNAK and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for the period 2016-2019 started with an allocation of ISK 43 million in 2016, growing to ISK 183 million in 2019. These funds were allocated on the basis of a maximum of 80 students in Police Science. As of 2020, requirements have changed and now students compete for 40 study placements in the spring semester of the first year.

This funding agreement relates to all expected costs of developing and delivering a police education programme, including administrative expenses of the University and the administrative and academic needs of the Police Science Programme within the Faculty. The funding is used to recruit and pay four permanent academic staff in the Faculty of Social Sciences, one permanent position in the Faculty of Law, one Project Manager and other teaching costs, as well as travel costs associated with collaboration with PTPD in Reykjavík. It also includes funding for research and conferences, seminars and other support necessary to establish Police Science as an academic field in Iceland.

Funding issues were touched upon on multiple occasions in the RA and during meetings with staff members. According to the RA, the financing of the programme should be revisited and renegotiated with the Government for the next contract, specifically with regard to costs other than those for

direct teaching, such as research and training costs in cooperation with PTPD and individual police districts.

In the RA, table 1 presents the government contributions and allocations. From 2016 to 2019, the government contribution has risen by a factor of 4.2 and the total costs by 4.0. Student numbers have risen by a factor of 1.9 and salary costs by 3.2. Other teaching and research expenses and administrative and central services have, however, risen by a factor of 4.6 and 5.3 respectively.

During the review, it became clear that neither the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Ministry of Justice nor the academic staff were aware of the way in which the budget was being allocated by UNAK. As a government institution, the University uses the financial management system provided by the government, which is currently being updated. The budget for the police science programme is paid directly to UNAK and it then re-distributes its overall budget across the different schools. About 60% of the overall budget for the University goes to the schools and about 40% to administrative services including library services, real estate management, IT services, student services, graduate school, financial services and other administrative costs. As these services are being expanded at UNAK, this is also the reason why the budget costs for “other teaching and research expenses and administrative and central services” have risen. In other words, the budget from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is not directly invested in the police science programme, but also used for overhead costs at the university level. The internal allocation model is based on objective parameters such as number of students and credits.

The resourcing of the programme should be considered by both the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 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. As the government is in the process of developing a new allocation model for universities, UNAK is also in the process of reviewing its internal allocation model.

## 1.5. Staff

According to the RA, currently the Police Science programme has four permanent members of academic staff (one of these is located in the Faculty of Law) and one Project Manager. The Programme Director for Police Sciences receives approximately a 23% reduction in regular teaching obligations and the other Programme directors 6–7% each. Certain parts of the programme are taught by UNAK teaching staff from other Faculties outside the Police Science programme.

Three members of Police Science staff have doctoral degrees and one hopes to complete a doctoral degree by the end of 2020. The faculty members of the Police Science Programme have academic backgrounds in education, sociology, criminology and anthropology, with degrees awarded in the US, the UK and Iceland. Two of the four permanent faculty members have a long experience of working as police officers, one in Iceland and the other in the UK. One has previous experience in developing and delivering police education at the university level.

The review team met with members of staff from both UNAK and the PTPD. The programme staff at UNAK, in particular, felt the burden of the rapidity with which the programme was developed and implemented and the succession of changes, including staffing, that had occurred since the programme's inception. The team was provided with examples of sick leave (at both institutions) and lack of support, both institutional and departmental. The latter is due to the dispersed nature of the programme and the location of some members of staff and the PTPD's location in Reykjavik.

The RA states that the professional duties of academic staff at UNAK are divided between teaching, research and administration. The four permanent academic staff members in the Police Science Programme are expected to spend 48% of their working hours on teaching, 40% on research, and 12% on administration. The teaching duties are 769 teaching hours per year. In the academic year 2019–2020, the four faculty members had on average 278 hours of overtime for teaching. This overtime, which was necessary for teaching, coupled with the hours that all four spent on

administration duties that exceeded 12%, has led to a belief amongst programme staff that their research has suffered.

The review team was of the view that, in comparison with other comparable programmes and Schools for the study of Police Science, staffing is sufficient. Nevertheless, it believes that staff are hampered by the hasty inception and implementation of the programme and the current conditions under which they work, leading to a feeling of 'running to stand still,' as it was described by one member of staff. Further points and recommendations relevant to the staffing of the programme and support for staff are to be found in Sections 2.7 (staff induction, appraisal and development), 4.6 (teaching-research balance) and 5.1 (quality management) of this report.

There are eleven members of PTPD staff, divided into two teams. One team works on life-long learning and another on practical training and internship. The PTPD Director oversees both groups and has both managerial and financial responsibilities. He is also responsible for all modules delivered by PTPD for UNAK with regard to the quality of teaching, assessment and student matters.

In addition to full-time team members, PTPD has part-time instructors. The instructors for the internship number approximately fifty experienced staff members drawn from all nine police districts. There are 18 trained emergency driving instructors, as well as the use-of-force instructors from the Special Intervention Unit and the districts. Other specialist trainers are in the fields of crisis communication, crowd control, civil protection, border control etc. Also, staff members of the Fire Department, Coast Guard and other related first responders participate in training when required.

## 1.6. Students

Since its establishment in 2016, the Police Science Programme has received the largest number of enrolments in the Faculty. On average, 164 new students have enrolled in the study line for prospective police officers each year. One significant change since the programme's inception is that, since 2019/2020, only students who are selected by PTPD for the practical training are allowed

to continue their studies on the Police Science programme at UNAK after the first semester. Further comment on this matter is to be found in Section 2.2 (Admissions criteria).

UNAK has offered flexible or blended learning in some form since 1998 and a much higher proportion of its students (about 55%) are registered as distance-learning than at most other universities in Iceland. Approximately 39% of the students at UNAK live in the capital area, and just over 5% live outside Iceland. Further comment on the distance learning aspect of the Police Science programme is to be found in 2.4 (Design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes).

The number of female students at UNAK has grown steadily over recent years and the gender ratio in the Police Science Programme is almost equally split between the genders. This has been a very positive development for the programme and for UNAK and the objective is to keep the gender ratio as equal as possible in the coming years. The educational background of students is not currently monitored by UNAK.

### 1.7. The Reflective Analysis

At UNAK, an RA drafting group was formed in December 2019. It consisted of six members representing the programme in Police Science from UNAK and from the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD). It also included a student representative. Further contributions were received from other staff members of the programme. The draft report was amplified and finalised by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Rector's Office.

The RA drafting group met nine times from January until May 2020. Two focus groups, involving 15 former and current students were conducted in February 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic prevented further in-person meetings; however, communication via email and Zoom continued. The RA was submitted to the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education in September 2020.

In general, the review team found the RA to be clear, honest and well-written, if somewhat lacking in a proactive approach to the many issues it set out. The various challenges faced within the University, the Faculty, and the Diploma programme in Police Science were discussed openly.

Overall, the RA provided the review team with much of the contextual information that it later associated with some of the key areas for concern raised in this report, namely:

- The delay in the delivery of the contract between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and UNAK, which led to an overhasty development and implementation of the programme;
- A lack of clear communication between the key stakeholders;
- A lack of integration of the programme at various levels of the contract, and between the institutions delivering the programme and its stakeholders.
- A somewhat diffuse managerial structure, with a number of actors whose responsibilities are not clearly defined and challenges in communication between the programme, PTPD and the police in general.

## 1.8. Summary Evaluation

The key points at the conclusion of Section 1.7 led to the review team articulating the following recommendations:

- 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.
- A clear communication strategy should be developed at institutional level to ensure that communication between support services and students is effective so that students are aware of the services and that the services are able to provide accurate information.

The review team recognised the value in the integration of police training in the higher education system and the resulting focus of the programme in aiming to change and modernise the Icelandic police force. It also recognised the value of the location of the programme in the School of Humanities and the Faculty, which allows students to participate in a range of relevant courses. Nonetheless, the lack of integration that was visible at various levels of the programme's structure led to the recommendations that:

- 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 the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and UNAK.
- 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 should be communicated through the formal agreement between UNAK and PTPD and should be communicated to students.

These key recommendations are further supported by the detail of a number of further recommendations that are to be found in the appropriate sections of this report.

It was clear to the review team that, in recent years, Icelandic police education has undergone a dramatic transition whereby a relatively concise professional training in a small, traditional police school has been developed into a programme that incorporates that professional training and sets it in an academic context. The panel understood that this kind of reform will be confronted with various problems and pressure from various sources. These may influence the way in which an education reform of this kind is implemented. However, the team was also of the view that many of the problems that the programme is facing stemmed from sources at different levels, including that of the University itself (insofar as the team viewed institutional processes as seen through the lens of the Police Science programme) and the support it offers the programme through its institutional

level processes. The recommendations set out in this report seek to pinpoint at which level action is necessary: ministerial, institutional or programme.

## 2. Managing Standards: The learning process and award criteria

It was clear from the RA that the development of the Police Science Programme was not easy due to the limited time between the date on which the contract was awarded and the date on which the programme was to start. The review team was informed that UNAK felt that, academically, it had something to offer such a programme in terms of cognate subjects and could supplement and boost the practical element of training with an academic underpinning. UNAK would have preferred to offer a three-year programme but, without government agreement, had to fit the content into a two-year programme.

In addition, UNAK was required to develop the programme in a short period of time over the summer. The programme team was willing to work under these conditions but, with hindsight, UNAK informed the review team that it would have tried to persuade the government to wait another year.

It was clear to the review team that this preparatory phase (or lack of it), both within the University and the Ministry, was crucial in creating some of the issues around the ongoing implementation and development of the programme. The period between the decision on the integration of police education into the higher education system/call for tenders and the award of the tender/initiation of the programme was insufficient to allow time to reflect on the positioning of the programme within the University and the PTPD. There was insufficient time to fully include stakeholders in the development of the programme, to position the programme in the Faculty and to begin to think of the kind of profile Icelandic police officers should ideally have and how this can be achieved. It is within this context that the review team makes the recommendations that it does in this section of the report.

## 2.1. Programme approach to the management of standards

The programme's approach to the management of standards was not described in the RA as it follows the institutional processes set out in UNAK's framework for quality assurance. This is covered in Section 5 of this report.

In addition to the headings for Section Two below, the review focused on other aspects of managing standards specific to the programme, in particular:

- A (shared) profile of a police officer in Iceland
- The role of the Police Education Advisory Board (PEAB)
- The integration of the programme between UNAK and PTPD and collaboration between the two institutions
- Learning outcomes and competences
- The teaching of shared courses
- Distance learning
- The internship
- Ethics

For the purposes of this report, given their fundamental importance to the standards and operation of the Police Science programme, these elements are dealt with specifically in Section 2.4.

## 2.2. Admissions criteria

The RA states that the normal process for student admissions is the joint responsibility of the Student Registry and School Offices. Students apply to UNAK using the online registration and information system, Uglá. However, admission into the Police Science Programme differs from most other programmes as it is jointly facilitated with the PTPD. Also, there are additional legal requirements for prospective police officers in Iceland as they must fulfil requirements according to

Article 38 of the Police Act No. 90/1996. Enrolment in the first semester of the study line for prospective police officers does not guarantee that students will be accepted into practical training.

The process for admission into the study line for prospective police officers has been under constant revision since 2016. Currently, prospective police officers apply simultaneously with other UNAK applicants and then additionally apply to PTPD for admittance into practical training. UNAK admits students that meet the requirements in the autumn and then, during the first semester, students apply to PTPD and go through the entrance tests that now count as 60% of the selection process. In December, students complete their academic courses at UNAK, which count as 40% of the selection process for practical training. Forty to fifty students are selected for practical training and start at PTPD in early January (2nd semester).

The decision on which applicants are admitted into practical training is based on a comprehensive evaluation of various factors, i.e., endurance test, first-stage performance, psychological assessment, medical evaluation, conduct, personal communication skills, criminal record, as well as interview and other assessments. PTPD's decision on the selection of students into practical training is final.

In relation to the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, UNAK, through its distance learning policy, does admit students from all parts of Iceland, irrespective of their location of residence. The contract also states that UNAK should enable students to proceed with their studies in case of their not being selected to continue with the practical training. However, currently the number of students admitted to the programme is more limited than it has been, thus diminishing the prominence of this issue, although it is clearly still a matter of some concern for students (see below).

The RA's statement that, admissions have been under "constant revision" since 2016 is further evidence of the difficult context in which the programme has been implemented. The current regulation, which recruits students to the academic part of the programme at UNAK but does not unconditionally confirm their place on the practical training at PTPD, is of significant concern to

students as evidenced by the interviews held by the review team with three different groups of students. Students are concerned about this for various reasons:

- The point of studying Police Science is undermined if there is no possibility of progression onto a Bachelors programme in case of non-selection for the practical training; this effectively excludes students with, for example, mental health issues from applying to the programme at all as they know that they will not be selected for semester two at PTPD;
- Students who are not selected for the second semester at PTPD have already paid their tuition fee but are left with no option but to leave and try again the following year;
- There has been confusion and miscommunication about the number of people who may be selected for continuation, which has led to people who were unaware of this second selection at the end of semester one, moving from their place of residence to facilitate study, only to be told that they have not been selected for semester two.

Communication is one of the themes that ran through the review for the team; this last bullet is a good example of the need for a clear and effective communication strategy at all levels and across all stakeholders, in line with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), more specifically ESG 1.4.

### 2.3. External reference points and benchmarks

The RA informs us that the Police Education Review report in 2015 clearly stated that it was in the best interest of Icelandic police education to move it to university level, as in other Nordic countries.

The other Nordic countries, therefore, have formed the core of external reference points and benchmarks for UNAK in this regard. Contact is well-established with police education institutions in those countries and also extends to the United Kingdom (UK).

The Police Science Programme has various partnerships concerning curriculum development and the sharing of best practices and UNAK and PTPD have also hosted several representatives from the

Nordic police programmes to learn from their best practices and to develop the programme's curriculum.

The majority of the benchmarking activity is funded by UNAK and PTPD, although some has benefited from Erasmus+ funding.

In November of 2019, PTPD became a member of the Association of European Police Colleges and also has a contract with CEPOL, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training. Both are essential training venues for trainers and lecturers alike. Staff exchange with other universities is relatively infrequent. However, visits to UNAK and PTPD by teachers and students from police education programmes in other countries are more common.

It is clear that the academic staff involved in the programme have invested in national and international contacts and that these contacts are engaged in the training of students.

Internationalization is clearly one of the spearheads of the programme, not only in the field of education, but also in the field of research. PTPD has been able to build its Nordic cooperation on a tradition formed over the past years by the former police school. UNAK is still a relatively new actor in the police education community but has already been able to initiate international cooperation. To improve its benchmarking activities the Police Sciences Programme should focus on connections to European academic police education institutions. It will also want to ensure that the benefits to staff from these exchanges are shared with students.

#### 2.4. Design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes

The RA provided the institutional context within which the Police Science programme was designed and approved and is monitored and reviewed. As has been the case with other new study programmes at UNAK, and with other police programmes across the Nordic countries and Europe, it takes considerable time to develop this type of programme. Much has been achieved in the Police Science programme but UNAK and the programme team recognise that there is much still to be

done in the coming years with all proposed changes in strict accordance with all relevant regulations and with the approval of UNAK.

The process for designing the Police Science Programme was based on Article 8 in the Higher Education Institution Act No. 63/2006, as well as on the requirements of the contract between UNAK and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which lists the criteria of initial police education and the framework of the partnership between UNAK and PTPD. The design process began with a proposal for the new programme that was agreed in a Faculty Meeting according to Article 16 of Regulations for the University of Akureyri No. 378/2009. The Quality Council at UNAK was then asked by the Director of Quality Management to review the proposal, particularly with reference to the ESG and the Icelandic National Qualifications Framework. This procedure is intended to ensure that, from the beginning, new programmes are established according to the requirements of law, regulations and quality standards. The study programme was approved and established within a very short timeframe in the summer of 2016 (see also the introduction to Section 2).

In relation to monitoring, the RA explains that the curricula of the Police Science Programme are reviewed yearly and, from the beginning of the study programme, several changes have been implemented, both by changing individual courses and adding new courses. The PTPD staff and PEAB also take part in curriculum development.

UNAK's Faculty Curriculum sub-committees annually review the University's curriculum and course catalogue. The sub-committees work according to specific rules set by the Schools. Curriculum Committees review the curriculum and make suggestions to Faculty Meetings for curriculum amendments. Curriculum Committees consist of representatives from academic staff, appointed by the relevant Faculty Meeting, and students, selected by their student associations. Updated course catalogues for the Police Science Programme are approved in Faculty Meetings and are confirmed by the School Council before they are published. Changes to the courses are proposed in October for the following academic year.

At the end of each course, students are requested to complete a course evaluation survey. The results are available to the Dean of School, Head of Faculty and the responsible teacher. If more than 50% of students take part in the evaluation, then a summary score for the course is available in Uglá. However, a low response rate can sometimes limit the conclusions that can be drawn from the results.

At PTPD, students are invited to complete a course evaluation survey both for practical training and internship. The results are used in team review meetings held at the end of each semester. Learning points from students for individual staff members are followed up in individual performance appraisals by the Director of PTPD.

Regular reviews of specific programmes take place every seven years according to UNAK's quality assurance system, through the Subject-Level Review process. The review process follows procedures which have been approved by the Quality Council: the Procedure for Regular Review of Study Programmes at the University of Akureyri. The process of review starts with the Dean of the School, who assigns a committee to review the study programme.

The review team believes that many of the key issues in relation to the review of the Police Sciences programme at UNAK can be dealt with under the broad heading of this key area of quality assurance, namely design, approval, monitoring and review (see also ESG 1.9). Many of the issues under the headings below are related to the original design and approval of the programme, whilst much future action will be clarified and actioned through monitoring and review processes. However, this section of the report relates directly to Section 5: the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System and the recommendations made in that section are also pertinent here.

In order to cover a number of key areas clearly, this section is structured under the following headings:

- Profile of a police officer in Iceland
- Learning outcomes and competences

- Teaching of shared courses
- Role of the Police Education and Advisory Board (PEAB)
- Integration of the programme between UNAK and PTPD and collaboration between the two institutions
- Distance learning
- Internship
- Ethics

#### 2.4.1. Profile of a police officer in Iceland

It was clear to the review team that the contract between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and UNAK stipulates the desired competences and skills of future police officers, but not the subject matter through which they should achieve these outcomes. Although new courses have been introduced and more attention is being paid to practical training and its interaction with the course material of the Police Science programme at UNAK, there are still unresolved issues that cannot merely be attributed to the geographical distance, communication or staff shortages. In the view of the review team, many of these are due to the lack of a pre-defined and agreed profile for a police officer in Iceland; this lack has the potential to impact on the learning experience of the students.

The review team discussed the profile with participants in many of the meetings that it held with internal and external stakeholders. Although there was some agreement around the profile of an Icelandic police officer (e.g. that new police officers must be educated in the basics of working safely on the streets, the importance of ethics and the need for police officers to base decisions on 'science and evidence' rather than 'feelings' in which there was agreement that the academic side of the programme had a key role), there was no one, agreed response. Some respondents were clear that there was a need for an agreement on what police education in Iceland is; the team was told that there has been no vision or decision as to how many police officers Iceland needs. In the interviews

with stakeholder representatives of the police, the team also observed that none of them had been involved in any mutual processes between UNAK and the police where a vision of the future Icelandic police officer could have been formulated, or where the expected competence requirements of police officers could have been defined.

In the view of the review team, issues of integration are at the heart of this key vision/decision. The vision should be shared by ministries, UNAK, PTPD, the National Commissioner for Icelandic Police and other key stakeholders. From this joint vision (described as “crucial” by one interviewee) flows the integration of much of the rest of the structure, development and implementation of the programme.

*Recommendations:*

- 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.
- Clear structures that enable communication and decision-making between ministries, between institutions and between ministry(ies) and institution(s) should be developed.

#### 2.4.2. Learning outcomes and competences

In its first reading of the RA, it appeared to the review team that the programme, as described in the RA and accompanying materials, did not meet the competence criteria set out in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture agreement, as not all competence criteria were covered by the learning outcomes and none of the PTPD learning outcomes appeared to be listed. In addition, only 55% of students who answered the course evaluation survey agreed that the studies provide opportunities to apply what they have learned and the team was unable to check, by viewing student work, if learning outcomes and competences are being achieved.

In discussion with the programme teams at UNAK and PTPD, the review team learned that the learning outcomes were set by the Ministry of Justice in advance. UNAK staff did not have a problem with the specified learning outcomes and feel that the task in hand is to ensure that they are embedded in the right courses. The work of the PEAB has been helpful in this regard (see Section 2.4.4). However, PTPD have found the learning outcomes more difficult to accommodate; there is concern that what is being taught is not fit for purpose, in particular in relation to collaborative teaching between UNAK and PTPD. There is also a degree of controversy between the curriculum approach and the realities of police work; this was particularly expressed by students who had experience of working as auxiliary police officers. On the evidence seen and heard by the review team, it appears that there is little explanation of the learning outcomes (specific to the police science courses, those from other social science courses and the competences taught at PTPD) and how they form a coherent programme. This coherence does not appear to be clearly communicated and explained to students and this is at the root of much of their discontent.

Students also perceive a lack of connectivity between their theoretical and practical courses. Staff at PTPD stressed that they were keen to ensure more connection with what they offer in their practical courses by basing them on the content and outcomes of the academic courses. There are now weekly meetings between UNAK and PTPD staff at programme level and the review team encourages discussion at these meetings of how the matters of communication and integration at the level of learning outcomes and competences might be resolved.

Overall, the review team is of the view that the programme as offered by UNAK and PTPD does cover the learning outcomes specified by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in the contract. It is also of the view that the Learning Outcomes are appropriate. However, there is room for improvement concerning the integration of the practical and the academic; a lack of synchronicity also means that students find it difficult to connect the academic and the professional learning outcomes. The lack of definition of a profile for the Icelandic police officer (cf. Section 2.4.1) hinders the students from understanding the value of the generic, theoretical knowledge base as a

foundation for police education. The team encourages programme staff to use the weekly meetings and the PEAB to resolve these issues.

#### 2.4.3. Teaching of shared courses

In addition to the PTPD concern about the fitness for purpose of collaborative teaching, and the fact that the students do not appear to understand the role of such courses as contributors to the overall coherence of the programme, the review team considers that there is one further issue in connection with this matter and that is to do with the fact that certain case studies that would be pertinent to Police Science within, for example, a Sociology course, are not possible due to the confidentiality surrounding the specifics of criminal cases. They cannot then be used in courses that include students from other programmes.

The RA states that “...isolating police students within the university setting is not ideal as it is essential to have the police students interact with a diverse student body”. The review team is of the view that this is not a strong argument, given the strong element of distance learning which means that the Police Science students are not on campus and do not interact with other students at all in some respects. Some of the students told the team that the collaborative teaching added to the feeling that they were not at a Police Academy, a fact that reinforces the need for cultural change. UNAK staff that the team spoke to could see the value in collaborative teaching and the team urges them and their PTPD colleagues to consider ways in which this matter might be resolved; for example, general courses can be taught in mixed groups, but selective materials could be provided to students of Police Sciences for assignment purposes.

#### 2.4.4. Role of Police Education Evaluation Board

The RA states that the Police Science Programme at UNAK and PTPD has always emphasised the importance of having strong connections with police experts outside of the University. One means of formalising this was to establish the PEAB in December 2018. The main impetus behind its creation was to bridge possible gaps between the police, practical training at PTPD and the academic courses

at UNAK. Students raised the issue of gaps from their perspective as they impact on their educational experience and argued that the issue must be addressed in order for them to feel that their studies are integrated and cohesive. The staff at UNAK and PTPD agreed, and the establishment of the Advisory Board now plays a large part in addressing some of these issues.

The PEAB group consists of four academic staff members from the Police Science Programme, two academic staff members from the Faculty of Law at UNAK (as they teach law to Police Students), two Project Managers from UNAK who work with the Police Science Programme and its students, four representatives from PTPD, seven police officials nominated by the districts, three police officers appointed by the Police Officers' Associations and the National Police Officer Association and three students from the Police Science Programme. The Advisory Board currently consists of 15 men and 10 women. Attempts are ongoing to increase membership of this Board.

Since January 2019, the Police Education Advisory Board has met four times, once in Akureyri, twice in Reykjavík and once in Borgarnes. A meeting scheduled in Selfoss in the spring of 2020 was postponed due to Covid-19. Meetings have lasted from one to two days. The topics of discussion have included learning objectives, curriculum development, the integration of theory and practice and other related subjects. Staff from the Police Science programme confirmed the value of the PEAB in relation to all of these topics. The PEAB itself believes that it has a valuable role in terms of enhancing the Police Science programme and that it can see the improvements in concrete terms. Its members also told the review team that they think it would assist the Police Science programme if its role and its members were more visible, so as to encourage communication and the flow of ideas from relevant stakeholders. It also strongly believes that it is important to maintain a student presence in the PEAB.

PEAB does not have guaranteed funding for costs associated with travel, accommodation and organisation, which is problematic as it involves added administrative responsibilities for the Police Science Programme team and should be appreciated and compensated as such. This latter point was

confirmed by the Police Science programme staff – it appears that the establishment of the PEAB was the initiative of one member of staff who has since stepped down from the role of chair or organiser due to the additional workload without recompense. The review team was left with the understanding that PEAB currently has no chairperson. One member of staff suggested that the role of coordinator should be shared between UNAK and PTPD. The last meeting of the Board was in November 2019. The review team urges UNAK and the PTPD to find some way of funding the PEAB, given its central role in the development of the programme.

In addition, the National Police Commissioner for Iceland is not represented on the PEAB. The review team believes that this should be rectified since this role should be central to discussions around how police education in Iceland should develop.

#### Commendation

- The potential of the PEAB as a vehicle for ongoing monitoring and revision of the programme to ensure that it remains relevant to all stakeholders, as well as an effective communication channel between the police and the programme.

#### 2.4.5. Integration of the programme between UNAK and PTPD and their collaboration

The review team saw and heard evidence from various stakeholders, including students, that significant effort has been made to remedy the lack of synchronicity in the Police Science programme between PTPD and UNAK. It acknowledges that this effort is made under difficult circumstances and recognises the action being taken to move forward. However, it cannot be denied that this lack of synchronicity and integration is at the heart of many of the problems faced by the programme from initial planning and development to the coherence of the learning outcomes and competences for the programme.

Despite the introduction of the weekly meetings between the staff at UNAK and PTBD and despite the introduction of the PEAB, programme staff recognised that there is a lack of synchronicity and that both institutions are under pressure to resolve this issue.

Several structural impediments exist in this regard, such as the fact that the staff from the two institutions are unable to sort things out quickly over a cup of coffee where this is appropriate due to the physical distance between the two (although it should be pointed out that the physical location of some staff should mean that this is not impossible). Flexible and distance learning can both help and hinder synchronisation. It should be noted that the students that the review team spoke to were, in general, more likely to speak favourably of their experience at PTPD where they meet staff in person; at UNAK, they are more likely to relate to staff in an online environment (although the review team would suggest that more careful planning of the on-campus session (*'lota'*) would assist in this regard).

Students also spoke of a repetition of course content between the two institutions and described this as feeling like they were studying at “two completely different schools.” They suggested that communication could be improved in relation to what exactly is being taught and where. However, they did acknowledge improvements in this area and said that, for the most part, they could see a connection between the academic and the practical work assignments. Programme staff at both institutions also spoke of their desire to increase this connection.

Staff said that they felt that the overall picture of the programme is missing and that a bridge between UNAK and PTPD is still required. Discussion needs to move between partners more fluidly and in a timelier manner than at present as there is currently confusion as to who the actors are and where responsibilities lie; examples of this were a lack of understanding of who is responsible for resources, who decides on the profile of a police officer etc.

The review team heard of a plan to address synchronicity and issues around the vision of the programme but remained unclear as to how the goals, including the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, would be fulfilled. PTPD staff also spoke of the desire for further integration of theory and practice but, again, the review team remained unclear as to any plan to achieve this.

In the view of the review team, this lack of synchronicity, integration and cooperation is apparent at all levels. It also noted that there is no formal agreement between UNAK and PTPD that sets out expectations and responsibilities, despite this being a requirement of the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. It strongly believes that this is the starting point for rectifying many of the issues around integration and synchronicity, in line with ESG 1.2 and 1.9.

#### Commendation

- The effort made by programme and faculty staff in UNAK and the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD) to improve the programme since its initial, hasty inception and the increased cooperation with PTPD at programme level, including regular, weekly meetings.

#### Recommendations

- 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.
- 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.
- Clear structures that enable communication and decision-making between ministries, between institutions and between ministry(ies) and institution(s) should be developed.

#### 2.4.6. Distance learning

The RA states that UNAK has offered flexible or blended learning in some form since 1998. Therefore, a much higher proportion of students at UNAK are registered as distance-learning students than at most other universities in Iceland (about 55% of the total student population).

The teaching environment of the Police Science Programmes at UNAK is built on blended or flexible learning. Both distance learning students, as well as on-campus students, operate in a flexible learning format, which means that all lectures are recorded and made available online for students. Teaching methods in the programme vary, and mostly consist of lectures as well as individual and group assignments and discussions. The majority of Police Science students are distance learners; however, on-campus students can also choose to attend classes in person, or remotely. As a result, the distinction between on-campus and distance students has become less clear, as both groups of students have increasingly turned to a more online approach to their education.

The teaching environment at PTPD is different as it requires mandatory attendance in practical training, which has, up until 2020, started upon selection after the 1st semester. New students attend four week-long practical training sessions at PTPD in the 2nd semester and the same in the 3rd semester. This mandatory attendance at PTPD has led to some students deciding to live in the capital area or close to PTPD rather than in Akureyri. This contributes to the low ratio of on-campus police students at UNAK.

The number of distance learners has impacted on the teaching methods used and some teachers at UNAK face problems in relation to students being unable/unwilling to attend classes in real time due to work commitments etc. In fact, flexible delivery does not exclude attending in real time and the RA suggests that synchronous delivery of course content may need to increase with the importance of attending in real time communicated to students more clearly.

Both staff and students spoke to the review team about their experience of distance learning. From the staff perspective, they feel well-supported by excellent technology and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. However, they also believe that balance towards distance learning devalues the on-campus learning experience. Most students said that they were working full-time and therefore would not be able to attend the programme were it not for the flexibility afforded by distance learning.

The review team is of the view that, whilst there are significant benefits to distance learning, nonetheless policing as a profession requires excellent team-work skills and often an exceptionally strong trust towards colleagues. It urges the programme team to consider how such skills will be introduced into the curriculum and believes that, given the account of the 'lotas' that it heard from students, these could be more carefully planned in terms of content and activity to help alleviate this issue and to operate in the spirit of ESG 1.2 and 1.9.

#### Commendations

- The inclusive nature of the distance learning aspects of the programme in allowing those students who would not otherwise be able to enrol access to the programme;
- The well-functioning ICT platform and digital library resources.

#### Recommendation

- 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.'

#### 2.4.7. Internship

The RA states that the 200-hour internship forms part of the responsibility of PTPD; the Director of PTPD supervises the courses and is responsible for quality and assessments. However, the University of Akureyri awards the credits. Students spend this 200-hour internship with one of the police districts; it comprises both general police work and criminal investigations.

All police districts have offered internships for Diploma students and nominated an Internship Coordinator. Yearly workshops for the Internship Coordinators and other instructors take place at PTPD in order to develop the competence components of the internship and assessment of students. In addition to the internship, students are involved in practical training once a month during their time at PTPD.

The review team had some concerns in relation to the internship (see also ESG 1.2 and 1.9). Firstly, although the 200 hours now available is to be increased to 280 hours, the team and those they spoke to, including ministry and programme staff, students and stakeholders representing the police districts and PEAB members, believe that this is still very short if it is to achieve its aims. This is particularly important because the review team also learned that during the internship the students do not actually work as trainee police officers but rather they observe the actions of their senior colleagues. This appears to cause some frustration, particularly for those students who already have experience of working as auxiliary police officers. Programme staff at UNAK told the team that they were organising an international workshop the following month that would specifically look at this topic.

Secondly, the review team was concerned to learn that there is currently no UNAK oversight of the assessment of the internship or of the training of the police educational supervisors who carry out the assessment. It was told that the contract specifically says PTPD is responsible for this element of the assessment; the supervisory teacher is responsible for that course. At the moment, results are received from PTPD without any breakdown of the marks and the Police Science Project Manager adds the grades to the students' profiles. UNAK programme staff told the team that they felt that they should be more informed of the breakdown of the grades awarded and the team would agree with this.

Thirdly, there is either inequity in the value of the internship for students or all students are not sufficiently informed of the aims and objectives of the internship within the context of the Police Sciences programme. Whilst for some students, 200 hours internship is not sufficient, for others who were already working in the field when they enrolled on the programme there was no added value. Indeed, those students said that they had to take time off from their paid policing work to do the internship which made them feel as if they were working for free. They also felt that, due to their experience, they were asked to carry out work for which interns would not normally have the relevant experience. The practice of the Icelandic police to recruit young laymen as auxiliary police

officers thus seems to engender a level of confusion regarding the internship practice and its potential benefits.

#### Recommendations

- The internship should be carefully assessed 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.

#### 2.4.8. Ethics

The review team believes that the review raises an important issue within police education, that is, the challenge of developing proper professional ethics in students. The contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture states that:

*Graduate students must have acquired the ability to:*

- *Take responsibility for their own actions and their consequences;*
- *Conduct their work in accordance with the ethical standards applying in a particular department;*
- *Take different aspects into account in their work;*
- *Respect equality;*
- *Exercise influence in the community by applying their expertise in keeping with ethical values.*

In the RA, the team read that there have been extensive discussions between UNAK, PTPD and representatives from the police on how to ensure ethical standards. Examples were provided of some prospective police officers having difficulties following rules and taking responsibility for their

actions as exemplified by several cases of cheating in assessments and instances of plagiarism.

Verbal and written disrespect from students towards the teaching staff has also been experienced.

Ethics form part of multiple courses, with one core course (Professional Ethics) in the second year.

The RA says that there are plans to discuss how to increase the emphasis on the subject further although the review team is unclear as to how and when these discussions will be taken forward.

Programme staff are aware of the issue and there is recognition that work has been done in this area but there are still concerns around how the academic course translates into practice. UNAK and PTPD work independently on the subject and feel that students show a lack of regard and discipline towards their academic studies. The review team heard that there is a desire to bring ethics and values into training on decision-making, for example.

Comments from the teaching staff indicated that many of the students orient themselves towards very practical subjects and even appear to be disinterested in the academic side of the programme. These attitudes are reflected in their behaviour during academic courses. At the same time it was pointed out that the students are very open to discussing their own ethics and values.

The review team is of the view that UNAK must take these matters seriously; as illustrated above, the team read and heard of multiple examples demonstrating the need for action but did not hear of any intended action plan to remedy the problem. The team urges UNAK and PTPD staff to develop an action plan, with the input of PEAB, as soon as possible.

## 2.5. Assessment policies and regulations

The RA states that assessment practices at UNAK should mirror the intended learning outcomes of each module and are carried out according to the UNAK Regulations on Course Assessment. In relation to the ESG (1.3), UNAK notes that, "...most of the assessments at UNAK are made by individual teachers even though many courses are taught by a team of teachers who all contribute to the assessments".

Assessment practices vary within the Police Science Programme. Assessments in courses usually consist of continuous assessments and final examinations. Creating and marking assessments is generally the responsibility of the teaching staff that deliver a course. Continuous assessment throughout the semester is usually in the form of projects, written assignments or take-home online examinations. These are either individual or group assignments.

Final examinations differ between courses and teachers. However, the use of Moodle (now Canvas) as a platform for examinations has been increasing in recent years. The teacher administers Moodle examinations in consultation with UNAK's Examination Manager. Supervising teachers enter the grades directly into the University's intranet, Uglá, within 12 working days from the date of the final examinations or completion of the final assignment. They then inform students of the date on which they can see their examination papers. As most are distance learners, students are invited to meet the supervising teacher through Zoom to discuss their results.

External examiners may also be called upon when students appeal their grade when they have failed an assessment. Students have the right to receive an explanation of the evaluation of their written examination, if requested, within 15 days of grades being published.

In relation to the assessment of students in Practical Police Training (at PTPD) the following regulations apply:

- *In Practical Police Training I and II, students must pass a variety of exams to examine knowledge, (multiple choice); report writing and practices in the police information data system (assignments and one final examination); use-of-force skills (procedural test and an oral examination on procedures and rules). Driving skills are examined by a 45-minute driving test and a strength and endurance test takes place at the end of the semester.*
- *In Practical Police Training III and IV, no grade is given other than a pass/fail based on the students' performance on a competence matrix.*

As recognised in the RA, students who spoke to the review team confirmed that feedback on assessment is variable with some courses offering no feedback at all and others taking a long time to provide feedback. According to the RA, teachers try to spread the assignments over the whole semester to even out students' workload; however, in the view of students, there is a lack of coordination around the assignment of projects and examinations.

Students also informed the review team that some courses seem to be slow to initiate assignments, despite talk of ensuring that the assessment workload starts earlier. In the case of one student, after one year of study, a first essay assignment was required. Students also criticised the lack of balance between courses in terms of the assignment model being multiple choice. The review team recognises that these issues are highlighted in the RA and encourages the programme team to take action to resolve them.

Some of the Police Sciences programme students have prior university degrees. During interviews, students were not able to inform the review team of the established institutional system for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer. Students have received inconsistent responses from the teaching staff concerning, for example, the acceptability of prior methodology studies from another programme.

In the case of the courses offered by PTPD, the review team was unable to tell if the assessments are linked to the learning outcomes as the UNAK programme team is given pass/fail results by PTPD; these are added to the students' assessment profiles.

*Recommendations:*

- 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 (see also pp. 35-36).
- 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.

## 2.6. Consistency in grading and assigning ECTS

The RA states that the grading system at UNAK is introduced to students on the University website. It is also included in the course syllabus by some teachers but this is not universal. Neither UNAK nor the Police Science programme have a standardised marking process.

In relation to consistency in grading (ESG 1.3), the panel was informed by both students and staff that there are indeed regulations at University level for assessment and grading but that these are at a high level that permits teachers to decide on the detail of the assessment and grading of their courses. Staff on the Police Science programme were clear that students must be informed of how they will be assessed and graded at the start of each course. In general, according to the outcomes of UNAK surveys, students agree that marking criteria are made clear in advance of each course.

The review team also heard of the risk of grade inflation, although this was deemed to be an institution-wide problem and not merely within the Police Science programme. Certainly some students corroborated this statement, especially those with experience of other Icelandic universities. Students also felt strongly that they learned more from the process of doing an assignment rather than just tests as they went through each course. Staff believe that having some benchmarking at university and programme level would be very useful and the team would encourage consideration of this at both levels.

In relation to workload and ECTS, students were strongly of the opinion that courses are not balanced; some have a much heavier workload than others and exceed 6 ECTS (e.g. Law and some of the Sociology courses). Students also felt that some of the Police Science courses at both UNAK and PTPD are easier than, for example, Psychology courses.

The guidelines of the ECTS User's Guide<sup>2</sup> are used to assign ECTS. In the Police Science programme credits are allocated uniformly across the programme courses with each credit point involving a 25-30-hour workload. This is the same for courses offered at both UNAK and PTPD.

The programme team told the review team that discussions amongst themselves and with the PEAB, had led to agreement that, as part of a package of changes to the programme that would go forward to the Curriculum Committee (see page 12) for roll out in 2021, it will be proposed that ECTS credits be adjusted according to the content of each course (within the Bologna estimation of between 25-30-hour workload for each credit point). This will be further considered through the University's quality system processes. Programme staff would also welcome a formal, university-level decision on the workload for practice-based training.

## 2.7. Staff induction, appraisal and development

The RA states that there are no specific job descriptions for the academic staff at UNAK besides the Regulations on the Work Duties of Teachers at UNAK. However, a manual for staff is published on the intranet and contains various practical information for staff, including a checklist for administrators for the reception of new staff. This is followed by a set of actions that are to be taken within the first year of employment to ensure that new staff are, e.g., introduced to the workplace as such, and information about the support that is available regarding their teaching and research. At PTPD, guidelines on staff induction are published on the intranet, along with other human resource management documents.

The RA states that sabbaticals are the most important avenue for professional development for academic staff at UNAK. Sabbaticals for a semester can be requested every three years or once every six years for a full academic year. During a sabbatical, the faculty members in question have no teaching or administrative obligations and can focus solely on research for six or twelve months. The

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/ects-users-guide\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/ects-users-guide_en)

first faculty member of the Police Science programme went on sabbatical (for one semester) in autumn 2020. UNAK also offers sabbaticals for faculty members who are working on their PhD. None of the permanent faculty of the Police Science Programme have yet gone on sabbatical as they feel unable to avail themselves of the opportunity at the current time.

At PTPD, there are no sabbaticals for staff. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC), and European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) and policing conferences remain the initial sources of development for staff members. However, the RA tells us that, due to staff workload during the academic year, the opportunities for study visits, conferences and formal education have been limited.

Other means of professional development include specific professional development days, which started in 2010. The Centre for Teaching and Learning regularly offers courses for academic staff throughout the academic year; this includes classes for teachers on the use of teaching software and relevant teaching methodologies, and occasionally the University Library delivers seminars or holds information meetings regarding updates of the services on offer. UNAK recommends that academic staff members take courses on teaching provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning or other institutions. Moreover, completing a 10-ECTS course on teaching methods in higher education is a prerequisite for academic advancement within the University. UNAK offers such a course, and it is also possible to complete a 30 ECTS Diploma on teaching in higher education at the University of Iceland.

The RA states that staff development interviews, between the Head of Faculty and academic staff members, are conducted annually, although this is often not the case. The Rector of the University held a meeting with administrators in the autumn of 2018 to encourage a more thorough and structured use of staff interviews. UNAK hopes that staff interviews will be conducted on a more regular basis in future. In 2019, the University placed an increased focus on human resources when a

new Director of Quality and Human Resources was hired, in addition to a Project Manager for Human Resources.

In the view of the review team, the institutional processes for staff appraisal and development are weak in terms of the opportunities for sabbatical leave and also in relation to a supportive staff appraisal system. Although there has been encouragement at institutional level to ensure that staff appraisal interviews are held annually, the team saw no evidence of a targeted action plan to ensure that this is the case.

Programme staff were of the view that appraisal meetings were a policy recommendation rather than mandated. They also believed that such interviews were limited to the outcomes of student evaluations each semester which, rather than providing an opportunity for staff to raise general developmental matters beyond the scope of a sabbatical or a course in relation to teaching in higher education, can appear to be punitive, in particular given the perceived link between this and the complaints process, at which point the HR department does become involved.

Staff did not believe that there was/is support for the shift in culture required when a Police Science programme is embedded in an academic environment – a change that raises a number of developmental requirements for staff, students and other stakeholders. This point was corroborated by members of staff at the PTPD who informed the review team that police culture is not in line with university culture and that the internal hierarchy and decision-making processes are different. They said that many discussions had been initiated on how to build a more integrated culture but there has been no support at the level of staff development.

One member of UNAK staff approached the Centre for Learning and Teaching which provided helpful feedback and direction on the structure of her courses. However, this was an individual initiative and not one that is promoted and coordinated by the University as part of its staff development and appraisal process.

In the view of the review team, the University should take responsibility for ensuring an obligatory process for staff appraisal interviews that are focused on development and in line with ESG 1.5. It should use the information gained from such an institution-wide process to inform itself of trends that will allow for a targeted focus on particular development opportunities. For example, in the case of the Police Science programme development around the integration of two cultures would be useful. All such policies and opportunities should apply equally to PTPD staff.

#### Commendation

- The willingness of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to provide feedback and support on individual courses.

#### Recommendation

- 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.

## 2.8. Summary evaluation of security of standards

The review team recognises the continuous work by the programme's staff and administrators to improve the programme not only content-wise, but also procedurally. However, the lack of a signed agreement between UNAK and PTPD, as specified in the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the lack of an agreed national profile for an Icelandic police officer, the lack of UNAK oversight of internship assessment, the many issues around integration and synchronicity between UNAK and PTPD and, despite recognition of many of these problems, the lack of any clear action plan(s) lead the team to conclude 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.

### 3. Student Learning Experience: Student support services

In the RA, the focus for this section was very much the analysis of the experience and perceptions of the first cohorts of students on the Police Science programme. The RA was extremely open and honest in reporting student views that were often negative, sometimes extremely so. The review team sought to supplement this with discussions with those providing support services to students and also by providing a benchmark through their own experience.

#### 3.1. Overview: Programme's management of the student learning experience

The RA provided the University's approach to the management of the student learning experience, as set out in its vision to 2023:

*The learning community at the University of Akureyri is personalised and demanding.*

*Programmes are offered at all levels of study with an emphasis on flexible course offerings in undergraduate and Master's studies. Doctoral students actively participate in the learning and research community at UNAK by being involved in teaching and undertaking research in connection with their studies.*

*All University of Akureyri programmes emphasise independent learning, critical thought and integration of up-to-date knowledge in each field with traditional learning materials.*

*There is a targeted integration of teaching and research at all levels of study, aimed at preparing students for further study or job market participation.*

The student-centred learning process can be summarised into the following elements according to the ECTS User's Guide from 2018:

- *Reliance on active rather than passive learning*
- *Emphasis on critical and analytical learning and understanding*
- *Increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student*
- *Increased autonomy of the student*

- *A reflective approach to the learning and teaching process on the part of both the student and the teacher*

Some of these themes have been covered in Section 2 of this report and the review team sought to supplement those findings by focusing on the student voice and support services and opportunities that are available to students.

### 3.2. Resources for enhancing the student learning experience

Funding for the Police Science programme is entirely reliant on that provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for a total of 40 students. Since 2016, requests by the programme for additional staffing have been turned down due to a lack of further funding. The funding problems of the programme is an issue that is touched upon on multiple occasions in the RA and it is clear that a perceived lack of resource together with a lack of transparency for the Police Science staff as to the details of the budget for the programme and how it is used have caused tensions and stress during the first years of the programme (see also 1.4 Funding and resourcing).

UNAK facilities are located in two buildings on a campus at Sólborg in Akureyri. All lecture rooms and lecture halls are equipped with computers and projectors and some have various combinations of computer screens, wireless microphones for recording, speakers, video conferencing equipment, sound systems and electric whiteboards. UNAK has a small gymnasium, as well as a term-time canteen service and cooking facilities for students.

Since January 2017, PTPD's training facilities have been housed in the former Police Academy in Reykjavík. The facilities include a large lecture room, a student kitchen and a student relaxation room. The main reception, staff offices, meeting room and staff kitchen are located on the same floor. On the 2nd floor, PTPD has access to one classroom as well as multi-use areas used for role-play scenarios.

On the first floor, PTPD has training facilities that include one sizeable use-of-force training area (with an interactive computer training system), weight room (gym), men's and women's changing rooms with showers, one training apartment with five rooms, one computer centre with 26 computers, one small classroom, an interview training room (with indigo equipment), and garage. All lecture rooms at PTPD are equipped with computers and projectors and some have various combinations of computer screens, whiteboards, microphones for recording, speakers, video conferencing equipment and sound systems. PTPD also has available a portable video recording system (video and audio).

The review team was unsure as to why there was not more transparency regarding the budget, even if it is UNAK practice to manage budgets centrally. However, although the team is of the view that funding for the programme should be kept under review, in comparison with other similar programmes, it does not believe that the programme is seriously underfunded and, due to the problems highlighted elsewhere in this report, is more likely not to be operating as efficiently as it might.

The review team heard few, if any, complaints from students about the physical resources at either UNAK or PTPD. The team would suggest that, in order to enhance the potential of offering face-to-face lectures, the programme team explores the possibility of delivering lectures at PTPD where possible, given the location of many members of academic staff.

### 3.3. Student recruitment and induction

The RA states that recruitment for the Police Science Programme differs from recruitment for most other study programmes at UNAK because of specific legal requirements. UNAK's recruitment for the Police Science programme is managed by the Office of Marketing and Public Relations in cooperation with the Schools, Faculties and PTPD. The Office is also responsible for UNAK's website; PTPD is responsible for its own website. Potential applicants can find important information on UNAK on these two websites. The Office of Marketing and Public Relations publishes a prospectus of

programmes and courses offered at UNAK. It also organises UNAK's participation in the University Day in Iceland, which is held in Reykjavík and Akureyri in cooperation with all Icelandic universities. UNAK strives for a diverse recruitment to the programme and is pleased with the current gender balance which is currently almost 50-50.

Special induction days for new students are held at the start of the first semester by the Police Science Programme. These induction days are managed by the Director of Marketing and Public Relations and the Office Managers of the Schools and involve IT personnel, the Director of the Library and Information Services and students from the Student Union. During the induction days, the students meet faculty members of the Police Science Programme, the Police Programme's Project Manager and staff members of PTPD. Students are offered a thorough introduction to the services that UNAK offers. PTPD, in collaboration with UNAK offers the students an opportunity to attempt the fitness test and the new students also meet the leaders of their student association. Team building, communication and orientation activities are now embedded within the induction period.

The review team was able to look at both websites (UNAK and PTPD) and at their descriptions of the Police Science Programme. There are discrepancies in how the programme is described and, in general, the PTPD website is less accessible than UNAK's. The review team suggests that it would assist the communication about, and integration of, the Police Science programme if there were some means of ensuring that the UNAK and PTPD websites promote the programme in a coherent and complementary way to ensure that, whichever website a student looks at, they are receiving the same information about the aims and objectives of the programme as a whole.

UNAK plans to further improve the induction process in 2021/22 by increasing the number of days to allow UNAK and PTPD to work together on joint activities. The review team encourages this action as a means of improving the integration of the programme and the communication of that integration to students.

### Commendation

- The level of accessible, on-line information about the programme on the UNAK website.

#### 3.4. The student voice and engagement of students in QA

The RA describes the student voice as 'strong' at UNAK and believes that it has grown more robust in the last few years as the Student Union (SU) has grown substantially. Students have representatives in most of UNAK's councils, committees and teams that relate directly to their interests and they are actively encouraged to ensure that their voice be heard. There is a move to increase the number of students on councils and committees to ensure that they have mutual support at such meetings. Student representatives are elected from the student body at the SU's annual meeting.

Students who participate in various councils and committees play an important role in UNAK's management and are recognised for this; for example, students who sit on UNAK's University Council and the President of SU receive a note on their graduation certificates to say that they have participated in the governance of the University. SU operates a students' rights office, which safeguards students' rights within UNAK. Counselling and other assistance are offered free of charge to help address students' issues related to their stay at UNAK.

One of the main ways in which the student voice is heard is through the student evaluations and focus groups that are held regularly and that were drawn on significantly in the drafting of the RA. The SU's main aim is to uphold students' rights and it can, upon request, act as a student's representative towards UNAK's authorities.

The RA states that the Police Science programme has tried various approaches to involve students for example, students were invited to participate in the PEAB. The RA highlights the problem of how little students involve themselves in university life due, perhaps, to lack of time as most of the students are both studying and working and also because very few students live in Akureyri.

A student association specifically for students in the Police Science Programme at UNAK, *Forseti*, was founded in 2019. Before *Forseti* was founded, Police Science students were part of the Student association for Law. The goal of the Police Student Association is to protect the common interests of students in the Faculty of Social Sciences and be their advocate within the School and outside of it. Its goal is also to maintain a diverse social life for its students and to plan social events.

It was clear to the review team that the RA reflected the student voice clearly and honestly throughout the document. Much of what it read was backed up by what students said in meetings. However, what was missing for the team was an analytical approach to what is relevant in the negative student feedback and what is not. The team was able, through discussions with students, to discover those areas where developments in the programme had been made as a response to student feedback but this did not appear to be systematic or communicated to students, who were unsure of the outcomes of their feedback and could only judge on whether or not there was an obvious change. Students in meetings displayed a mixture of the negative as reported in the RA and acknowledgement that things were improving. In particular, students in the first year who have less knowledge about the former system of police education, were less affected by the previous culture. Students that spoke to the review team had no experience of being consulted about the structure and development of the programme including new courses; their input was focused on evaluating what is in existence, although they had no experience of participating in any of UNAK's formal approval or review processes.

Although students are represented on various committees and councils, and in exercises such as the development of the RA, they were unsure of the purpose of the various representative bodies and committees (including PEAB)/the current review exercise and of their role in them.

Whilst acknowledging the care with which UNAK solicits feedback from students and the honesty with which it reports on this feedback, the review team would suggest that the University needs to go further in terms of analysis of such feedback, closing the loop in terms of informing students of

the results of their feedback and ensuring a more informed involvement of students in other capacities than just that of providing feedback.

### 3.5 Student support services

The RA provided information on the UNAK Library (UAL) The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and Student Counselling Services. It did not provide information on Careers Guidance.

The UAL aims to provide outstanding professional and personal library services to both students and staff of UNAK. Since the establishment of the Police Science Programme, both books on policing and subscriptions to electronic books on policing and journals have been purchased. The Library participates in the Iceland Consortium [www.hvar.is](http://www.hvar.is), for electronic subscriptions to journals and databases. Students and staff can connect to a local network VPN (Virtual Private Network), which provides access to electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books) that are only accessible through the University's local network. Students are encouraged to use the VPN for reading material for courses.

The Library also participates in [www.skemman.is](http://www.skemman.is), the online institutional repository of Icelandic university libraries which houses students' digital theses and dissertations as well as articles and other research material from the universities' academic staff. All the dissertations from students that have completed a BA in Police Science are available on [skemman.is](http://skemman.is). The Library provides innovative services, e.g., students can "book a librarian" for personal training; this service has been utilised by many students to date.

The practices of using the library have changed considerably with the increase of distance learning. Despite this, it suffers from lack of space: PhD students have been given workspace from the reading rooms, and there is no space for group work. In a survey done among second-year police students in 2019, 60% of the students felt that the library resources supported their learning well.

The CTL was established on January 1st, 2015. Its main role is to provide professional support to faculty members in their development of their teaching skills and integration of information technology in teaching with special emphasis on UNAK's flexible learning model. CTL organises and offers conferences and workshops for academic staff on a regular basis, as well as offering teachers, who want to enhance their courses, individual consultations both on information technology and pedagogy. It also hosts the teaching and learning material that is pertinent to PTPD.

CTL is also responsible for UNAK's computer systems' hardware and software (including Canvas), the IT help desk, and, since 2018, the Examinations Manager has become a member of the CTL staff.

There is a recording studio where faculty and students can record their material with a staff member from CTL present to assist. This studio is equipped with a variety of both hardware and software options. In addition, CTL has set up two development classrooms to accommodate flexible learning. In a survey conducted in the spring semester of 2019, 65% of students in their second year in the Police Science Diploma programme somewhat or strongly agreed that the IT resources and facilities provided by UNAK had supported their learning well.

All students have access to the Student Counselling Services at UNAK. Consultation is offered in regard to work methods and choice of studies and professions. The service is free of charge. Student Counsellors are also responsible for students with disabilities and students with specific learning difficulties or special needs. It is also possible to speak with a Student Counsellor or book a distance appointment. Students can book an appointment online and there are also walk-in hours. All conversations are confidential.

At its meeting with staff from the various services, it was clear to the review team that the students and their experience was at the heart of the work of these services. The Library, CTL and Counselling Service all provided positive examples of their work with students. The CTL discussed its role in working together with PTPD on online delivery of courses.

Both the Counselling Service and Marketing were required to deal with communication issues at a time when negativity about the new Police Education programme was at its height. Marketing was trying to answer questions posed by the media and both services were called on to communicate with students. Both services felt hampered by a lack of information on which to base advice to students as mainly they were obliged to advise the students to try and get a meeting with the main (Faculty) office, leaving them with the feeling that they could have provided a better service. In fact, the students who spoke to the review team had no complaints about any of the student support services.

In general, the review team is of the view that the support services available to students at UNAK are appropriate and adequate. However, the lack of a communications strategy limits the information that they can provide to students and that they need to build their services in general, which lessens their value.

#### Commendations

- The well-functioning ICT platform and digital library resources.
- The willingness of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to provide feedback and support on individual courses.

#### Recommendation

- A clear communication strategy should be developed at institutional level to ensure that communication between support services and students is effective, that students are aware of the services and that the services are able to provide accurate information to students.

### 3.6 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

The Police Sciences programme is relatively small in terms of the number of participating students. It would thus provide a very good platform for intensive cooperation between teaching staff and

students. The review team noted that students' views on working with staff members were varied. However, it was noteworthy that all students agreed that they had no experience of being consulted in developing the structure of the programme or in planning new courses. The institutional process for such involvement is operationalised through the student representative for the programme who sits on the curriculum committee and on the faculty committee. However, neither the individual students nor the student community *Forseti* appeared to be aware of this.

As previously mentioned, some members of teaching staff commented that many students appear to be primarily interested in the practical side of the programme. Their interest in the academic side may even be described as limited. It might be useful to improve communication between teaching staff and students to overcome these challenges. This would bring the students more into the centre of the programme, in line with ESG 1.3. Effective communication may also solve the problem of students feeling that there is repetition between the UNAK and the PTPD parts of the programme.

### 3.7. Use of sessional/adjunct teachers

The RA states that the Police Science Programme uses sessional lecturers in most of its courses. These teachers can be divided into two groups: First, those with academic credentials that teach courses on specific subjects and/or are specialists in police-orientated subjects like traffic law or criminal procedures from within the police organisation. Some of these teachers also have a responsibility, at least partly, for assignments or final examinations. The other type of sessional teachers are usually police officers that have specific knowledge of what is being taught. These teachers typically come in as guest speakers and do not have any responsibility beyond delivering a lecture. According to UNAK's informal guidelines, temporary lecturers should, as a general guideline, not cover more than 30% of all teaching at the University.

UNAK teachers must deliver a specific number of credits. If they invite sessional teachers or guest speakers onto their courses, then they need to transfer teaching credits from themselves. The RA states that this is problematic as it has the potential to impact on the salaries of UNAK staff. The RA

suggests that consideration should be given to paying police officers that have input into courses separately from the supervising teachers' credits.

The review team was able to confirm the statement in the RA through interviews with staff and it was clear that, despite the benefits that the use of sessional teachers bring to a course in terms of enhancing the student experience, they are not optimally used for the reasons described above. In the view of the review team this is counter-productive, especially in a programme that is intended to train future police officers. It strongly urges UNAK to act on the suggestion in the RA that consideration should be given to paying police officers that have input into courses separately from the supervising teachers' credits.

### 3.8. Internationalisation

UNAK and PTPD participate in the NORDCOP partnership programme which funds initiatives and events around various themes (e.g., use of force, cybersecurity, integration of theory and practice, migration, etc.). Both UNAK and PTPD have NORDCOP representatives that attend meetings, workshops and other events and share with their respective institutions so that Iceland can learn from best practices in other Nordic countries.

Each year, UNAK and PTPD participate in the NORDCOP exchange for students. Students from the other Nordic police universities are received (currently there is a student from Finland studying at UNAK), and UNAK/PTPD has sent Icelandic police students abroad, although only a small number of Icelandic students have so far applied for the exchange. UNAK's cooperation with foreign universities is also considerable, particularly with regard to research, and many faculty members participate in international projects.

Beginning in 2020, UNAK students will also be able to spend a full semester studying at the Finnish Police University College as part of their BA in Police Science (most of the Icelandic exchange students will consist of students who have graduated as police officers). Exchange students from the Finnish Police University College will also be able to spend a semester at UNAK as part of their

studies. The agreement between UNAK and the Finnish Police University College also involves teacher exchanges, although the focus has mostly been on student exchanges.

The RA provides many further examples of international cooperation including international visits: UNAK and PTPD have hosted several delegates from police programmes from around the world to improve police education and promote police science research in Iceland. These include individual visits from partners from abroad, as well as visits that are part of either the Policing and Society Conference or the Police Science Symposia.

In February 2018, the Police Science Programme hosted its inaugural Policing and Society Conference, where the theme was Rural Policing. As part of the conference, the Police Science Programme invited two keynote speakers and meetings took place before and after the conference in which the needs of police officers living and working in rural and remote areas were considered by the programme team.

Many research projects in which programme staff are involved also have their roots in international partnerships and the RA provided multiple examples of these, many of which go beyond the Nordic region.

It was clear to the review team that internationalisation has clearly been one of the spearheads of the programme, not only in the field of education, but also in the field of research. It is of the view that the programme has developed a functioning network of international contacts for the purposes of benchmarking and ensuring the application of relevant best practices. Although the numbers of exchange students are relatively low (both incoming and outgoing), students benefit from the international contacts of the programme in terms of benchmarking and staff research as it filters into the revision of Police Science courses.

### 3.9. Management of information and public information

Under this heading in the RA, the University describes the UNAK website as, “the most valuable platform for publishing information”. The leading site is in Icelandic, but there is also a slightly shorter English version. The webpage provides essential details on the Police Science Programme. It also allows access to curriculum, course catalogues and information on the mode of delivery, which is especially important given the popularity of distance learning.

The UNAK website contains University strategies, relevant laws, regulations, detailed information on staff competence, along with annual reports from the past ten years.

The website of PTPD provides all information regarding the requirements for the enrolment to the Police Science Programme.

The review team would also suggest that the University should consider the difference between ‘Information Management’ and ‘Public Information’, as defined in the ESG (1.7 and 1.8). 1.7: Information Management defines its standard as “Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities”. The team would suggest that what UNAK describes in this section of its RA is rather Public Information (1.8).

The team would also point out that it was told about a data committee as one of the three pillars of UNAK’s quality assurance system; however, it was unable to find anyone at any of the interviews that it held who could provide any information about this committee or its work.

As noted by the review team in Section 3.3 above, UNAK reflects in the RA that, “It is imperative to increase the consistency of the information provided about the study line for prospective police officers on the PTPD webpage and UNAK’s webpage”. The team would repeat its suggestion that this is carried out without delay.

It would also suggest that UNAK consider ensuring that all information for all stakeholders is clear on the website as it was apparent at some interviews that those speaking to the team were unsure of some information or of where to find it.

### 3.10. Summary evaluation of the student learning experience

In conclusion, the review team believes that, despite its modest resources, the Police Sciences Programme at UNAK has a competent teaching staff and an inclusive student body. Although it will be useful to keep funding under review, the inherent problems in the programme described in this report are more likely to impact directly on its operation than a lack of funding.

The theme of communication and its limitations was noticeable in relation to the headings in this section of the report. As well as there being no information on how UNAK uses data for quality assurance or enhancement purposes, the review team noted a lack of coherence in terms of communication of the programme via the UNAK and PTPD websites and a need to close the feedback loop in terms of student evaluation.

Communication issues were also raised in section two of this report, in particular in relation to the lack of comprehensive communication channels to allow for discussion of an agreement on the profile of an Icelandic police officer.

In addition, the review team is of the view that current policy around teaching credits disadvantages the programme and, thus, the student learning experience by creating no incentive to use guest and/or sessional lecturers, even when they would clearly add to the experience offered by the programme.

All of the above lead the team to conclude that limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK's present and likely future arrangements to manage the student learning experience in respect of its award of Diploma in Police Science.

## 4. Management of Research: Links between teaching and research

### 4.1. The programme's research policy and strategy

The RA set out UNAK's Research and Innovation Vision (from the Strategy of UNAK 2018-2023) as being:

*The basis for increased research at the University of Akureyri will be enhanced activity of research groups which will forge ahead in their fields of study or to address comprehensive challenges in society at each time. Research groups are the core of the University's doctoral studies, where doctoral students will be funded through domestic and foreign research funds.*

*The research community at the University of Akureyri will furthermore provide students with skills for innovation in a broad context and all fields of study. A new and creative approach is a prerequisite for students being able to tackle the diverse environment they will face following their studies and, at the same time, encourages students to make use of the opportunities which consist in the expected changes.*

Currently, given the relative newness of the Police Science Programme, research considerations also include the Faculty of Social Sciences as the unit of analysis. It deems this appropriate as members of the Faculty of Social Sciences have a disciplinary background in a broad range of social sciences and humanities, including anthropology, criminology, economics, education, history, Icelandic, philosophy, policing, political sciences and sociology. Much of the research conducted within the Faculty falls into interdisciplinary areas including the study programmes on media, modernity and police science, as well as the social science concentrations on the topics of arctic studies, criminology, gender studies, and rural studies. Other staff within the University also contribute to relevant research in the field.

Neither the Faculty of Social Sciences nor the Police Science Programme has developed a single overarching research strategy. For UNAK, this reflects the diversity of research conducted within the Faculty of Social Sciences, as well as a commitment to academic freedom. The RA states that Faculty members have actively resisted UNAK's administrative pressures to define an overarching research strategy for the Faculty of Social Sciences as a whole or to prioritize research collaboration within the Faculty. Faculty members have instead been encouraged to pursue state-of-the-art research in their respective areas of interest. UNAK believes that this approach has been successful. However, this policy may also lead to an imbalance in the thematic research areas when assessed from a policing and police education development viewpoint. Currently it seems that criminology is a particularly strong research area within the programme but at the same time, for example, policing practices and police tactics are practically non-existent as themes of research.

Staff who spoke to the review team agreed that there was a desire not to stifle academic freedom by the drafting of a unified research strategy. The programme staff do not simply want to produce papers but would like to be able to conduct their research as part of a team. At the moment, teaching and programme administration do not allow for this so the focus has been on the dissemination of research.

Staff do believe that there will be a need for a more strategic approach to research as there are very specific areas of research that would be relevant to the programme and to policing in Iceland. The initial proposal talked about a fully funded research centre but this has not yet materialised.

Senior level staff described research at UNAK as having been a challenge over the last 15 years. The vision and mission for 2023 clearly demonstrate a desire for more focus on research. However, the Icelandic system of extra pay for extra teaching works against research.

The strategy for encouraging international links and collaboration was in recognition of the fact that, to advance in research work, there is a need to be part of a research group (internally or externally). UNAK hopes that this will benefit the staff member, the programme and the University.

As a department, Police Science should have education at all three levels. As a fully functioning department, it needs to have the requisite staff. UNAK's goal is that there should be a Masters programme in three years' time and a doctoral programme three years after that.

The review team found it understandable that research resources in a small university unit are rather limited. It found all the research themes mentioned in the review as relevant to police sciences. In the experience of the team, it is a common characteristic of similar sociology-oriented academic units to work in a similar way. However, the team was of the view that a research agenda or strategy for Police Science would provide coherence, visibility and expertise; it would also strengthen the relation with the teaching activities within the programme and help to realise any ambitions for a masters/doctoral programme and assist in highlighting the University's role as a key influential actor in society.

The review team also found that there was little research aimed directly at improving the police as a service provider to society, for example, police tactics, police leadership and cooperation between police and other authorities and sectors of life.

#### 4.2. Monitoring of quality of outputs

The RA states that the quality of research outputs is monitored, in addition to the peer review process, in accordance with the Regulation on Quality Assurance of Teaching and Research in Higher Education Institutions No. 1368/2018. In the University's view, the Faculty's research productivity is in many respects satisfactory but that there is room for improvement. However, it also points out that the Faculty is understaffed and has had its student-teacher ratio increase from 13.7 in the 2012/2013 academic year to 36.5:1 in 2019/2020 which, it believes, affects research productivity. This is particularly the case in the Police Science Programme, whose student-teacher ratio exceeds 50:1.

Police Science programme staff agreed that institutional monitoring goals for, and monitoring of, research were clear and transparent, although they did feel that the monitoring should be more

qualitative. The points system whereby staff receive additional payment for publications does not seem to motivate the staff to undertake research. The review team was informed that research points are easy to attain, but staff also commented that the system favours senior members of academic staff and is unfair to those in the early stages of their career who are not as experienced in research and in writing publications. The system is considered to create unwanted competition and does not encourage teamwork in research.

### 4.3. Benchmarks

The RA states that the Faculty of Social Sciences is currently working on benchmarks and is especially looking at international benchmarking. The most common benchmark is research productivity, measured as research points. UNAK believes that the Faculty of Social Sciences also needs to extend its benchmarks to include other social science departments. Many of the benchmarks used by the Police Sciences programme are through its international collaborations which are discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.4.

### 4.4. Collaboration

The RA states that members of the Faculty of Social Sciences have varied disciplinary backgrounds, and much of the research conducted within the Faculty is interdisciplinary. Research within the Faculty tends to be collaborative, including large-scale research group projects and relatively unstructured collaboration in smaller groups. Research within the interdisciplinary Police Science Programme includes examples of both.

The staff at UNAK, specifically the Police Science Programme, and in PTPD consider it very important to have professionals from within the field contributing to teaching and research to better integrate academic education and practical training and bridge the theory-practice gap. An example of this is the research group RECPOL - Recruitment, Education, and Careers in the Police: a European Longitudinal Study, where Iceland is joined by Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, along with Belgium, Spain (Catalonia) and Scotland.

Programme staff told the review team that part of their plans for the future is to set up the research centre mentioned in the original agreement and for the director for that centre to draft a research strategy for colleagues and for international partners.

The review team believes that the level of collaboration achieved by the Police Science programme, in particular with international partners, is impressive and this already does, and will, impact positively on the programme in many ways. However, it encourages the programme to focus further on research aimed directly at improving the police as a service provider to Icelandic society.

#### 4.5. Teaching-research balance and impact of research on teaching

According to the RA, the Police Science Programme strives to integrate research and teaching as much as possible. Firstly, the programme offers courses specifically aimed at the development of students' research skills (i.e., Practical Skills; Research Methods and Statistical Analysis; Research Methods for Social Sciences; and Qualitative Methods). BA students take the course Police Science Seminar, where they must gather peer-reviewed material and write a comprehensive research proposal for their BA thesis and then present it. BA students must also take the Current Issues in Policing course during their last semester, where they gather and present on peer-reviewed material. Both of these courses link into the BA Thesis (12 ECTS) that students must write in their final semester of study.

Academic staff in the Police Science programme have integrated their ongoing research into their courses. Examples include research on the challenges and practices of rural police officers in Iceland.

While the Police Science Programme does not currently have graduate students, it does have potential overlap with the MA Programme in Social Sciences, which offers a research-focused MA degree in Social Sciences. As a case in point, there are now several criminologists in the Faculty of Social Sciences and UNAK, including two in the Police Science Programme, who could supervise MA students researching police-related subjects.

The Police Science Programme is still new enough for the tradition of student-teacher research collaboration to be under-developed. The RA states that, “more needs to be done to promote student research participation”. As discussed earlier in this report, research is strongly orientated towards criminology and related fields. This should be taken into consideration in any future recruitment of staff and invitations to visiting professors.

Part of the funding for the programme should be spent on bringing in visiting professors to strengthen the research base of the Police Science Programme as UNAK’s original proposal states. Although the programme has hosted several academics who do research in police science for short periods, it has not yet introduced visiting professors.

The RA reflects on the fact that academic staff are burdened with educational and administrative tasks which impedes their abilities to conduct research. UNAK hopes that by reducing the number of students, this will improve. The University believes that, with regard to the connection between teaching and research, it is clear that productive research domains have been developed on topics that interact with the course material. However, the review team is unclear (due to its inability to review course material), how research is being fed into the course material and lectures.

The review team spoke to staff and students of the Police Science programme about the impact of research on teaching. Students were of the view that, whilst they were being introduced to multiple research articles from other countries, they were not being introduced to Icelandic research on teaching. However, they were relatively unconcerned about this as they felt that there were other aspects of the programme that needed to be improved that took precedence over it building its research base.

Staff were aware of this lack of statistics and research into Icelandic crime. They believe that, if they are able to reach a more stable base on which to function and with the recruitment of further staff, the balance between teaching and research will be redressed. They are keen to use their 40% research time for research but at the moment are more focused on meeting student expectations.

The review team heard that research in general poses a great challenge because there is currently no cross-fertilization between academia and the police. The academic staff feel that they are overburdened with teaching duties and suggested that research could only be done during sabbaticals.

The review team urges the University to improve research inputs into Police Sciences teaching. It would also like to stress the added-value of creating an overarching research strategy that would help connect research with education. Such a strategy does not necessarily need to impede academic freedom.

#### 4.6. Support for grant applications and grant management

The RA reiterates that the research obligations of faculty at UNAK are 40% for Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors and 31% for Adjuncts. In addition to this emphasis on research, faculty members can apply for a temporary increase in their research obligations and a corresponding decrease in teaching obligations. The UNAK Research Fund (*Vísindasjóður*) also awards small grants for research projects, travel and publications. UNAK's Project Fund awards grants for smaller projects and UNAK's Professional Development Fund can aid in pursuing research.

Academic faculty can apply for a one-semester sabbatical every six semesters or a one-year sabbatical every six years. Sabbaticals are competitive across UNAK, and applications are ranked based on research productivity. In addition to salaries, UNAK covers some travel and living expenses.

Academic staff at UNAK are also encouraged to pursue professional development, which often involves direct or indirect research support. Academic staff pursuing a PhD can, for example, apply for a reduction in their teaching load. Faculty can also apply for professional development funds through the Faculty union and for Nordplus support. Professional development days, intended to foster research, have also been organised by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Staff at UNAK are also supported in their research by the University of Akureyri Research Centre in the form of consultation and help with grant writing as well as administering surveys, focus groups, etc.

UNAK's Centre for Teaching and Learning, as well as the University Library, regularly organises events and seminars that support and facilitate research. Faculty members are also eligible to apply for various research grants administered by the Icelandic Centre for Research (*Rannís*) and other institutions meant to support academic research.

It was clear to the review team that there is some disappointment amongst programme staff that the portion of the funding from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture intended for supporting research via a Police Science Research Centre with a full-time director has not come to fruition and the faculty and programme staff are unclear as to how funding for the programme from the Ministry is allocated, despite repeated inquiries to UNAK's administration. Programme staff were firmly of the view that there is no support from the University for research and that they have had to take the initiative to form research teams with parties from outside the university. The review team understood that by 'support' in this context, it was explicitly funding that was in question. There is no separate support service at the institutional level to support researchers with regard to grant applications, data management, ethical advice and so on.

#### 4.7. General comments on the management of research

In relation to the management of research, the review panel concluded that staff have invested in internationalisation through connecting to international research networks and they clearly seek to contribute to police research in the Nordic countries. However, there is no overarching research strategy or policy for the programme that would help focus research initiatives. The programme would benefit from a closer cooperation with the Icelandic police to identify areas where knowledge-based policing would be the chosen policy. Access to police data systems (not only crime statistics) would provide necessary information for policing research. In addition, there is little support concerning research development and valorisation at institutional level. The University should consider a means of facilitating data management, research ethics and funding, as well as the support of PhD students if and when relevant to Police Science.

## 5. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

In line with ESG 1.9 (Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes), many of the main programme level quality assurance processes, as required by the University, have been dealt with in Section 2.4 (Design, approval, monitoring and review) of this report. This section, therefore, deals with UNAK's quality assurance system more generically (see ESG 1.1) and considers how far the institutional level processes support the Police Science programme in assuring and enhancing its provision.

The Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education provided guidelines and process for the review of the Police Science programme at UNAK. As per those guidelines, the review is of a programme but is set in the context of an IWR. The review team would point out that it can only comment on UNAK's quality assurance and enhancement system based on its experience of what it saw in relation to the Police Science programme. Its comments may or may not be relevant in a broader context.

### 5.1. General institutional context under which the programme operates

The RA states that, "the quality assurance system of the University of Akureyri is based on the ESG. This entails that guidelines and processes regarding students' learning experiences and the quality of their degrees are written with the aim of meeting the ESG requirements".

In addition to the ESG, UNAK bases its processes for safeguarding standards and assuring quality enhancement on QEF2 (as it is described in the second edition of the Quality Enhancement Handbook for Icelandic Higher Education). This framework has two main cornerstones, Subject-Level Reviews (SLRs) which are institution-led with participation from one or two external foreign academic experts and which take place at each of UNAK's academic units every seventh year, and Institution-Wide Review (IWR) of the whole institution, which takes place every seventh year. UNAK is currently preparing for such a review, which will take place in 2021.

The Rector has the main responsibility for quality within the University and the Director of Quality and Human Resources is responsible for daily operations. Deans are responsible for quality within their Schools and are accountable to the Rector and the University Council in quality matters.

UNAK's Quality Council (QC) operates under Regulations on the Quality Council of the University of Akureyri set by the University Council. The Director of Quality and Human Resources is Chair of QC. Other members are three academic representatives appointed by the Schools, two representatives from the University Office and two from the Student Union. The QC convenes once a month during the academic year's two semesters and its role is:

- *to ensure that the University always fulfils the external requirements set for the quality of its work*
- *to draw interest to quality considerations within the University*
- *to be a forum for discussion and decision-making on the quality considerations of the University*
- *to contribute to improvement and development of teaching and assessment within the University*
- *to approve, supervise, and ensure periodic review of departments and degrees*
- *to monitor research quality within the University and work with its Board of Sciences on developing criteria and scales used to assess scientific operations at the University of Akureyri*
- *to compile, evaluate, and respond to that information on the operations of the University which relates to quality*
- *to take a stand on important changes in the operations of the University that may affect quality in its operations*
- *to discuss preparation and implementation of a self-evaluation and external evaluation of the University and to ensure follow-up Minutes from QC's meeting are published on UNAK's intranet, Uglá.*

In discussion with University level staff, the review team was informed that UNAK's aim was to embed quality enhancement across the institution thereby ensuring that the issues that are raised in SLRs are tackled. The team was told that UNAK was the first university in Iceland to recruit specifically to the role of quality officer; a Quality Handbook has been produced and training in quality management for staff has been initiated. Quality assurance is mostly focused through the Faculty.

The review team was informed that there are three key teams that manage QA within the University; these are the Curriculum Committee and two others that deal with data and with student evaluations. Although it came across multiple examples of the role of the Curriculum Committee, it did not find any widespread knowledge of the other two committees. However, the impact of student evaluations on the programme was clear. The team was surprised that there is no mention of these three key committees in the terms of reference for the Quality Council to explain how they interact with that body.

It was evident to the review team that the Police Science programme team is very clear as to the role of the Curriculum Committee. It told the team about a large package of changes that would go to that committee to revise various aspects of the programme in 2021, including the length of the internship and the revision of credits in relation to workload. From what the review team could understand, the Curriculum Committee appears to be the point of control for programmes. It understood clearly that, from the institutional point of view, it is not possible to change course catalogues unless it is agreed with students; in all normal circumstances, UNAK adheres strictly to this. All changes should go through the Quality Council.

However, the impact of this at programme level is that it appears that changing content can be done easily but changing the structure (e.g. replacing one course with another or changing the number of allocated credits) can reportedly take 12-18 months due to institutional processes and mechanisms.

From the review team's perspective, the key issue is that programme staff are not provided with a supportive annual monitoring mechanism that allows them to monitor smaller tweaks and changes to the programme and to consider student feedback annually in an environment that encourages reflection. It is the view of the team that, essentially, the UNAK quality system does not currently provide a system for continuous development in the spirit of Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles. The current practices rather provide tools for quality control, not for quality assurance. It was clear that the Police Science staff, together with PTPD staff, believe that they are monitoring the programme at their weekly meetings. The fact that this responsibility for monitoring is embedded at programme level is laudable. However, the review team is of the view that the programme team needs an annual process that will allow it the space to monitor the impact of smaller changes on the programme and that UNAK needs such information to allow it to maintain oversight of its programmes more regularly than once every seven years (periodic review). Student feedback and various regular internal assessments should be used as essential analytical information.

#### Recommendation

- The University should open up discussion with the programme team to find a way to ensure that the quality management system supports the programme team by providing the space to reflect on the programme, its mission, goals, objectives, content and structure outside of the requirements of the Curriculum Committee. A regular (annual?) monitoring process in line with ESG 1.9 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 review team would also comment on the fact that there appears to be no link between the three key committees that make up the institutional QA system. The role of student evaluations and feedback is clear and it was obvious to the team that the students' voice is heard clearly and impacts on the development of the programme.

### Recommendation

- The University quality management system should provide the programme team with a solid process in line with ESG 1.9 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. Such a process could be an integral part of the monitoring process recommended above.

The review team also suggests looking at the content and structure of the UNAK Quality Manual to ensure that the institutional level quality policy is set out clearly and the various processes and committees are explained in a way that clarifies the institutional quality assurance and enhancement system. This is in line with ESG 1.1. Finally, whilst students and student support services were aware of UNAK's quality assurance framework, they were not able to talk about it in any detail and were not clear as to their role or involvement in the framework.

### 5.2. Strategic planning and action planning

The RA was not clear on how action plans were developed at different points in the quality assurance system and this aspect was missing for the review team throughout the review. Indeed, some of the reflective sections of the RA recognise that there is no action plan in place to respond to some of the issues raised.

This led the review team to wonder how the institutional framework for quality assurance and enhancement functions as a whole in terms of PDCA. The recommendations in Section 5.1 above should provide some means of inserting action planning into the QA framework.

### 5.3 Drawing on international experience

UNAK clearly states that it bases its institutional quality assurance and enhancement framework on the ESG, although it does not mention other international influences. As this report demonstrates, although there is alignment with the ESG Part One, this alignment could be strengthened. A

reconsideration of all standards in Part One of the ESG would be a helpful exercise to conduct in advance of the 2021 IWR.

#### 5.4. Domestic co-operation

The Police Science programme is a very clear example of the need for close co-operation and collaboration with a domestic partner (PTPD). Many aspects of this collaboration are set out in other sections of this report and this section does not repeat those. Instead, it highlights two points made during interviews that the review team held with staff:

At institutional level, UNAK agrees that it had not had a strong relationship or contact with PTPD to date specifically in relation to quality assurance and recognises that closer, collaborative work in the future would be to the advantage of both institutions and the Police Science programme. At PTPD, staff made it very clear that they would welcome contact from UNAK in relation to quality assurance and would be very willing to look at how they might integrate their processes into the quality assurance and enhancement framework.

The PEAB provides an effective communication channel with the police units and unions, although it has been rather inactive recently. The current long meetings of one to two days several times a year could also serve as an opportunity to assess the professional skills level of programme graduates and shorter interim meetings would allow for other matters to be discussed in a timely way.

##### Recommendation

- The University's quality management system should incorporate PTPD to further assist with integration.

#### 5.5. Planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

Many of the changes that have been implemented in the Police Science Programme have been made after discussions with students and, more recently, after working with students and representatives from the police districts and various police associations in the PEAB. Whilst laudable, and in line with

the recommendation in Section 5.1, further consideration of the roles and responsibilities of staff and students should be considered. A constructive dialogue, based on student feedback, is in order, in keeping with the concept of Student-Centred Learning (ESG 1.3); Such a dialogue would also serve to deepen the students' understanding of their programme, its coherence and its objectives.

The RA states:

*the Police Science programme reviews the curricula yearly and has from the beginning of the study programme, implemented several changes, both by changing individual courses and adding new courses. The PTPD staff and PEAB also take part in curriculum development.*

*UNAK's Curriculum Committees annually review the University's curriculum and course catalogue. The Committees work according to specific rules set by the Schools. Curriculum Committees review the curriculum and make suggestions to Faculty Meetings for curriculum amendments. Curriculum Committees consist of representatives from academic staff, appointed by the relevant Faculty Meeting, and students, selected by their student associations.*

As recommended in Section 5.1, further examination of the concept of monitoring is advised (see also ESG 1.9). The reader is referred to Sections 2.4 and 5.1. for additional information relevant to these topics.

## 5.6. Summary evaluation of the quality assurance and enhancement system

It is clear that both the ESG and the Icelandic QEF2 have been taken into consideration in developing the UNAK quality assurance system. However, neither reference framework, and in particular the former, has been successfully contextualised for the benefit of the institution and to support its programmes.

It is also clear that the QA system is still being developed; the role of the QA and HRM Director and the existence of a Quality Manual are evidence that UNAK takes quality assurance and enhancement seriously. At the moment, as it appeared to the review team, there is more of an assurance than an enhancement focus and more could be done, formally and informally, to support programme staff. For example, it is clear that UNAK has created a culture whereby students feel free to voice their views openly and honestly, and the team could see that the Police Science programme staff do their best to respond to student feedback. However, the feedback loop is not closed – students are not informed of what can (and, importantly, cannot) be done in relation to their feedback. This is important in terms of ensuring that the students understand the programme context and of the limitations that might hinder action; it is important in terms of ensuring that they have enough understanding so that they can play an active role in their education (ESG.1.3). In addition, it was difficult to see where programme feedback was analysed and used for programme development purposes as opposed to immediate changes made in response.

The matter of student evaluation is also important in that it is described as one of the three pillars of the QA system, the others being the data committee and the Curriculum Committee. However, although the roles of the student evaluation system and the Curriculum Committee were understood by programme staff, they were unsure of any link between the two and even less sure of the existence of a data committee. In other words, the three pillars of the system were not understood in that collective context.

Most QA systems rely on a PDCA cycle (or a variant of this). Although there was evidence of doing and checking, the review team saw little evidence of action planning as a result of QA processes.

Finally, the lack of institutional oversight by UNAK of the QA systems at PTPD is a major flaw and one which, given the very collaborative nature of the Diploma in Police Science, should be rectified as soon as possible. Given that the next UNAK IWR is in 2021, the review team hopes that the comments made in this report will help with preparation for that review.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. General summary

The themes of communication and integration encompass almost all of the key points that the review team has made in this report. The review team recognises the continuous work by the programme's staff and administrators to improve the programme, not only content-wise but also procedurally. However, the lack of a signed agreement between UNAK and PTPD, as specified in the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the lack of an agreed national profile for an Icelandic police officer, the lack of UNAK oversight of internship assessment, the many issues around integration and synchronicity between UNAK and PTPD and, despite recognition of many of the problems, the lack of any clear action plan(s) convinced the team that the initial rushed planning and implementation of the programme was still too much in evidence after five years.

The review team noted a lack of coherence in terms of communication of the programme via the UNAK and PTPD websites and communication issues also included the lack of comprehensive communication channels to allow for discussion of, and agreement on, the profile of an Icelandic police officer.

The review team believes that, despite its modest resources, the Police Sciences Programme at UNAK has a competent teaching staff and an inclusive student body. The inherent problems in the programme described in this report are more likely to impact directly on its operation than is a lack of funding.

The review team believes that, with the right support and opportunity for reflection and action planning, the programme in Police Science can overcome its current problems. It hopes that the recommendations made in this report will assist UNAK and PTPD staff at programme and institutional level to consider them under the thematic headings of integration and communication. The team hopes that the recommendations can be prioritised and actioned with a view to stabilising

and embedding the Police Science programme as a valuable and respected qualification in Icelandic society.

## 6.2. Summary of strengths

The strengths identified by the review team include:

- The integration of police training in the higher education system and the resulting focus of the programme in aiming to change and modernise the Icelandic police force (see Section 1.7)
- The location of the programme in the School of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences which allows students to participate in a range of relevant courses (see Section 1.7)
- The potential of the Police Education Advisory Board (PEAB) as a vehicle for ongoing monitoring and revision of the programme to ensure that it remains relevant to all stakeholders (see Section 2.4.4)
- The effort made by programme and faculty staff in UNAK and the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD) to improve the programme since its initial, hasty inception and the increased cooperation with PTPD at programme level, including regular, weekly meetings (see Section 2.4.5)
- The inclusive nature of the distance learning aspects of the programme in allowing those students who would not otherwise be able to enrol access to the programme (see Section 2.4.6)
- The well-functioning ICT platform and digital library resources (see Sections 2.4.6 and 3.5)
- The willingness of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to provide feedback and support on individual courses (see Sections 2.7 and 3.5)

- The level of accessible, on-line information about the programme on the UNAK website (see Section 3.3)

### 6.3 Summary of areas for improvement

Areas of improvement include:

- The resourcing of the programme should be considered by both the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Ministry of Justice, as well as UNAK (see Section 1.4)
- There should be more transparency at institutional level about the allocation of the financing for the programme (see Section 1.4)
- 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 (see Section 1.7)
- 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 (see Sections 1.7 and 2.4.5)
- 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 should be communicated through the formal agreement between UNAK and PTPD and should be communicated to students (see Section 1.7)
- 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 (see Sections 1.7 and 3.5)

- 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 (see Section 2.4.1)
- 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*' (see Section 2.4.6)
- 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 (see Section 2.4.7)
- 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 (see Sections 2.4.7 and 2.5)
- The University should disseminate its policy for recognition of prior learning (see Section 2.5)
- The University should further develop its assessment feedback/response system between teaching staff and students (see Section 2.5)
- 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 (see Section 2.7)
- 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 (see Section 5.1)

- 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 (see Section 5.1)
- The University's quality management system should incorporate PTPD to further assist with integration (see Section 5.4)

#### 6.4. Judgment on managing standards

The review team concludes 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.

#### 6.5. Judgment on managing quality of student learning experience

The review team concludes that limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK's present and likely future arrangements to manage the student learning experience in respect of its award of Diploma in Police Science.

### 7. Delivery of the contract on Diploma programme

In addition to the judgements on academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience, part of the panel's task was to evaluate to what extent UNAK was fulfilling the conditions of its contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in respect of the programme in Police Science.

The panel was made aware of the circumstances under which UNAK bid for and was allocated the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and under which it developed and implemented the programme:

*In early 2016, the Icelandic Government announced that education for prospective police officers would be moved to the university level in the near future. In early July 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture put forward a proposal to Icelandic universities for a bid to implement Police Science; the deadline for the bid was 22nd July 2016 with the evaluation process to be completed by 8th August 2016. On 23rd August 2016, MESC announced that the University of Akureyri had been selected to develop and deliver the basic education for prospective police officers in Iceland.*

Given the limited time in which to develop the necessary infrastructure or to recruit the required staff, UNAK opened up recruitment for Police Science students. Three weeks later, on 12th September 2016, 122 students had been recruited and began their studies on the newly established Police Science programme. The contract between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and UNAK was signed on 26th October 2016, in other words more than six weeks after students had commenced their studies on the programme. Those who successfully completed their studies would receive a Diploma level qualification as police officers. The contract states that the Diploma programme for prospective police officers is subject to legal definition; consequently, no programme may be offered under this name other than that leading to the professional qualification of Police Officer.

The panel was asked to limit its analysis of the fulfilment of the contract to five areas which are set out below, preceded by a general, introductory paragraph.

### 7.1. General contract information

The contract states:

*The University of Akureyri is to enter into an agreement with the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development on the arrangement and implementation of practical police training. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture must be consulted on the drawing up of the agreement.*

At the time of the review, this formal agreement still did not exist. In the view of the panel, the elaboration of such an agreement would provide the starting point for the resolution of many issues that the programme is currently facing. Although the programme staff at both the PTPD and UNAK have set up a working relation, there is no structural collaboration at the institutional level which hampers communication, monitoring the learning outcomes and training.

## 7.2. Admission criteria for the diploma programme in Police Science

The contract states:

*Admission to the diploma programme in Police Science must take place in accordance with the provisions of Article 19 of the Higher Education Act, No 63/2006. In collaboration with the relevant higher education institution, the Centre selects up to 40 students to participate in vocational training, in accordance with Article 38 of the Police Act, No 90/1996, as amended. The Centre's decision on the selection of students for vocational training is final. In the event that a student who has been admitted to the diploma programme in Police Science does not meet the requirements for enrolment in vocational training, the University must endeavour to reassign already earned credits to other programmes that it teaches, to the extent possible. [...] The University will endeavour to admit students from all parts of the country, irrespective of residence. The Centre will select students for vocational training in accordance with Article 38 of the Police Act''.*

The PTPD selects up to 40 students to participate in the vocational training. It does this independently and its decision is final. In the past, although the University could reassign credits to allow unsuccessful students to move into a BA programme, this caused anxiety amongst students in their first year who were unsure of whether or not they would be selected despite having been admitted to the first semester of the diploma. As of 2021, this will change and students will be selected for the vocational element of the programme before the first academic year begins. This is a positive development. Students who choose not to continue with their studies on the Police

Science programme may be able to transfer to another programme if numbers permit. Student counselling is available for individual support and guidance. Through its distance learning policy, UNAK does admit students from all parts of Iceland, irrespective of their location of residence.

### 7.3. Content and quality of the programme

The contract states:<sup>3</sup>

*The objective of the diploma programme in Police Science is to offer every year a Police Science course for up to 40 full-year students, leading to the award of a professional university-level qualification at the end of two years of study. The diploma programme in Police Science is subject to legal definition; consequently, no programme may be offered under this name other than that leading to the professional qualification of Police Officer. In the event that the number of full-year students admitted to the University's diploma programme in Police Science exceeds the number specified in this Addendum, any extra costs incurred as a consequence thereof are the responsibility of the University.... To allow for the graduation of students from the diploma programme in Police Science, the University of Akureyri must organise the courses in such a manner as to permit students to reach a satisfactory level of competence in at least the areas listed below.*

Overall, the review team believes that the content of the Police Science programme is appropriate. The team recognises the continuous work by the programme's staff and administrators to improve the programme not only content-wise, but also procedurally. However, the lack of a signed agreement between UNAK and PTPD, as specified in the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the lack of an agreed national profile for an Icelandic police officer, the lack of UNAK oversight of internship assessment, the many issues around integration and synchronicity

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<sup>3</sup> this report is required to deal with the sections of the contract under general and professional competence criteria (see below).

between UNAK and PTPD and, despite recognition of many of the problems, the lack of any clear action plan(s) gave the team cause for concern.

Although the review team believes that the Police Sciences Programme at UNAK has a competent teaching staff and an inclusive student body, it is likely that the inherent problems in the programme described in this review report impact directly on its operation. In particular the limitations around communication were noticeable: the team was concerned by the lack of comprehensive communication channels to allow for discussion of an agreement on the profile of an Icelandic police officer. There is also a lack of coherence in terms of communication of the programme via the UNAK and PTPD websites and a need to close the feedback loop in terms of student evaluation.

In addition, the review team is of the view that current policy around teaching credits disadvantages the programme and, thus, the student learning experience by creating no incentive to use guest and/or sessional lecturers, even when they would clearly add to the experience offered by the programme.

#### 7.4. General and professional competence criteria

The general and professional competence criteria are grouped in the contract under the following headings:

- *Knowledge*
- *Ethics*
- *Professional collaboration*
- *Surveillance and response*
- *Prevention and investigation of offences*
- *Developing civil protection and*
- *Collaboration and professional awareness.*

Overall, the programme, as offered by UNAK and PTPD, includes the competences listed in the contract with Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and these and the learning outcomes are appropriate. However, there is room for improvement concerning the integration of the required Ministry of Education, Science and Culture competences, which are generally taught at PTPD, and the academic learning outcomes taught at UNAK. Moreover, due the lack of synchronicity, it is difficult for the students to achieve the learning outcomes, especially when it comes to connecting the academic with the professional.

### 7.5. Organisation of the diploma programme in Police Science

The contract states in relation to the organisation of the diploma programme in Police Science, including vocational training and practical exercises:

*To the extent that the diploma programme taught by the University includes courses that are common to other programmes, care must be taken to ensure that students receive relevant specialised training, such as in the form of special practical exercises, written assignments or lab work.*

As mentioned earlier, the lack of a formal agreement between UNAK and PTPD hampers the integration of the academic and practical elements of the programme. Division of responsibilities is somewhat unclear and results in logistical challenges that impact on the student experience. Students that take common courses report a mixed experience with some reporting efforts by staff to ensure that the course is relevant to them as Police Science students. However, a significant number report that there are no additional or tailored exercises, written assignments or lab work. More integration in the programme would enable further specific use to be made of UNAK courses in the practical training at PTPD. The review team also believes that better communication of the purpose of the common courses would enable students to understand better the overall structure and objectives of the programme.

## 7.6. Quality assurance

The contract states:

*As the education provided by the programme leads directly to a professional qualification and confers the right to pursue more specialised studies abroad, an intermediate evaluation of the programme should take place at the beginning of the second year of operations, followed by a full evaluation on expiry of the agreement, cf. Article 7 of the Rules on quality assurance of teaching and research at higher education institutions.*

In relation to the stipulation in the contract that the programme be subject to an intermediate evaluation at the end of its second year of operation, the review panel was unaware of any such evaluation. The report of the review that took place in November 2020 fulfils the requirement for a full review on expiry of the agreement.

## 7.7. The view of the review team on the fulfilment of the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

In the view of the review team, it is difficult to make any kind of overarching judgement as to whether or not these five aspects of the contract have been fulfilled. The lack of a signed agreement between UNAK and PTPD (although not one of the five aspects under scrutiny) is a clear example of something that has not been actioned and it was difficult for the team to understand why it had not been.

In relation to the other aspects:

- Admissions criteria: the contract is fulfilled, but, it seems, at a cost to students.
- Content and quality of the programme: at a basic level, the contract is fulfilled but there are many aspects that could be improved that would lead to the enhancement of the programme and the quality of the student experience.

- General and professional competence criteria: again, the contract is fulfilled but there are aspects that could be improved that would lead to the enhancement of the programme and student achievement.
- Organisation of the diploma programme in Police Science, including vocational training and practical exercises: it is doubtful as to whether or not the contract is completely fulfilled.
- Quality assurance: the contract is partially fulfilled.

It is the opinion of the review panel that, whilst there is much that UNAK could do in partnership with PTPD to ensure complete fulfilment of the contract, it would be unfair to ignore the circumstances under which the programme was developed and implemented, since these continue to affect the delivery of the programme. In relation to the contract itself, one of the key difficulties faced by the programme is the need to serve various masters: two ministries, two institutions, the National Commission for Police in Iceland, students and so on. Whilst there is much that UNAK could do to improve this situation (detailed in this report under the two key themes of communication and integration), the programme would benefit from support in doing so both from the University itself and from the main external stakeholders.

## Annex 1: Meeting Schedule

### Monday November 2

Time	Meeting	Attendees
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9:20-10:00	<b>Quality Manager and other QM staff at institutional level</b>	Sigrún Lóa Kristjánsdóttir, Project Manager, Key Figures Sigrún Magnúsdóttir, Quality Specialist Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Director of Quality and HRM
10:30-11:00	<b>Police Student Union</b>	Not disclosed. N = 4
11:00-11:30	<b>Open meeting: students</b>	Not disclosed. N = 7
12.30-14:00	<b>UNAK institutional management team - including Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Head of the Faculty of Social Sciences</b>	Elín Díanna Gunnarsdóttir, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences Heiða Kristín Jónsdóttir, School office manager Hólmar Erlu Svansson, CEO Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Director of Quality and HRM Póroddur Bjarnason, Head of Faculty, Social Sciences

### Tuesday November 3

Time	Meeting	Attendees
8:30-9:15	<b>Ministry of Education, Science and Culture</b>	Not disclosed. N = 3
9:15-10:00	<b>Recently graduated students</b>	Not disclosed. N = 4
10:30-12:00	<b>The Centre for Police Training and Professional Development</b>	Guðmundur Ásgeirsson, staff Hildur Þuríður Rúnarsdóttir, staff Logi Jes Kristjánsson, staff Ólafur Örn Bragason, Director Sverrir Guðfinnsson, staff
13:00-13:40	<b>Capital Region Police Authority</b>	Not disclosed. N = 4
13:50-14:30	<b>North-East Police Authority</b>	Not disclosed. N = 2

**Wednesday November 4**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	
8:30-9:15	<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	Not disclosed. N = 2
9:20-10:00	<b>Academic Support Services, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning,</b>	Auðbjörg Björnsdóttir, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning Katrín Árnadóttir, Head of Marketing and Public Relations Ólína Freysteinsdóttir, Student Counselling Services Pia Susanna Sigurlína Viinikka, library
10:30-11:30	<b>Full-time academic staff from PS and Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning</b>	Andrew Paul Hill, Programme Director, Police Science Auðbjörg Björnsdóttir, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning Eyrún Eypórsdóttir, Lector, Police Science Guðmundur Oddsson, Docent, Police Science Hrannar Már Hafberg, Lector, Law Margrét Valdimarsdóttir, Lector, Police Science
12.30-13:10	<b>Sessional teaching staff in PS</b>	Birgir Jónasson, Police Eiríkur Valberg, Police Hildur Fjóla Antonssdóttir, Doctoral Student, Lund University María Bjarnadóttir, Doctoral Student, University of Sussex
13:20-14:00	<b>National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police</b>	Not disclosed. N = 3

**Thursday November 5**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	
8:30-09:15	<b>1st year students in PS</b>	Not disclosed. N = 3
9:20-10:00	<b>2nd year students in PS</b>	Not disclosed. N = 3
10:30-11:30	<b>Open meeting: Faculty</b>	Not disclosed. N = 24
12.30-14:00	<b>Programme Steering Committee for Police Science, including UNAK Programme Director/Project Manager</b>	Andrew Paul Hill, Programme Director, Police Science Eyrún Eypórsdóttir, Lector, Police Science Guðmundur Ásgeirsson, Centre for Police Training and Professional Development Hildur Sólveig Elvarsdóttir, Project manager Margrét Valdimarsdóttir, Lector, Police Science Ólafur Örn Bragason, Director of Centre for Police Training and Professional Development NN, Student Representative

**Friday November 6**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	
8:30-10:00	<b>PEAB</b>	Árni Pétur Veigarsson Ásgeir Þór Ásgeirsson Elín Jóhannsdóttir, South-Region Police District Guðmundir Fylkisson, Police Officer Union Ingibjörg Ýr Jóhannsdóttir Kristján Kristjánsson Pétur Björnsson, North-East Police District Commissioner Rannveig B Sverrisdóttir, South-Region Police District
11:10-11:40	<b>Rector and National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police</b>	Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, Rector Sigríður Björk Guðjónsdóttir, National Chief of Police
12.30-14:00	<b>Follow-up with Full-time academic staff from PS</b>	Andrew Paul Hill, Programme Director, Police Science Eyrún Eypórsdóttir, Lector, Police Science Guðmundur Oddsson, Docent, Police Science Hildur Sólveig Elvarsdóttir, Project Manager Hrannar Már Hafberg, Lector, Law Margrét Valdimarsdóttir, Lector, Police Science
14:00-14:30	<b>Finance manager</b>	Harpa Halldórsdóttir, UNAK Director of Finance
14:30-15:00	<b>Rector and QM</b>	Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, Rector Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Director of Quality and HRM

## Annex 2: Review summary

**Commissioned Review of the Police  
Science Programme at the  
University of Akureyri**

**- Summary -**

March 2021

## Preface

This is the report of a commissioned special review of the Police Science programme at the University of Akureyri undertaken at the behest of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and executed by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education.

Special 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"<sup>4</sup> and emphasise 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](http://www.qef.is)).

Dr Andrée Sursock

Chair

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<sup>4</sup> <https://qef.is/about-us/principles-and-values/>

## Review Team

The following experts comprised the Team:

Prof. Dr. Jelle Janssens, Chair. Associate Professor, Ghent University, Department of Criminology, Criminal Law and Social Law, Belgium.

Dr Kimmo Himberg. Director and Rector of Police University College, Tampere, Finland.

Kolbrún Lára Kjartansdóttir, student. University of Iceland.

Ms Fiona Crozier, Panel Secretary. Independent consultant. Former Head of International, Quality Assurance Agency, UK.

## 1. About the Review

This special review was conducted based on agreed terms of reference and on guidelines to the expert team that were developed for this specific review. The review was required by the 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 basic Police education in Iceland. UNAK offers two 2-year 120 ECTS Diploma Programmes in Police Science, with one being open to working law enforcement officers ('starfandi lögreglumenn') and the other being open to prospective students who do not have this experience ('verðandi lögreglumenn'). Students who graduate from the Diploma Programmes can apply to a 1-year 'top-up' programme that culminates in a 180 ECTS BA degree.

The review process was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and began in autumn 2020.

Members of the review panel were provided with the University's Reflective Analysis (RA) and associated evidence at the end of September 2020. Additional information was requested by the review panel on 8 October 2020 and received on 23 October 2020. The virtual site visit was held from 2nd-6th November 2020 and involved meetings with 24 groups of internal and external stakeholders including students (see Annex 1).

## 2. Summary of Review Results

### 2.1. General summary

The themes of communication and integration encompass almost all of the key points that the review team made. The review team recognises the continuous work by the programme's staff and administrators to improve the programme, not only content-wise but also procedurally. However, the lack of a signed agreement between UNAK and the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD), as specified in the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the lack of an agreed national profile for an Icelandic police officer, the lack of UNAK oversight of internship assessment, the many issues around integration and synchronicity between

UNAK and PTPD and, despite recognition of many of the problems, the lack of any clear action plan(s) convinced the team that the initial rushed planning and implementation of the programme was still too much in evidence after five years.

The review team noted a lack of coherence in terms of communication of the programme via the UNAK and PTPD websites and communication issues also included the lack of comprehensive communication channels to allow for discussion of, and agreement on, the profile of an Icelandic police officer.

The review team believes that, despite its modest resources, the Police Sciences Programme at UNAK has a competent teaching staff and an inclusive student body. The inherent problems in the programme described in this report are more likely to impact directly on its operation than is a lack of funding.

The review team believes that, with the right support and opportunity for reflection and action planning, the programme in Police Science can overcome its current problems. It hopes that the recommendations made in this report will assist UNAK and PTPD staff at programme and institutional level to consider them under the thematic headings of integration and communication. The team hopes that the recommendations can be prioritised and actioned with a view to stabilising and embedding the Police Science programme as a valuable and respected qualification in Icelandic society.

## 2.2. Summary of strengths

The strengths identified by the review team include:

- The integration of police training in the higher education system and the resulting focus of the programme in aiming to change and modernise the Icelandic police force
- The location of the programme in the School of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences which allows students to participate in a range of relevant courses

- The potential of the Police Education Advisory Board (PEAB) as a vehicle for ongoing monitoring and revision of the programme to ensure that it remains relevant to all stakeholders
- The effort made by programme and faculty staff in UNAK and the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development (PTPD) to improve the programme since its initial, hasty inception and the increased cooperation with PTPD at programme level, including regular, weekly meetings
- The inclusive nature of the distance learning aspects of the programme in allowing those students who would not otherwise be able to enrol access to the programme
- The well-functioning ICT platform and digital library resources
- The willingness of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to provide feedback and support on individual courses
- The level of accessible, on-line information about the programme on the UNAK website

### 2.3 Summary of areas for improvement

Areas of improvement include:

- The resourcing of the programme should be considered by both the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 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 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

#### 2.4. Judgment on managing standards

The review team concludes 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.

#### 2.5. Judgment on managing quality of student learning experience

The review team concludes that limited confidence can be placed in the soundness of UNAK's present and likely future arrangements to manage the student learning experience in respect of its award of Diploma in Police Science.

## 2.6. The view of the review team on the fulfilment of the contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

In addition to the judgements on academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience, part of the panel's task was to evaluate to what extent UNAK was fulfilling the conditions of its contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in respect of the programme in Police Science.

In the view of the review team, it is difficult to make any kind of overarching judgement as to whether or not these five aspects of the contract have been fulfilled. The lack of a signed agreement between UNAK and PTPD (although not one of the five aspects under scrutiny) is a clear example of something that has not been actioned and it was difficult for the team to understand why it had not been.

In relation to the other aspects:

- Admissions criteria: the contract is fulfilled, but, it seems, at a cost to students.
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- General and professional competence criteria: again, the contract is fulfilled but there are aspects that could be improved that would lead to the enhancement of the programme and student achievement.
- Organisation of the diploma programme in Police Science, including vocational training and practical exercises: it is doubtful as to whether or not the contract is completely fulfilled.
- Quality assurance: the contract is partially fulfilled.

It is the opinion of the review panel that, whilst there is much that UNAK could do in partnership with PTPD to ensure complete fulfilment of the contract, it would be unfair to ignore the

circumstances under which the programme was developed and implemented, since these continue to affect the delivery of the programme. In relation to the contract itself, one of the key difficulties faced by the programme is the need to serve various masters: two ministries, two institutions, the National Commission for Police in Iceland, students and so on. Whilst there is much that UNAK could do to improve this situation (detailed in this report under the two key themes of communication and integration), the programme would benefit from support in doing so both from the University itself and from the main external stakeholders.

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11:10-11:40	<b>Rector and National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police</b>	Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, Rector Sigríður Björk Guðjónsdóttir, National Chief of Police
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14:30-15:00	<b>Rector and QM</b>	Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, Rector Vaka Óttarsdóttir, Director of Quality and HRM

## Annex 3: Review terms of Reference

### I. Scope of the review

Following a request by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MESC), and in agreement with the University of Akureyri (UNAK), the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education will organise the review of Police Science at UNAK.

The focus of the review will be on a two-year police education programme that has been located in UNAK at MESC's request. A Bachelor's degree in Police Education was set up subsequently by the university and will be part of this review.

### 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*<sup>5</sup> (hereinafter, the '*QEF2 Handbook*').

The review will be based on a Reflective Analysis, conducted by UNAK's Faculty of Social Sciences, which takes into account the contract signed between MESC and UNAK in October 2016 and discusses the following aspects:

- The learning journey of students and how standards of award are ensured.
- The effectiveness of student support services that directly impact the quality of the student learning experience (this can include, for example, library, laboratory, career guidance, counselling, information technology services).
- The link between teaching and research/scholarship (see § 33 of the *QEF2 Handbook*).
- The national and international collaborative relationships in delivering the education and training of students and how the institution guarantees the standards of award in this context.
- If there is research activity linked to the subject, how the institution manages this area (see § 49 of the *QEF2 Handbook*).
- How quality assurance and enhancement processes meet the expectations of the ESG.
- An analysis of student progression, graduation and employment or further study.

As specified the *QEF2 Handbook*:

The Reflective Analysis should be the outcome of open reflection by the institutional community, staff and students. The document should include a clear description of the process leading to the completion of the Reflective Analysis. In particular, it should include a commentary from the Chair of the Student Council (or equivalent) on the involvement of students in the development of the Reflective Analysis (§ 69).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://en.rannis.is/media/gaedarad/Final-for-publication-14-3-2017.pdf>. Since then the Handbook can be found at: <https://gef.is/assets/PDFs/Others/QEF2-Handbook-for-website.pdf>

The Reflective Analysis should be accompanied by the main sources of evidence on which it is based (key statistics, committee minutes, etc.) and other documents readily available which will assist the Review Team in understanding the processes and structures of the institution. Quality Handbooks (describing the internal quality systems and structure), prospectuses, student handbooks, guides for postgraduate students etc are all welcome (§ 71).

All documentation relevant to the IWR should be made available to the team in electronic format, by the most convenient means: e.g. via hyperlinks in the Reflective Analysis, or by granting access to the institution's intranet, or by collecting them on a USB, or by some combination of the foregoing. Whichever means are adopted, there needs to be clear linkages between the Reflective Analysis and the related evidence base. In addition, each member of the Review Team should be provided, via the Board Manager in advance of the visit, with a bound, paper copy of the Reflective Analysis provided by the institution. Paper copies of any documents that the institution itself publishes in that format (such as a Prospectus) should be available to the Review Team during the site visit (§ 72).

The Board manager will provide support to the Reflective Analysis as specified in the *QEF2 Handbook*:

In advance of each IWR, the Board secretariat will contact the institution to provide guidance and support on the preparation and submission of the Reflective Analysis. Key dates for the submission of material will be agreed at that stage (§ 73).

Such advice, however, would be limited to the general structure, approach and style of the document. The Board Manager is not in a position to offer any detailed comments on content (§ 74).

Following the submission of the Reflective Analysis (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 Reflective Analysis, the institution would be asked to revise its submission" (§ 74 of the *Handbook*).

A 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 principles for organising the visit are spelled out in § 76-85 of the *QEF2 Handbook*.

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 study**

The review will result in a report that will be delivered to UNAK after the University will have the opportunity to correct any factual errors. In producing the review report, the team will follow the guidelines spelled out in the *Handbook*, § 86-87.

The report will include commentary on good practice and recommendations for enhancement and conclude with confidence judgments on a) standards of degrees and awards and b) student learning

experience. The confidence judgments will be formulated by the Quality Board following the principles spelled out in the *QEF2 Handbook*, § 93-98.

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 MESC as part of its original contractual agreement to offer this education programme and to have it reviewed.

The Quality Board will consider that this exercise exempts UNAK from conducting a SLR for this unit, in the current round, provided the following process is followed:

- a) The Quality Board will provide a summary of this review and post it on its website. It will also be included as an annex in the full report (*QEF2 Handbook*, § 53).
- b) If the report concludes with positive confidence judgments, the report will be considered along with the other SLR reports as part of the Institution-Wide Review of the University; as such, UNAK will provide information on how they have dealt with the recommendations provided in this and other SLR reports.
- c) If, however, the unit receives a limited or no confidence judgment, then UNAK will be asked to produce an Action Plan that will address how the weaknesses identified will be remedied. This procedure is described in the *QEF2 Handbook*, § 102, as follows:

The Action Plan should be submitted to the Board Manager within two months of receipt of the final report. The Quality Board, normally in consultation with both the Review Chair and the institution, will make a judgement on the potential adequacy of the Action Plan to address the identified weaknesses. In the event of a Plan being deemed inadequate, a representative of the Quality Board (together with the Board Manager) will meet with the Rector or senior representative of the institution to agree a speedy resolution. In the unlikely event of a failure to agree an Action Plan, the Board will report to MESC that it is unable to fulfil its obligations in this particular context and take instruction from MESC.

#### **IV. Human resources and timing**

- The Review Team will consist of four members: three international experts and an Icelandic student. One of the international experts will serve as Chair, and another one as Secretary. 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.
- The student member will be nominated by LÍS. It should normally be a current student registered on an undergraduate or postgraduate course in Iceland and have no conflict of interest with the institution or the subject. Prospective reviewers will be required to certify that they have no conflict of interest with the institution being reviewed. UNAK will be asked to comment on the proposed membership of the team in relation to any potential conflict of interest.

- The Board Manager 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 MESC.