Programme Specification

(Notes on how to complete this template are provided in Annexe 3)

1. Overview / factual information

Programme/award title(s)	BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up)
Teaching Institution	New College Durham
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	
Date of latest OU (re)validation	
Next revalidation	
Credit points achieved for the award	120
UCAS Code (if applicable)	
HECoS Code (if applicable)	
LDCS Code (FE Colleges England only	
Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.	September 2026
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Criminology (2022): This provides the academic standards expected of graduates in Criminology. The programme should be mapped to these expectations for theory, research methods, crime and social policy, harm, and global/contemporary issues. QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Policing (2022): This sets the benchmark for the specific requirements for degrees in Policing, including knowledge of policing practices, ethical standards, and professional skills

Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes (including QAA Characteristics Statements). For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.	QAA Quality Code: The Quality Code outlines best practices for delivering higher education and ensuring the standards of the programme are maintained across all areas, including teaching, assessment, and student support. FHEQ Level 6 Descriptors: These describe the expected knowledge and skills for Level 6 (honours) study. The programme will align with these descriptors to ensure students meet the learning outcomes for a Bachelor's degree. OfS Conditions of Registration (2024): The programme must comply with the Office for Students' conditions, particularly around quality, accessibility, and student outcomes.
Professional/statutory/ accreditation recognition	This programme is not accredited by a professional or statutory body and does not confer professional status or eligibility for policing roles. It is an academic Level 6 top-up degree designed to provide a critical and applied understanding of policing, criminology and justice. While the programme supports progression into a range of criminal justice and community safety careers, entry into such professions remains subject to employer-led vetting and suitability requirements.
For apprenticeships more information on integrated Assessment. EPAO being used.	N/A
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	FT
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	1 Year

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Dual accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Date of production/revision of this specification	December 2025

2. Programme overview

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

The BA (Hons) Policing, Criminology & Justice Top-Up Programme aims to provide a clear academic progression route for students, particularly those completing the FdA Policing the Community with Criminology at New College Durham. The programme is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and professional competencies necessary for successful careers in policing, criminology, and the criminal justice system, building on prior learning while fostering academic growth and development.

The programme's educational aims are grounded in the following key reference points, which guide the development of the curriculum:

- QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Criminology and Policing (2022).
- OfS Conditions of Registration and other regulatory frameworks provided by the Office for Students (OfS).

These frameworks ensure that the curriculum is both academically rigorous and professionally relevant, preparing students to meet the challenges of the evolving field of policing and criminology.

Educational Aims

The programme aims to:

- **Develop criminological and policing knowledge**: Engage students with contemporary criminological and policing issues, such as rehabilitation, surveillance, digital crime, and emerging threats. The curriculum ensures that students are equipped to critically analyse criminological theory and apply it to real-world professional practice, addressing key challenges within policing and criminal justice contexts.
- **Develop advanced research and evidence-based analysis skills**: Students will develop research, enquiry, and critical analysis skills throughout the programme. These skills include the ability to evaluate and synthesise academic literature, analyse data, and apply research methods to address criminological and policing issues. Students will critically assess the role of criminological theories and policing strategies in shaping crime prevention, justice reform, and policy. This research is developed across taught modules and further consolidated through the independent dissertation.
- **Cultivate ethical, legal, and social competencies**: Develop key employability skills, including critical thinking, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and evidence-based decision-making. These skills are embedded in both individual projects and collaborative assessments. Students will apply criminological theory and professional knowledge to solve real-world problems in policing, criminology, and criminal justice contexts.
- **Enhance transferable skills for employability**: Develop a range of skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and evidence-based decision-making. These are central to the curriculum and are embedded in both team-based assessments and individual projects, ensuring students are well-prepared for careers in policing, criminology, and other sectors that require analytical thinking, collaboration, and professional responsibility.
- **Prepare students for professional careers**: The programme equips students with the advanced knowledge, critical insights, and practical skills necessary for successful careers in policing, criminology, probation, and the wider criminal justice system. Graduates will be well-prepared for multi-agency collaboration, community safety, and justice reform, contributing effectively to real-world professional practice. Additionally, students will be prepared for postgraduate study in criminology, policing, or related fields.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme, graduates will be able to:

- **Demonstrate progression through a structured academic pathway**, applying prior learning from formal qualifications or professional experience, and complete the honours degree through a clear and supported transition from Level 5 (or equivalent) to Level 6.
- **Apply advanced criminological and policing knowledge**, critically analysing contemporary issues such as rehabilitation, surveillance, digital crime, and emerging threats within modern policing contexts. Graduates will be able to evaluate theoretical and practical approaches to addressing these issues.
- **Develop and apply independent research skills**, engaging critically with real-world criminological and policing problems. Students will demonstrate their ability to synthesise evidence, design research projects, and apply criminological theory to practice across the programme, culminating in the dissertation.

- **Critically evaluate ethical, legal, and social challenges in policing and criminology**, demonstrating professionalism and ethical reasoning when addressing these complexities. Graduates will be able to analyse how law, policy, and practice interact with societal issues in policing and criminal justice.
- **Prepare for professional careers in policing, probation, criminology, and the wider criminal justice system**, developing transferable skills such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and evidence-based decision-making. These skills will enable graduates to contribute effectively to multi-agency work and to adapt to future professional demands.

Alignment with Benchmark Frameworks

The Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (outlined in section 3) have been derived from the educational aims of the programme and are directly aligned with the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, and the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration. The PLOs reflect the key aspects of criminological and policing knowledge that students are expected to master and demonstrate upon successful completion of the programme. They also emphasise the development of critical thinking, professionalism, ethical decision-making, and transferable skills, which are essential for careers in policing, criminology, and the wider criminal justice system.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

This Level 6 top-up degree provides a seamless progression route for students who have completed the FdA Policing the Community with Criminology at New College Durham. The new programme eliminates the need for students to seek external institutions for their final year of study, improving retention and supporting long-term academic success.

It also offers an opportunity for students from other institutions with relevant Level 5 qualifications in policing, criminology, or social sciences to apply for direct entry, providing an inclusive and accessible progression pathway into policing and criminology at an honours level.

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.

N/A

2.4 List of all exit awards

The BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up) programme offers the following possible exit awards:

BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up) (Full Award)
This is the standard award for students completing 120 credits at Level 6, including the 40-credit dissertation.

This award provides students with a full academic progression route from FdA Policing the Community with Criminology to honours degree level, incorporating advanced criminological and policing knowledge along with independent research skills.

BA Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up)
This award is available for students who complete 60 credits at Level 6 (excluding the dissertation), in line with The Open University's regulations for awarding ordinary degrees. Specifically, students are eligible for the ordinary degree upon completing 60 credits at Level 6 in addition to the 240 credits earned at Level 4 and Level 5. Students who successfully complete all Level 6 modules but do not undertake the dissertation will be awarded the ordinary degree.

Justification for Structure
The decision to allow the option of an ordinary degree provides students with flexibility. While the BA (Hons) requires the completion of 120 credits at Level 6 (including the dissertation), the ordinary degree requires only 60 credits at Level 6, in accordance with OU regulations. This ensures that students who opt not to complete the dissertation can still graduate with a Level 6 qualification.

This approach maintains full compliance with OU regulations, offering an exit award that is consistent with the national standards for ordinary degrees.

3. Programme Structure and Learning Outcomes

Programme Structure – LEVEL 6					
Compulsory modules	***Credit points***		***Credit points***	***Is module compensatable?***	***Semester runs in***
PCC601: Going Straight: Desistance and Rehabilitation	20			Yes	1
PCC602: Crime, Power, and Social Control	20			Yes	1
PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age	20			Yes	2
PCC604: Intelligence, Evidence and Emerging Threats	20			Yes	2
PCC605: Dissertation in Criminology and Policing	40			No	1 and 2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 6 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6

For apprenticeship delivery: detail the KSBs to show that link/alignment with degree apprenticeships (and which support that curriculum map edatured at the end of the document)

3A. Knowledge and Understanding

Learning Outcomes		*Learning and Teaching Strategy/Assessment Methods*
A1	**Critically analyse criminological and policing theories, contemporary crime threats, and the application of crime control techniques in policing practice.**	The learning and teaching strategy for the BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up) programme will support students in achieving the newly refined Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) across multiple modules. It integrates interactive workshops, problem-based learning (PBL), case studies, and independent research, reflecting contemporary criminological and policing issues while embedding transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, and critical academic skills at Level 6. **Workshops:** Interactive workshops, grounded in active learning frameworks, will be used to engage students in criminological theories, policing practices, and criminal justice issues. Research consistently demonstrates that active learning pedagogies lead to superior cognitive and affective outcomes compared to passive, lecture-centric instruction. These workshops will foster the development of critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and the application of theoretical knowledge to real-world policing scenarios (e.g., cybercrime, counter-terrorism, surveillance). Students will engage in hands-on activities that challenge them to apply criminological theory to complex, contemporary issues, enhancing their ability to analyse and make informed decisions in real-world contexts.
A2	**Synthesise and evaluate empirical evidence to assess the effectiveness and impact of criminology and policing strategies across diverse offending and enforcement contexts.**	
A3	**Critically evaluate the governance, oversight, and accountability mechanisms that regulate the use of policing power, surveillance, and intelligence, assessing their implications for human rights and public trust.**	
A4	**Critically evaluate contemporary debates, reform agendas, and strategic approaches shaping the future direction of criminology and policing, assessing their implications for justice, governance, and policy development.**	
A5	**Critically evaluate the credibility, limitations, and ethical use of research and intelligence evidence in criminology and policing, demonstrating informed judgement in the interpretation of findings for policy, practice, and independent research.**	

	Problem-Based Learning (PBL): Students will be involved in real-world case studies, such as the evaluation of surveillance technologies or exploring digital crime investigations. This approach will develop analytical skills and decision-making as students work through complex problems and apply criminological theory to practice. PBL will also foster teamwork as students collaborate to address real-life problems in policing. **Independent Research:** Research will play a central role, particularly through the dissertation module. Students will engage in self-directed study, enabling them to critically evaluate criminological and policing theories, conduct empirical research, and produce a dissertation that showcases their ability to synthesise evidence and apply research findings to contemporary issues in policing and criminology. Independent research will further develop students' critical academic skills and their ability to work autonomously and responsibly. **Assessment Methods:** A variety of assessment methods will be used across the programme to assess both theoretical knowledge and practical application of criminological theories and policing strategies. The assessments will also foster critical analysis, independent research skills, and the ability to synthesise criminological research. **Essays and Reports:** These assessments will require students to demonstrate advanced theoretical understanding and critical evaluation of criminological and policing theories, with reference to contemporary crime issues. They will also provide an opportunity for students to analyse policy, law, and ethical frameworks. **Case Studies and Presentations:** Students will apply criminological theory to real-world case studies, analysing the effectiveness of policing practices in

	addressing contemporary crime. Presentations will assess students' abilities to communicate their findings effectively and critically engage with peers. **Dissertation:** The dissertation module will allow students to showcase their independent research, demonstrating the ability to synthesise empirical data, critically evaluate criminological theories, and apply evidence-based solutions to contemporary criminology or policing issues. The dissertation will also integrate skills such as project management and academic writing. **Module Linkage:** • **PCC601: Policing Rehabilitation and Desistance** Students critically evaluate criminological theories of rehabilitation (A1, A2) and assess the effectiveness of rehabilitation strategies in real-world contexts (B1, B2, B4). They explore emerging trends in crime prevention and rehabilitation (A4) and apply research to evaluate these strategies (C2, C3, D1, D2, D4). • **PCC602: Crime, Power, and Social Control** Students synthesise criminological theories (A1) and evaluate the impact of power, authority, and surveillance on policing strategies (A3, A4). They critically assess ethical challenges in policing (B2, B3) and apply criminological theory to real-world case studies (C2, C3, C4, D1). • **PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age** Students apply criminological theories to cybercrime (B1, B4) and explore the role of surveillance and technology in modern policing (A2, A3). They critically evaluate the ethical, legal, and operational challenges faced by digital crime investigators (C1, C5) and evaluate evidence-based strategies in digital crime investigations (A5, D3, D4). • **PCC604: Intelligence, Evidence, and Emerging Threats**

	Students assess the role of intelligence in crime prevention (A2, A3) and evaluate intelligence practices used in counterterrorism and crime control (A5, B1, B4). They explore the impact of law, policy, and ethical frameworks on intelligence gathering (C1, C5) and propose improvements for real-world policing strategies (C2, D2, D3). • **PCC605: Dissertation in Criminology and Policing** Students demonstrate advanced knowledge in their research topic (A1) and critically evaluate criminological theories and research methodologies (A2, B2). They explore emerging trends in their research area (A4) and apply evidence-based strategies to contemporary criminology or policing issues (A5, C1, C3, C5). Project management and research skills are developed throughout the dissertation (C2, D1, D2, D3)

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6

For apprenticeship delivery: detail the KSBs to show that link/alignment with degree apprenticeships (and which support that curriculum map edatured at the end of the document)

3B. Cognitive Skills

Learning Outcomes	*Learning and Teaching Strategy/Assessment Methods*
B1 Apply criminological and policing concepts to analyse and reason through complex practice-based scenarios, demonstrating contextual judgement in criminal justice and policing contexts.	Students will be challenged to develop their cognitive skills by constructing arguments and interpretations based on criminological and policing research. They will explore a wide range of academic sources and be encouraged to develop critical analyses of contemporary issues such as surveillance, desistance, digital crime, and justice reform. Students will be assessed on their

B2	**Synthesise and integrate complex criminological and policing literature to construct coherent, theoretically informed arguments that address contemporary crime and justice debates.**	ability to critique and evaluate research, theories, and policy, drawing independent conclusions supported by relevant academic literature.
B3	**Critically challenge dominant criminological and policing frameworks, developing theoretically informed alternative perspectives on crime, justice, and social control.**	They will develop their cognitive understanding through independent thinking, synthesising complex information, and producing informed recommendations that are justified through evidence-based reasoning. Teaching and learning will include tutorials, academic workshops, VLE integration, lectures, seminars, directed study, case-based tasks, presentations, peer feedback, and plenary activities.
B4	**Evaluate the effectiveness of crime prevention, investigative, and intelligence-led strategies within defined policing contexts, using evidence to propose informed improvements to practice.**	Cognitive skills will be embedded and developed across all Level 6 modules. For example, PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age requires students to critically evaluate digital evidence and competing interpretations of cybercrime, while PCC602: Crime, Power and Social Control challenges students to analyse and debate theoretical perspectives on surveillance and authority. These modules give students structured opportunities to apply critical analysis, synthesis of research, and independent judgement in practice. **Module Linkage** • **PCC601: Policing Rehabilitation and Desistance** Students critically evaluate criminological theories on rehabilitation and crime prevention (B1, B2) and assess their effectiveness in real-world policing contexts (B4). They synthesise research on rehabilitation strategies and explore their impact on reducing recidivism (B4, C2, C3). Students also analyse criminological data related to rehabilitation interventions (D1, D2) and communicate their findings professionally (D4). • **PCC602: Crime, Power, and Social Control** Students synthesise criminological theories on social control mechanisms and evaluate their impact on crime control and policing

	(B2, B3). They critically assess the ethical implications of power dynamics in policing (B3) and apply criminological theory to real-world case studies (B4, C2). Students develop the ability to analyse the effectiveness of crime control measures (D1) and communicate complex criminological concepts (D2, D4). • **PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age** Students evaluate criminological theories related to cybercrime, digital surveillance, and modern policing challenges (B1, B4). They synthesise complex information on digital crime investigations and propose evidence-based solutions (B2, A5). Students critically assess the legal, ethical, and operational challenges in digital crime investigations (B3, C1, C5) and communicate their findings clearly (D3, D4). • **PCC604: Intelligence, Evidence, and Emerging Threats** Students synthesise criminological theories and intelligence frameworks related to contemporary criminal justice issues (B1, B4). They evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing in addressing emerging threats (B2) and assess the ethical and operational challenges of intelligence gathering (B3). Students apply research findings to propose improvements in intelligence practices (C5, D2, D3). • **PCC605: Dissertation in Criminology and Policing** Students demonstrate advanced knowledge in their research topic and critically evaluate criminological theories and research methodologies (A1, A2, B2). They explore emerging trends in their research area (A4) and apply evidence-based strategies to criminological or policing issues (A5, C1, C3, C5). Project management and research skills are developed throughout the dissertation (C2, D1, D2, D3).

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6

For apprenticeship delivery: detail the KSBs to show that link/alignment with degree apprenticeships (and which support that curriculum map edatured at the end of the document)	
3C. Practical and Professional Skills	
Learning Outcomes	***Learning and Teaching Strategy/Assessment Methods***
C1 Apply criminological knowledge, legal frameworks, and ethical considerations to analyse and evaluate contemporary policing challenges within academic and simulated professional contexts. **C2 Apply criminological knowledge to design and justify evidence-informed interventions or responses to crime and criminal justice problems within contemporary policing contexts.** **C3 Critically evaluate the design, implementation, and effectiveness of criminological interventions and research approaches, including the identification, selection, and critical appraisal of relevant academic and policy evidence.** **C4 Critically reflect on personal academic development, demonstrating responsibility for learning, responsiveness to feedback, and the ability to identify and address areas for improvement within higher-level study.** **C5 Critically evaluate the use of digital tools and technologies within criminology and policing contexts, assessing their evidential value, limitations, and ethical implications in academic enquiry.**	Applying their knowledge, students will undertake a range of activities that enable them to develop the practical and professional skills required for roles across policing, criminology, probation, and wider justice settings. Throughout the programme, students will work with real-world case materials, legislation, policy documents, and investigative frameworks to mirror the expectations of professional practice. The nature of the programme requires students to develop independence in their approach to learning, decision-making, and professional judgement. Research tasks within individual modules, alongside the independent dissertation, require students to plan and justify their methodological choices, demonstrating awareness of ethical considerations, safeguarding responsibilities, and the legal constraints that underpin work in policing and the criminal justice system. Ethical approval, data protection, and risk awareness form essential components of the dissertation process and are embedded throughout the curriculum. Students will develop professional competence in evaluating ethical dilemmas, assessing risk, and recognising the boundaries of safe and lawful practice when conducting research or analysing sensitive case material.

	Teaching and learning will include tutorials, academic workshops, VLE integration, lectures, seminars, directed study, case-based activities, presentations, peer feedback and plenary activities. **Module Linkage:** • **PCC601: Policing Rehabilitation and Desistance** • Students apply criminological knowledge to design and justify evidence-informed rehabilitation strategies to support desistance (C2). They critically evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions using case studies, policy, and statistical evidence (C3), developing their ability to engage with and apply research evidence within policing and criminal justice contexts (C4).**PCC602: Crime, Power, and Social Control** • Students apply criminological theory to design and justify responses to crime and social control within contemporary policing contexts (C2). They develop core research skills through tasks such as the annotated bibliography, which require the identification, selection, and critical evaluation of academic and policy sources (C3). This supports their ability to engage with research and use it to inform criminological analysis. Students also explore power dynamics and ethical challenges within policing and public safety (C1, C4).**PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age** • Students analyse and interpret digital crime data and investigative material, applying appropriate analytical approaches to evaluate investigative strategies (D1). They begin to apply research-informed approaches to the analysis of digital

	evidence, developing professional skills in digital investigation and evidence handling while considering ethical and practical challenges (C1, C5).**PCC604: Intelligence, Evidence, and Emerging Threats** • Students analyse and interpret intelligence and threat-related information to support decision-making in response to emerging threats (D1). Through scenario-based activities, they apply research-informed approaches to intelligence analysis and threat assessment, developing professional skills in evaluating intelligence sources and considering ethical and legal frameworks within intelligence-led policing (C1, C4).**PCC605: Dissertation in Criminology and Policing** Students undertake an independent research project, demonstrating advanced project management skills (C1), critically evaluating research design and evidence (C3), and independently analysing and interpreting data to produce valid, reliable, and evidence-based conclusions (D1).

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6	
For apprenticeship delivery: detail the KSBs to show that link/alignment with degree apprenticeships (and which support that curriculum map edatured at the end of the document)	
3D. Key/Transferable Skills	
Learning Outcomes	***Learning and Teaching Strategy/Assessment Methods***
D1 Independently analyse and interpret qualitative and quantitative data relevant to criminology and policing, applying appropriate analytical techniques	Students will develop key transferable skills throughout the programme, particularly in the analysis of data, policy documents, case materials, and academic research. These skills will be essential in preparing students

	to produce valid, reliable, and evidence-based conclusions.	for professional roles in policing and criminal justice. They will enhance their digital literacy by engaging with online platforms, digital research tools, and presentation technologies, all of which are critical to modern professional practice in the field.
D2	**Critically reflect on the ethical implications of academic judgement and decision-making in criminology and policing, demonstrating awareness of professional responsibility and the potential impact of research and practice.**	A range of assessment methods, including reports, essays, presentations, and case studies, will be employed to support the development of both written and oral communication skills. These assessments will enable students to present complex arguments clearly, concisely, and professionally, ensuring they can effectively communicate their findings to diverse audiences.
D3	**Communicate complex information, arguments, and analysis clearly and appropriately for academic purposes, selecting suitable formats, structures, and conventions to support understanding.**	Independent working is integral to the programme, with students required to manage their time effectively, conduct independent research, and take full responsibility for project planning within individual modules and the dissertation. This will cultivate self-discipline, time-management, and the ability to work autonomously which develops key transferable skills that students will carry forward into their careers.
D4	**Demonstrate initiative and responsibility within academic study by effectively managing tasks, engaging proactively with learning activities, and responding constructively to feedback and academic demands.**	Teaching and learning will be varied and dynamic, incorporating tutorials, academic workshops, VLE integration, lectures, seminars, directed study, case-based tasks, presentations, peer feedback, and plenary activities. This diverse approach will cater to different learning styles, encourage critical thinking, and ensure that students engage fully with both theoretical and practical aspects of criminology and policing.
		Module Linkage

	• **PCC601: Policing Rehabilitation and Desistance** • Students apply criminological knowledge to design and justify evidence-informed rehabilitation strategies to support desistance (C2). They critically evaluate the effectiveness of interventions using case studies, policy, and statistical evidence (C3), while engaging with research to inform their analysis. Students also reflect on the ethical implications of rehabilitation and offender management practices (D2) and communicate their findings clearly in a structured academic format (D3).**PCC602: Crime, Power, and Social Control** • Students apply criminological theory to design and justify responses to crime and social control within contemporary policing contexts (C2). They develop research skills through tasks such as the annotated bibliography, requiring the identification, selection, and critical evaluation of academic and policy sources (C3). Students critically reflect on the ethical implications of power, surveillance, and social control (D2), and communicate research-informed arguments effectively in both written and oral formats (D3). The module also supports the development of independent study skills in preparation for later research tasks (D4).**PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age** • Students analyse and interpret digital crime data and investigative material, applying appropriate analytical approaches to evaluate investigative strategies (D1). They draw on research and evidence to support their analysis of digital crime and policing practices, while developing professional skills in digital investigation and evidence handling (C1, C5). Students communicate their analysis clearly and professionally,

	demonstrating appropriate academic conventions (D3).**PCC604: Intelligence, Evidence, and Emerging Threats** • Students analyse and interpret intelligence and threat-related information to support operational decision-making in response to emerging threats (D1). They apply research-informed approaches to intelligence analysis and critically consider the ethical and legal implications of intelligence gathering and surveillance practices (D2). Students communicate their findings effectively within applied and scenario-based contexts, demonstrating clarity and professionalism (D3).**PCC605: Dissertation in Criminology and Policing** Students undertake an independent research project, demonstrating initiative and responsibility in managing all stages of the research process (D4). They critically evaluate literature, research design, and methodology (C3), and independently analyse and interpret qualitative or quantitative data using appropriate analytical techniques (D1). Students reflect on the ethical implications of their research throughout (D2) and communicate complex findings in a clear, coherent, and academically rigorous format (D3).

Exit Awards:
BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up)
BA Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up) Ordinary Degree

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- ***Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:***

- ***Where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression***
- ***Any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules***
- ***Where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route***
- ***Additional considerations for apprenticeships:***
- ***How the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship***
- ***The integration of the 'on the job' and 'off the job' training***
- ***How the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship***

This programme is designed to attract students who have completed a relevant Level 5 qualification in policing, criminology, public services, or related social science disciplines, whether at New College Durham or through external providers. While the FdA Policing the Community with Criminology is still in its early stages (year two of delivery) and has not yet produced a graduating cohort, there is already strong interest from current Level 5 students wishing to progress to a Level 6 top-up at NCD.

In addition, Level 4 students have expressed clear intentions to remain with the College through to Level 6, and Level 3 FE students have stated a desire to complete a full honours degree rather than exit at FdA level. This creates a well-established internal pipeline from L3 > L4 > L5 > L6.

Beyond New College Durham, a number of regional providers deliver higher education qualifications in policing, public services or criminal justice-related subjects up to Level 5, but do not provide a local Level 6 honours or top-up route within a college or university centre setting. As a result, students completing Level 5 study elsewhere are often required to leave their local area or transition into larger university environments to complete an honours degree. This programme responds directly to that gap by offering an alternative progression route that maintains continuity of learning within a smaller, supportive higher education setting.

Distinctive Features of Programme Delivery:

Workshop-Driven Delivery Model:
A key distinctive feature of this programme is its emphasis on workshop-based learning, which is integrated across the curriculum. Workshops facilitate active learning, enabling students to engage deeply with programme content through collaborative problem-solving, case studies, and practical exercises. This approach aligns with best practices in higher education by promoting higher-order thinking and enhancing student

engagement. Research shows that interactive, student-centred pedagogies, such as workshops, significantly outperform traditional lecture-based methods in terms of retention and application of knowledge. Students benefit from smaller group sizes, allowing for focused, personalised learning experiences that build confidence, independence, and readiness for honours-level study.

Pedagogical Rationale for Workshops-Only Delivery:
The use of workshops exclusively allows for greater flexibility in teaching, enabling students to apply theory to practice and engage in meaningful discussions. This approach is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which supports the idea that students learn best when they actively construct knowledge through direct engagement and reflection. The shift from traditional lectures, which can often lead to passive learning and disengagement, aligns with current pedagogical thinking that prioritises student involvement in the learning process. As such, workshops allow students to develop critical thinking, collaborative skills, and real-world application—skills that are crucial for success in criminology and policing careers.

The College's Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (TLI) strategy also cautions against extended lecture formats, as they can lead to diminished engagement. Instead, workshops combine lectures, activities, and peer discussions, creating an interactive environment that keeps students engaged and promotes deeper understanding.

Programme Structure and Assessment:
The curriculum includes modules such as:

- *PCC601: Going Straight: Desistance and Rehabilitation* explores real-world approaches to offender reintegration and multi-agency practice.
- *PCC602: Crime, Power and Social Control* enables students to critically analyse contemporary issues like surveillance, state power, and legitimacy.
- *PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age* focuses on evaluating digital evidence and online investigative techniques.
- PCC604: *Intelligence, Evidence and Emerging Threats* examines intelligence products and their role in policing and justice.
- *PCC605: Criminology and Policing Dissertation* offers an opportunity for independent research, where students critically engage with criminological or policing topics of their choice, applying evidence-based approaches to real-world issues.

Applied Learning and Employer Engagement:
Students have access to resources such as simulated crime scenes, digital investigation tools, body-worn video and CCTV analysis software, and online criminological databases. These resources allow students to gain practical skills reflective of the modern policing and criminal justice environments.

Although the programme does not include a formal placement module or placement year, students are strongly encouraged to seek relevant external experiences through employer networks, which the College actively supports through partnerships with police forces, community safety teams, probation services, and youth justice organisations. These opportunities enhance employability and provide real-world insight into professional practice.

Additionally, students may participate in College-led initiatives, such as safeguarding awareness events, digital safety campaigns, and cross-college collaborations with other disciplines like Health, Social Care, and IT, which further integrate the applied learning approach of the programme.

The programme is designed to offer a balance between academic rigour and practical, applied learning, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in both academic and professional contexts.

5. Support for students and their learning (For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)

The Policing and Criminology team have a strong pastoral and academic support ethos, underpinned by a College-wide commitment to inclusive and personalised learning. A broad range of support mechanisms is available to ensure students can develop academically, personally, and professionally throughout their programme. Both quantitative and qualitative feedback, including module evaluations, student surveys, and ASC feedback, are used to monitor the effectiveness and engagement with these services. Additional Learning Support (ALS) is available to students with learning difficulties, disabilities, or specific learning needs, ensuring that all students can access appropriate adjustments and specialist support.

Student Induction
All students entering the programme will take part in a structured induction process. The aims of the induction are to:

- Provide students with a full introduction to the BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up) programme, including its aims, learning outcomes, modules, assessment strategy, and workshop-based approach to learning.
- Introduce students to key learning resources, including the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), online library platforms, and specialist digital tools relevant to criminology and policing.
- Enable students to highlight any academic or personal support needs so these can be addressed early.
- Allow students to meet the teaching team, personal tutors, and support staff.
- Facilitate opportunities for students to get to know one another and build early cohort relationships.
- Introduce students to College regulations, expectations, academic integrity policies, and the student code of conduct.
- Raise awareness of College support services, including the Advice, Support & Careers (ASC) service, Personal Learning Coaches (PLCs), Academic Support Tutors, Learning Support, and the Students' Union.

Overview of Support Arrangements
Student support needs are identified during induction through diagnostic activities, learning conversations, and personal tutorials. Internal Level 5 students progressing into the top-up will already have established support networks; however, they are encouraged

to re-engage with services to ensure a smooth transition into Level 6 study. Internal and external entrants alike will have access to tailored support systems designed to enhance confidence, academic capability, and readiness for honours-level work.

Development of Research Skills and Academic Readiness
Students entering the BA (Hons) Applied Policing, Criminology & Justice (Top-Up) programme may do so via a range of progression routes. These include internal progression from the FdA Policing the Community with Criminology at New College Durham, direct entry from external Level 5 qualifications delivered by other providers, and applicants with relevant professional or vocational experience within policing or the wider criminal justice sector. As a result, students may arrive with differing levels of experience in academic research, critical enquiry, and independent study, despite often possessing substantial practical knowledge and professional insight.

In recognition of this, the programme adopts a structured and supported approach to the development of research skills at Level 6. Rather than relying on a standalone research methods module at earlier levels, research literacy, critical engagement with evidence, and ethical reasoning are embedded and progressively developed across all Level 6 taught modules. Students are supported to develop the skills required for honours-level study, including critical reading of academic literature, evaluation of research evidence, academic writing, and the application of theory to real-world criminological and policing contexts.

Early in the programme, students are supported through induction activities, diagnostic discussions, and personal tutorials to identify individual strengths and development needs in relation to academic writing, research confidence, and independent learning. Targeted academic skills support is then provided through a combination of embedded workshop activities, formative feedback, personal tutoring, and access to the Higher Education Academic Support Tutor (HEAST). This approach ensures that students who are new to academic research or returning to study after a break are appropriately supported in developing confidence and competence at Level 6.

The dissertation module (PCC605) functions as a capstone research experience, enabling students to consolidate and apply the research skills developed across the programme through an independent, supervised research project. Students undertaking primary research are supported through the College's research ethics approval process, with guidance from their dissertation supervisor to ensure that ethical, legal, and professional standards are met. This scaffolded approach ensures that students are not expected to acquire research skills in isolation, but are supported throughout the programme in developing the academic and professional competencies required for independent research.

Internal Students (Progressing from Level 5)
- Named personal tutor with scheduled 1:1 tutorials.
- Optional PLC support or continuation of existing PLC involvement.
- Access to the Higher Education Academic Support Tutor (HEAST) for help with academic writing and study skills.

External UK Students (Entering at Level 6)
- Named personal tutor with scheduled 1:1 tutorials.
- PLC support encouraged to support transition into NCD.

- Access to the Higher Education Academic Support Tutor (HEAST) encouraged, especially for students new to academic writing or criminology.

Personal Tutor System
All students are allocated a personal tutor upon registration. Wherever possible, students remain with the same personal tutor for the duration of their studies to ensure continuity and build a strong supportive relationship.

The personal tutor leads the induction process and conducts early discussions to identify any support needs. Regular 1:1 meetings take place throughout the year to monitor progress, discuss academic or personal challenges, and support students in setting and reviewing goals. Personal tutors work closely with module tutors and the wider support services to provide holistic support.

Academic Support
Academic support is delivered through:

- Module-specific tutorials
- Drop-in or scheduled academic guidance
- Feedback on formative and summative assessments
- Embedded study skills support within workshops
- Students also have access to a dedicated Academic Support Tutor, recognised as an invaluable resource in supporting students who may not have a traditional academic background. Support may include:
- Academic writing
- Structuring assignments
- Harvard referencing
- Literature searching
- Using OpenAthens
- Report writing
- Presentation skills
- Critical reading

All module-specific material such as handbooks, PowerPoints, assessments, resources is provided via the approved VLE and reviewed and updated annually.
Self-directed study plays a key role in developing independence, critical thinking, and time management, supporting students to develop skills essential for Level 6 and employment.

Pastoral Support
The College provides a confidential and impartial information, advice, and guidance service through the Advice, Support & Careers (ASC) team. Students receive an ASC induction at the start of their programme. The ASC service offers:

• Support with funding, welfare, and wellbeing
• Careers advice and planning
• CV and application support
• Signposting to specialist counselling services
• Drop-in and appointment-based guidance

The PLC service is available to any student who may benefit from personalised pastoral or academic support. Students can self-refer or be referred by tutors or external advisors.

PLC support includes time management, confidence building, motivational coaching, and strategies to manage workload and stress.

Information about ASC and PLCs is available on the College website, intranet, and digital screens displayed campus-wide.

Career Guidance
Students have access to extensive careers information and resources through ASC, including digital and hard-copy materials. ASC staff deliver careers sessions covering progression routes, careers planning, and securing employment in policing, probation, youth justice, community safety, and wider criminal justice roles.

For sector-specific guidance, the teaching team acts as the primary point of contact. Career conversations are embedded throughout modules and tutorials, helping students understand routes into policing (e.g., police constable entry, investigator roles, staff roles), probation, youth offending, intelligence, community safety, and postgraduate study.

Support with Assessments
Module tutors provide guidance during assessment preparation, while the Academic Support Tutor offers tailored study skills support. Students can access resources and guidance on:

• Academic writing and structure
• Referencing
• Literature searching
• Presentation skills
• Report writing
• Avoiding plagiarism
• Using Turnitin to check originality

Turnitin is used to support academic integrity. Students may upload drafts to review similarity reports prior to submission.

Research Ethics Procedures
New College Durham maintains high ethical standards for all research. Students conducting primary research (e.g., interviews, surveys) must receive ethical approval from the College Research Ethics Committee before collecting data.

Core ethical principles include:

- Ensuring no physical, psychological, or social harm to participants
- Obtaining informed consent
- Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality
- Compliance with relevant data protection legislation
- Secure storage and destruction of participant data

Students are supported through the ethics process by their dissertation supervisor and through guidance materials on the Student Intranet, including:

- Research Ethics Policy
- Procedure for Ethical Approval
- Application Form for Ethical Approval

6. Criteria for admission
(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)

Applicants will normally be expected to hold a relevant Level 5 qualification in policing, criminology, public services, criminal justice, or a closely related discipline (e.g. FdA, HND, Diploma of Higher Education, or equivalent qualification totalling 240 credits).
Applications from external providers and non-traditional entrants will be considered on an individual basis. Holding a Level 5 qualification or relevant professional experience does not guarantee entry. All applicants must demonstrate that their prior learning and/or experience provides appropriate preparation for honours-level study in policing and criminology. This will normally be assessed through a structured interview process and, where appropriate, an additional assessment task to determine subject knowledge, critical thinking, and academic readiness. Decisions are informed by mapping prior learning and experience against the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Criminology and Policing.

Applicants are expected to hold Level 2 qualifications in English Language and Mathematics (or recognised equivalents), reflecting standard entry requirements across policing, criminal justice, and wider public sector roles, where functional literacy and numeracy are mandatory. Applicants who do not currently hold both qualifications may be admitted on the condition that they are actively working towards achieving Level 2 English and/or Mathematics through an appropriate adult learning route alongside their studies.

7. Language of study

The language of study will be English.

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including Professional Statutory Recognised Body requirements)

The programme will use the OU assessment regulations with no adjustments.

9. For apprenticeships in England, summary of how the End Point Assessment (EPA) links to the academic award

N/A

10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning including the student experience

Student feedback on experiences of teaching and learning is captured within programme team meetings by student representatives and their attendance at student forums (departmental and cross college), student surveys, student completion of written module evaluations, and as appropriate within 1-1 tutorials. Student feedback supports internal quality systems include teaching observations, learning walks by Heads of School/Curriculum Managers, programme team meetings, completion of in year programme reviews that lead to annual report, and implementation of a quality enhancement plan to address set actions throughout the academic year.

Student Voice
The contribution of the student voice is a critical quality element at the College. It is focused around strengthening teaching and learning and responsiveness to individual need; strengthening student participation and representation; and creating a culture of student involvement, all of which ensures that the 'student voice' is at the centre of the curriculum.

Full use is made of student feedback to plan, manage and improve the provision and to enable the College to respond to the needs of its students. Student forums at college and school level, as well as programme level operate very effectively and are well attended by student representatives. These mechanisms enable student representatives to raise any issues concerning their peers and to work with college staff to further explore these issues, to establish underlying causes of concern and to implement actions for improvement, as well as to consider responses to formal student surveys. Transparent arrangements are in place for the feedback of improvement activities to students and the communication of action plans to staff and students, ensuring ownership of improvement strategies at the appropriate level. An anonymous student comments and suggestions e-mail address is accessible via the Student Intranet. This ensures that students can have their opinions heard and acted upon to facilitate improvements in their provision from outside formal forum meeting arrangements, where appropriate.

Nominated student-representatives are invited to participate in staff-student programme meetings on a termly basis, with outcomes and actions from these meetings informing the annual evaluation and review process as well as informing immediate action to resolve pressing student issues, where applicable.

Cross-college student surveys are operated both on-entry to the programme (to capture perceptions of student induction and admissions procedures) and on- programme (to capture perceptions of quality of teaching and learning, assessment, student support and resources programme management). These surveys mirror the questions included in the National Student Survey (NSS). As well as being highly informative about the issues facing students studying in higher education at the college, they help familiarise students with the expectations of the NSS in which they participate in the final year of their programmes. Responses to start of programme and on-programme student surveys are considered by HE Academic Standards and Quality Board, a sub-committee of Academic Board, and responses received along with associated action plans generated are ratified at this committee prior to subsequent presentation to Quality, Curriculum and Students Committee (a sub-committee to the Board of Governors).

Following the analysis of formal student survey responses, programme teams meet to consider areas of concern raised by students and to generate actions to resolve these issues, where applicable. Survey responses are further interrogated at programme

review meetings resulting in modifications to programme delivery, assessment and/or student support arrangements, where applicable, and informing the production of the annual programme report and self-assessment of programme operation.

Module evaluations are also conducted to enable teams to scrutinise student perceptions at a subject level and to establish specific areas of satisfaction and concern for students. An analysis of module evaluation outcomes is considered at staff-student committee meetings and forms a critical component of the programme evaluation and review and subsequent annual programme report.

Key Performance Indicators
The College uses ProMonitor to monitor programme performance on a regular basis. Programme teams normally meet monthly and are guided to discuss agenda items relevant to key operational aspects at relevant times of year. They meet three times a year in the capacity of Programme Curriculum Review Meetings to evaluate past delivery and performance of the programme and make modifications to the curriculum where relevant. Curriculum Managers meet with the Head of School and the Quality Manager four times a year at an HE Quality Review to discuss programme management and performance with respect to: reporting identified issues and good practice; student retention; strategies implemented to support students identified 'at risk'; and communication with external examiners, employers, and other stakeholders.

11. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

N/A

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1: Curriculum Map

This table indicates which modules assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Level	Study Module	Programme Outcomes																	
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	D3	D4
6	PCC601: Going Straight: Desistance and Rehabilitation	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
	PCC602: Crime, Power and Social Control	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓		
	PCC603: Investigating Crime in the Digital Age		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
	PCC604: Intelligence, Evidence and Emerging Threats		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	PCC605: Dissertation in Criminology and Policing	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

Annexe 3: Notes on completing programme specification templates

1 – This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.

2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the QAA frameworks for HE qualifications: The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies

3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in QAA subject benchmark statements that are relevant to the programme/award: Subject Benchmark Statements

4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.

5 - Where the programme contains validated exit awards (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.

6 - For programmes with distinctive study routes or pathways the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.

7 – Validated programmes delivered in languages other than English must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.