

Summary

Our remit

Our remit was to propose how basic training and education to become a police officer could be redesigned as a fit-for-purpose higher education programme. The remit included:

- describing various alternatives for the design of a police higher education programme and proposing the most appropriate alternative;
- proposing what qualification the programme should lead to and drafting a qualification description;
- clarifying how a scientific basis can be guaranteed in the programme;
- on the basis of the existing regulatory framework for higher education and with reference to the content of the programme and the future profession it targets, analysing whether special rules are needed for admission to or dismissal from the education programme;
- analysing the conditions for the practical skills training as part of the police education programme and proposing a suitable design for this; and
- proposing an appropriate length and scope for the programme and how it should be governed.

Our assessments and proposals

Over time, the professional role of the police officer has become more complex and policing activities are becoming more

demanding. To meet these demands, police officers must in future have a greater capacity to absorb and analyse knowledge, make their own independent and critical assessments, perceive problems and propose solutions. Police education and training as part of higher education would mean a programme that has a scientific basis and rests on tried and tested experience; the programme would also have a strong link to research.

Strengthened police research would increase and broaden knowledge on police work, which in turn would help the police profession to continuously develop in pace with the rest of society. Other advantages of a higher education programme are that it would be subject to independent quality control, because the higher education institution would apply for authorisation to award degrees and because it would be subject to continuous evaluation. We also believe that a higher education programme would attract more people, both women and men, from different backgrounds to apply to become police officers. The fact that international police work is becoming increasingly advanced and in-depth also places great demands on the Swedish Police. In many countries, including the Nordic countries, police education and training is already a higher education programme.

A programme that leads to a police degree

We propose that the current police basic training and education be transformed into a higher education programme that leads to a professional degree that should be called a police degree. The police degree should be taken in the first cycle. The scope should be 180 higher education credits, which corresponds to three years' full-time study.

We also propose that a qualification description for the police degree be included in annex 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance and that it follow the same structure as other systems of qualifications.

Scientific basis and link to research

To strengthen the scientific basis of the new police education programme, as well as its link to research, we believe that the Government should task the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention with taking stock of police research conducted in Sweden since 2010 and considering the possibility of a bibliographic database of police research, which would be available to those active in the area.

The Government should also propose funding in a future budget bill for building up police research capacity in Sweden and strengthening opportunities for Swedish researchers in the area to collaborate with researchers in other Nordic and other European countries. The issue should be dealt with in the upcoming research policy bill. We believe that investing in a national research hub in the area of police work would be a good way to strengthen the education programme's link to research in the first cycle, and it would reinforce the recruitment base for teachers and researchers. The Government should task the Swedish Research Council with proposing a programme formulation for such a research hub.

In addition, the higher education institutions that are to teach the programme that will lead to a police degree should produce a joint strategy for how police research at higher education institutions could be developed and how the need for the various kinds of skills of the teachers teaching the programme can be guaranteed.

Admission to the programme

We consider that the rules that apply regarding requirements for basic eligibility for admission to general higher education programmes should apply as a starting point for the admission requirements for the new police education programme as well. Moreover, certain additional admission requirements should be established. These should be regulated in the Higher Education Ordinance and not in a separate ordinance.

We consider that Swedish citizenship should be a requirement for admission to the new police education programme. Anyone who is accepted onto the programme should be considered law-

abiding and also in other respects suitable for the programme and the professional field to which the programme leads. When assessing whether a candidate is law-abiding, information from the criminal records and suspect records should be checked. The Swedish Council for Higher Education should decide on special regulations concerning the criteria by which the law-abiding nature and suitability of the candidate should be assessed. The Council should consult the Swedish Police Authority on this.

The higher education institutions that receive authorisation to award police degrees should also have the right to decide on placing the programme in a security classification under the Protective Security Ordinance. The new police education programme should be placed in a security classification as it will, in future too, contain elements that the Swedish Police Authority currently considers to be worthy of protection. We therefore propose requiring that anyone applying to the programme that will lead to a police degree has undergone security clearance. The security clearance requirement involves record checks if the programme is security-classified, and it should, like the requirements concerning citizenship, law-abiding nature and suitability, be a requirement for basic eligibility under the Higher Education Ordinance.

We also consider that certain requirements should be introduced concerning special eligibility. Applicants should have at least a pass grade for the courses that are currently included in field eligibility A1. In our view, it is also necessary for students to meet certain other requirements to be able to complete the programme that will lead to a police degree. They should meet certain medical requirements, have a certain physical capacity, be able to swim and hold a valid Swedish category B driving licence. The Swedish Council for Higher Education should therefore draw up a new field eligibility for programmes that lead to a police degree. The Swedish Council for Higher Education should also prescribe which criteria should apply for assessing an applicant's special eligibility.

The rules contained in the Higher Education Ordinance concerning the selection of candidates and appeals concerning admission to the programme in the first cycle should also apply to the programme that leads to a police degree.

Practice-based education for police students

We propose that students on a programme that will lead to a police degree should complete a practice-based part of the programme. This should be just as long as the current trainee internship and cover 37.5 higher education credits, which is the equivalent of 25 weeks' study.

During the practice-based part of the programme, students will not, as is currently the case, be employed by the Swedish Police Authority and receive a salary; instead, this part of the programme, like the rest of the programme, will provide eligibility for financial aid for studies.

There should be no regulations determining whether or not the practice-based part of the programme is divided into several periods. In the same way as with other higher education programmes, the education provider should determine this.

The part of the practice-based education that higher education institutions, in agreement with the Swedish Police Authority, consider should be completed by students with powers as police officers should be arranged to take place after students have completed and achieved a pass grade for two years' study, corresponding to at least 120 higher education credits, of a programme that leads to a police degree.

We also propose that the Swedish Police Authority – before taking on a student from an education programme that leads to a police degree so that he or she can complete the practice-based part of the programme – should check that the student still meets the requirements concerning a law-abiding nature and general suitability that were set in connection with his or her admission to the programme. As activities at the Swedish Police Authority are placed in a security classification, a renewed security clearance would then also be required.

Disciplinary measures and dismissal

We propose that the provisions on disciplinary measures and the dismissal of students that apply to universities and other higher education institutions should also apply to the higher education programme that leads to a police degree.

Governance and length/scope of the programme

As is the case for almost all state higher education institutions, we propose that the Swedish Higher Education Authority determine which higher education institutions should be authorised to award police degrees.

We reject the idea that the police education programme should be conducted at one individual higher education institution. Instead, the Government should use the allocation of funding to determine which higher education institutions should be given the conditions to offer police education programmes once they have authorisation to award degrees. The number of higher education institutions should be limited. Primarily, the higher education institutions to be considered should be those that already offer police training and education today.

Implementation and economic consequences

We believe that it will be most advantageous if the new system for police education that we propose begins to apply as soon as is possible in terms of practical implementation. In our view, the first students for the new education programme that will lead to a police degree should be admitted during the first half of 2018 so that the first students can begin the programme in the autumn term of 2018.

A police education programme as a higher education programme will be somewhat more expensive than the current education and training programme. However, we are convinced that the reform, as proposed by us, will be economically beneficial and cost-effective in the long run.