

## Module specification

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Module Code	POL405
Module Title	Decision Making and Discretion
Level	4
Credit value	20
Faculty	Social and Life Sciences
HECoS Code	100484
Cost Code	GACJ

## Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Is the module core or option for this programme
BSc (Hons) Professional Policing	Core

## Pre-requisites

None

## Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	36 hrs
Placement tutor support	0 hrs
Supervised learning e.g. practical classes, workshops	0 hrs
Project supervision (level 6 projects and dissertation modules only)	0 hrs
<b>Total active learning and teaching hours</b>	<b>36 hrs</b>
Placement / work based learning	0 hrs
Guided independent study	164 hrs
<b>Module duration (total hours)</b>	<b>200 hrs</b>

<b>For office use only</b>	
Initial approval date	January 2019
With effect from date	September 2019
Date and details of revision	July 2023 – with effect from Sep 2023, updated assessment strategy with amended Indicative Assessment Task section.

<b>For office use only</b>	
Version number	2

## Module aims

This module aims to develop students' understanding of decision making and how discretion might be applied where policing decisions have to be made.

## Module Learning Outcomes - at the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Understand the rationale for developing , the stages of, the flexibility and the role of discretion in, the National Decision Model (NDM)  (NPC mapping: Decision-making and Discretion: 1.1,1.2,1.3,2.1,2.2,2.3,2.4,3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4)
2	Explain how to apply the National Decision Model to a given professional situation, demonstrating effective professional judgement and decision making.  (NPC mapping: Decision-making and Discretion:6.1,6.2,6.3,6.4,6.5)
3	Examine barriers to effective decision-making including the impact of risk aversion and risk avoidance, and strategies to mitigate these influences to further the ability of the police to deliver an effective service  (NPC mapping: Decision-making and Discretion:4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4,4.5,4.6,4.7,4.8,4.9,9.1,9.2,9.3)
4	Analyse the effect of bias on the decision-making process and how varying circumstances can exert influence upon the decision-making process  (NPC mapping: Decision-making and Discretion:5.1,5.2,5.3,10.1,10.2 ) (NPC mapping: Response Policing 8.1)
5	Understand the significance of recording all decisions and the importance of accountability in assessing risk  (NPC mapping: Decision-making and Discretion:7.1,7.2,7.3,8.1)

## Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks:

This section outlines the type of assessment task the student will be expected to complete as part of the module. More details will be made available in the relevant academic year module handbook.

1. A Case Study where a poor policing decision was taken, with particular consideration of barriers to effective decision making (risk, bias) and examination of how application of the NDM and risk management strategies might have led to a better outcome (2, 500 words)

Assessment guidance will be provided that directs students towards meeting the relevant learning outcomes

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Weighting (%)
1	1 - 5	Written Assignment	100

## Derogations

Compensation not allowed on the BSc (Hons) Professional Policing  
All elements must be passed on the BSc (Hons) Professional Policing

## Learning and Teaching Strategies

The learning and teaching strategy used in the module is grounded in the University's commitment to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the key principle of which holds that students are encouraged to participate in higher education when they are exposed to flexible ways of learning by staff that engage them in different ways using innovative and creative approaches. Accordingly, the module embrace the University's Active Learning Framework (ALF) which supports accessible, flexible learning that creates a sense of belonging for students. Each module is associated, thereby, with face to face and online elements.

## Indicative Syllabus Outline

### **LO1: Understand the rationale for developing , the stages of, the flexibility and the role of discretion in, the National Decision Model (NDM)**

Key influences on the decision-making process

Background and key drivers for development of the National Decision Model (NDM)

Purpose and benefits of the NDM

The National Decision Model (NDM):

- Mnemonic CIAPOAR (Code of Ethics, Information, Assessment, Powers & Policy, Operation, Action and Review)

Link between the NDM and the Code of Ethics

Human rights in decision making:

Mnemonic PLAN (Proportionality, Legality, Accountability, Necessity)

Flexibility within the NDM

Definition of the term 'discretion'

How discretion plays an important part in the decision-making process in policing

The applicability of autonomy and discretion in effective policing

Measures to be put into place to ensure that discretion is applied ethically and professionally, including:

- On-the-spot accountability (e.g. information provision)
- Record keeping
- Briefing and debriefing
- Supervision
- Reviewing decisions and learning lessons (e.g. case reviews)
- Continuing professional development (CPD)

### **LO2: Explain how to apply the National Decision Model to a given professional situation, demonstrating effective professional judgement and decision making.**

Reviewing example case studies

Recording decisions and rationale

Demonstrating flexibility within decisions  
Justifying the decisions made  
Reflecting upon the decisions made

**LO3: Examine barriers to effective decision-making including the impact of risk aversion and risk avoidance, and strategies to mitigate these influences to further the ability of the police to deliver an effective service**

Obstacles to making effective decisions  
Strategies for effective decision-making  
Application of discretion within the NDM  
Where the use of discretion might/might not be applicable  
Application of Authorised Professional Practice (APP) risk principles  
Public interest  
Applying the essence of the law  
Risks involved when discretion is used as part of the decision-making process  
Justifying the application of discretion in any decision-making process  
Definition of terms 'risk', 'risk assessment', 'risk aversion' and 'risk avoidance'  
The concept of 'constabulary independence'  
Effect of risk avoidance and risk aversion on decision making processes

**LO4: Analyse the effect of bias on the decision-making process and how varying circumstances can exert influence upon the decision-making process**

The influences of bias on the ethical decision-making process:

- Disproportionality
- Prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination
- Conscious and unconscious bias, including implicit bias
- Direct and indirect discrimination
- Relevance of police occupational culture
- Structural, institutional and individual explanations for bias and discrimination

Effects of personal experience, personal bias, values, cultural norms and emotions upon ethical decision-making, including:

- Personal resilience
- Cynicism
- Empathy
- Policing culture

The effect of using a 'default position' for decision making based upon previous approaches

Making decisions in 'slow time' and 'quick time'

Making decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances

**LO5: Understand the significance of recording all decisions and the importance of accountability in assessing risk**

Principles underpinning decision recording, and rationale

Methods of recording decisions and rationale

Contents of records

Allocation of correct risk to the correct person ('false-positive' and 'false-negative')

## Indicative Bibliography:

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Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update.

### Essential Reads

- Braga, A.A. and Tucker, R., 2018. Problem analysis to support decision-making in evidence based policing. *Evidence Based Policing: An Introduction*, p.29.
- Bryant, R and Bryant, S (Eds) *Blackstone's Handbook for Policing Students* (Blackstone's Practical Policing). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- College of Policing (2018) National decision Model. Authorised Professional Practice Available to view at: <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/>
- Lennon, G. and Murray, K., 2018. Under-regulated and unaccountable? Explaining variation in stop and search rates in Scotland, England and Wales. *Policing and Society*, 28(2), pp.157-174.
- Regoeczi, C and Kent, S., 2014. Race, poverty, and the traffic ticket cycle: Exploring the situational context of the application of police discretion. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 37(1), pp.190-205.
- Van den Heuvel, C., Alison, L. and Power, N., 2014. Coping with uncertainty: Police strategies for resilient decision-making and action implementation. *Cognition, Technology & Work*, 16(1), pp.25-45.

### Other indicative reading

- Bonner, H.S., 2015. Police officer decision-making in dispute encounters: digging deeper into the 'black box'. *American journal of criminal justice*, 40(3), pp.493-522.
- Brown, J., Fleming, J., Silvestri, M., Linton, K & Gouseti, I (2018) Implications of police occupational culture in discriminatory experiences of senior women in police forces in England and Wales, *Policing and Society*, Online: DOI: 10.1080/10439463.2018.1540618
- Buvik, K., 2016. The hole in the doughnut: a study of police discretion in a nightlife setting. *Policing and society*, 26(7), pp.771-788.
- Cruz, V., Garcia, B. and Hammock, E., 2015. Effects of Physical Appearance on Police Decision Making.
- Myhill, A. and Johnson, K., 2016. Police use of discretion in response to domestic violence. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 16(1), pp.3-20.
- Phillips, S.W., 2016. Police discretion and boredom: What officers do when there is nothing to do. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(5), pp.580-601.
- Sleath, E. and Bull, R., 2017. Police perceptions of rape victims and the impact on case decision making: A systematic review. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 34, pp.102-112.
- Vila, B., James, S. and James, L., 2018. How police officers perform in encounters with the public: Measuring what matters at the individual level. *Policing: An International Journal*, 41(2), pp.215-232.

## **Employability skills – the Glyndŵr Graduate**

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Each module and programme is designed to cover core Glyndŵr Graduate Attributes with the aim that each Graduate will leave Glyndŵr having achieved key employability skills as part of their study. The following attributes will be covered within this module either through the content or as part of the assessment. The programme is designed to cover all attributes and each module may cover different areas.

### **Core Attributes**

Engaged  
Enterprising  
Creative  
Ethical

### **Key Attitudes**

Commitment  
Curiosity  
Resilience  
Confidence  
Adaptability

### **Practical Skillsets**

Digital Fluency  
Organisation  
Leadership and Team working  
Critical Thinking  
Emotional Intelligence  
Communication