

**‘There’s More Than One Right Path to The Destination’: Does Degree Type Make a Difference in Police Recruiting?**

**Authors:**

Laura Huey, UWO

Hillary Peladeau, UWO

Hina Kalyal, UWO

**Abstract:**

Each year colleges and universities market criminology and criminal justice programs to potential applicants by suggesting these programs offer a uniquely tailored path for those seeking entry into a policing career. Despite such claims, little empirical research exists to suggest that degree content is a factor in influencing recruitment outcomes. In this paper, we present results from an ongoing, exploratory study into pre-recruitment education to show that program content – in this case, a criminology or criminal justice diploma or degree – has generally little influence on how police agencies evaluate a potential applicant. Drawing on interviews with thirty-two (n=32) police recruiters and senior officers from police services across the province of Ontario in Canada, we show that, while many agencies prefer candidates with degrees, criminology and criminal justice degree holders are not privileged in the recruiting process over those applicants from other disciplines.

**Keywords:**

policing; recruitment; criminal justice; criminology; education

### Introduction

Very few people in our society are entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing laws and maintaining order. Professionals in this field must be equipped with technical knowledge and skills, and offer the strong character and personal discipline required to succeed in a demanding environment. The Criminal Justice program will help you prepare to take on this challenge. (Medicine Hat College, 2010)

Each year thousands of college and university students enroll in Canadian criminology and criminal justice programs. Most, if not all, of these students, do so believing that a diploma or degree from one of these fields will provide the requisite knowledge and skills for a criminal justice career (Courtright & Mackey, 2006; Schanz, 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Yet, little is known about the extent to which such programs equip students with the skills they need to enter a criminal justice career. As was recently observed, without this knowledge, there may be a gap between what criminology students learn in their programs and what a job in criminal justice demands of them (Bartels, McGovern and Richards 2015: 145).

This paper addresses the question of how well criminology and criminal justice programs prepare students. It analyzes qualitative data from interviews with police recruiters and senior officers, and their perceptions of graduates' preparedness for criminal justice roles and meeting police agencies' present and future hiring needs. We interviewed thirty-two (n=32) recruiters and senior officers from across eighteen (n=18) police services. The interviewers asked each interviewee to give their views on a series of issues related to education and recruitment. In particular, interviewees were asked to compare the merits of applicants with a criminology or

---

<sup>1</sup> According to *Police Services Act* (2015), an individual can apply to become a police officer if they have a secondary school diploma (or its equivalent). Police agencies in Ontario do not require a college/university degree. However, a recent survey conducted by the Ontario Association of Police Service Board (2017) reports that most police agencies agree that post-secondary education should be a prerequisite to becoming a police officer due to the changing nature of crime. Agencies favour applicants with higher education, and thus, there are many post-secondary programs that market themselves towards police recruits.

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

criminal justice diploma or degree with applicants from other academic backgrounds. Most interviewees felt that the type of degree or diploma an applicant has does not significantly affect their success as a police officer. Many of the subjects also felt that the type of degree or diploma an applicant has should not be a significant factor in recruiting decisions.

### **Pre-recruit Education**

Few police education studies focus on degree type, and, particularly, on the question of whether or not having a criminology or criminal justice degree significantly influences recruitment outcomes. We are not alone in this observation; other scholars have noted that too little is known about post-graduate outcomes for criminology and criminal justice students (Wimshurst & Allard, 2007; Bartels et al., 2015). What makes this gap particularly surprising, as Bartels et al. (2015) have noted, is that it appears amid a wealth of recent scholarship on ‘student-consumers’ and the rise of professional, or ‘administrative criminology’, programs within the neoliberal university/college (see, for example, Saunston & Morrish, 2010; Hamer & Lang, 2015; Bunce, Baird, & Jones 2016). Although critics worry that criminology and criminal justice programs cater too much to professional concerns and students’ employment success post-graduation (Farrell & Koch, 1995; Flanagan, 2000; Frederick, 2012), we actually know very little about how well the graduates of these programs meet the needs of police services and other public institutions.

Of what we do know, research findings are mixed as to whether degree specialization makes a significant difference on an individual’s later attitudes, behaviours and/or future career development post-recruitment. In a study by Carlan (2007), officers who pursued criminal justice degrees reported having gained great value from their coursework in terms of improved knowledge of criminal justice, as well as their ability to deal with conceptual and managerial issues. However, a more recent study of police careers and degree type found little evidence to support that one’s

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

field of study in college affects occupation approval, feelings towards management, or role orientations (Paoline, Terrill, & Rossler, 2015, p. 66). Proponents of the value of criminology and criminal justice education for police have suggested that degrees in these areas are useful because they can teach students skills and competencies that meet the demands of different police organizations. These programs may also provide officers with adequate knowledge of global issues and their impact on crime at a local level (Paterson, 2011). Yet, some studies have found no significant difference in the skill set of police recruits with criminology versus other degrees (Carlan, 2007; Manis et al., 2008). Further, results of a study by Manis et al. (2008) on citizen complaints showed no difference in complaints between officers with criminology majors versus other social sciences.

It has also been noted that post-secondary education develops critical, creative and conceptual skills to deal with complex problems (Worden, 1990; Paynich, 2009), irrespective of the degree subject studied (Carlan, 2007; Manis et al., 2008). Some scholars therefore argue that overall university experience leads to the development of ethical and culturally aware attitudes among police officers, rather than specific course content (Roberg, 1978). In short, it would seem that the benefits of a criminology or criminal justice degree for police officers remain unclear.

The benefits that recruits with criminology or criminal justice degrees bring to a police force are also unclear. Do police services value these degrees? And, if so, does the possession of one of these degrees confer a preferential or privileged status on potential recruits?

## **Current Study**

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

The data for this study is drawn from a larger project exploring the extent to which criminology and criminal justice post-secondary education programs meet the needs of Canadian police services. Our research questions were:

1. What forms of policing-related post-secondary education currently exist in Ontario for potential police recruits?
2. Are these programs suitable for the needs of police organizations given the operational and other demands they face?

### **Method of Inquiry**

To examine this issue, we focused on the province of Ontario and conducted a mixed-methodological study consisting of: 1. an environmental scan of all college and university programs in the province marketed as suitable or desirable for students seeking entry into a policing career; and 2. Semi-structured interviews with police recruiters and senior officers from across the province. Our sampling frame for the latter was developed from a list of 58 municipal, provincial and federal policing services operating in Ontario. Invitations to participate were sent to each service, and seventeen services responded. Police recruiters were selected for interviews in order to speak about current recruitment models and practices; senior officers were asked to provide an organizational perspective that included an assessment of future policing needs. Further, whereas recruiters interview and evaluate potential recruits, senior officers sit on constable selection panels.

### **Data Collection**

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

For the interview portion of this study, we conducted a total of thirty-two (n=32) interviews<sup>2</sup> with eleven (n=11) police recruiters<sup>3</sup> and twenty-one (n=21) senior officers from eighteen (n=18) services across Ontario<sup>4</sup>. Interviews were conducted with an interview guide (see *Table 1*) with questions about the following topics:

1. desirable qualities in current and future recruits;
2. police assessment tools, such as General Duty Constable competencies;
3. views on police education, including content and modes of delivery;
4. views based on specific knowledge and experience of select college and university-based programs.

It was in relation to the third topic area that interviewees were asked about their views of the utility of criminology and criminal justice degrees for policing applicants, compared to programs in other subject areas. Participants were also asked about hiring models and the types of skills, knowledge, and personal traits they typically look for during the recruiting process.

### **Data Analysis**

An exploratory analysis of the interview data was first conducted using inductive thematic coding. The inductive approach is more flexible as it not constrained by any pre-existing theories or ideas, and the themes identified by the researcher are directly related to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For our analysis, we read the data carefully to identify text that could be grouped into general themes, which were helpful in structuring the working paper we developed for the

---

<sup>2</sup> The original data set was comprised of thirty-three (n=33) interviews; however, one interview with a recruiter was excluded from the analysis for this study because he chose not to answer the question about criminology and criminal justice.

<sup>3</sup> To help keep participants anonymous, we have referred to participants by different genders.

<sup>4</sup> All interviews were conducted in accordance with Tri-Council guidelines on ethical treatment of research participants and our University's Research Ethics Board.

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

larger project. The general themes are related to the study objectives, while the sub-themes are based on the close analysis of data (Thomas, 2006). Once the general themes were determined, we then returned to the data and, relying on the interview guide topics, engaged in focused coding. For this purpose, we created categories from the actual text or quotes in the raw data and to ensure reliability, all coding was independently verified by another team member. The results of this analysis inform our findings below.

### **Results**

All interviews began with a version of the following question: ‘Do you think having a criminology or criminal justice degree makes any difference to the skillset of the candidates?’ Once collected, responses were clustered into one of three categories: ‘yes’, ‘not significantly’, and ‘no.’

#### **Yes**

We received six (n=6) positive responses – one from a recruiter and five from senior officers. The responses can be categorized based on the participants’ reasoning.

Four participants focused on the value of ‘higher education’ in general being useful in policing. For example, one police leader replied, “I think it does for sure ... One, learning at a higher level is certainly beneficial, not just at the entry-level, but as you move through the police service as well.” Similarly, another senior officer responded, “I do. The one thing going to university does is it teaches you the ability to learn, digest, and write.” Without specifying degree type, he added, “I think that some of the courses that are being provided now through various universities in support of policing is beginning to provide basic skills that we’re expecting of new officers and prepare them for the job better than somebody that would walk of the street.” The third officer felt that criminology and criminal justice degrees assist potential applicants because

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

they are “a little more focused into the type of work that we do.” She also noted, however, “there’s more than one right path to the destination”, and that she didn’t “want to say that [those with criminology or criminal justice degrees] are necessarily superior players. They all aren’t.” A third senior officer opined that a criminology or criminal justice degree would “absolutely” be useful to policing, and then added that any form of university education could be useful, “even if it’s not a criminal justice degree.”

Of the two positive comments received, one, a recruiter, noted that applicants with pre-existing knowledge of the laws and criminal justice system can present as a little more confident than others during interviews, because they have “familiarity” with key ideas and concepts. The second officer, a senior officer, drew on his own experiences. “The criminology definitely helped me at the beginning of my career,” he observed, because the education he received in that field, combined with his psychology major, provided a “good understanding” of people and how best to relate to others. However, no degree-specific advantages were noted for potential recruits during the evaluation process.

### **Not Significantly**

We received fifteen (n=15) comments that fell within the ‘not significantly’ category. Respondents saw criminology and criminal justice degrees as having *some* positive benefits on holders that might make them more desirable as recruits; however, these benefits are not significant in terms of how recruiters evaluate potential candidates. One of the senior officers replied to our question that having one of the former makes “a little bit of difference. It helps.” She added that exposure to content about the criminal justice system “gives you a sense of what crime and justice is all about.” However, she also acknowledged that this knowledge alone was insufficient: “I don’t think it’s holistic enough to provide the skillsets needed to be a police officer.” A senior officer



## Degrees and Police Recruiting

from another service also felt that possessing a criminology or criminal justice degree helps new recruits “get off to a quicker start”. According to the officer, applicants with a criminology or criminal justice educational background come into policing with “a little more formal knowledge of the court systems, the social issues that are affecting crime, the criminal code authorities and things like that.” However, the relative disadvantage of a new officer without a criminology/criminal justice degree, he felt, could easily be overcome. Ultimately, he concluded, “I’m not aware of any one particular program that is better suited for policing than not.”

Several officers within this group expressed the view that pursuing a criminology or criminal justice degree was not the best route to a successful career in policing. One officer said, “it’s not the only road to get to where we want to go.” This view was echoed by a senior officer in another service who stated, “I would be just as happy to hire somebody with a business degree as I would somebody that had a criminology degree.” A senior officer elsewhere felt that, although having criminal justice knowledge pre-recruitment “isn’t bad,” his service received greater benefits from hiring individuals with social work degrees and experience. As he explained, “they can come to us with skills to both protect their own resiliency, but as well to communicate with people who are in distress or who are seeing the world through a different lens for whatever reason. That’s very valuable too.”

The one clear place in which degree type appears to matter is in pre-screening processes. A recruiter acknowledged that while a criminology or criminal justice degree would not confer any benefits upon an applicant during the interview portion of the recruitment process, the pre-screening scale his service uses recognizes and privileges a degree or diploma in one of those two fields. As he explained, “Our service uses a pre-course screening scale, [...] and in that we recognize that a potential candidate has a degree or diploma in a police-related field. So, they

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

would score slightly more marks than someone that had a degree or diploma in non-police related field.” However, “at the interview stages, it doesn’t favour a candidate to have a police university or college diploma, as compared to a university or college diploma that’s not geared towards policing.”

Some research participants in this category also spoke to the issue of whether knowledge acquired from a criminology or criminal justice degree might benefit successful recruits – and their police agencies – later in their career. Most in this group were unsure if there were any significant benefits. As one senior officer explained, “I’m not aware of any longitudinal studies that actually demonstrate that some of them do better than others.” He then added, “If you based it purely on promotion, there’s probably constables that have a lot more education than a lot of our higher-ranking people, but they have never thought of promotion ... What weight you’d apply on their education to where they are, I’m not really sure.”

### **No**

In total, we received eleven (n=11) ‘no’ responses – that is, the majority of interviewees stated that degree type ultimately has little bearing on whether an applicant will be successfully recruited into their police service. “I’ve sat on probably 100 selection panels,” one senior officer stated. “I’ve seen so many different types of people walk through the door, with so many different types of college diplomas or university degrees. Criminology, I don’t rank that any higher than somebody who might have been a teacher”. The reasons provided as to why degree type makes little difference centered around various themes – such as the need for diverse skills in policing – mentioned below.

While some participants in the ‘yes’ and ‘not significantly’ groups saw the value in acquiring knowledge of crime and the criminal justice system before entry into policing, others

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

felt that pre-recruitment knowledge and skills in these areas was not particularly useful. As one senior officer explained, without practical skill-building, “criminology [as] a pure degree, in my view, is not helpful.” This view was shared by a recruiter who noted that he had recently hired Kinesiology students over criminology degree applicants. “Educationally, the criminology students that we were interviewing,” he stated, “didn’t have the ‘gift-of-the-gab’. They didn’t feel comfortable in their own skin.” By contrast, the Kinesiology students had had professional training and “what made them great was their ability to sit and talk and be confident ... we can work with that.” While more applied criminal justice programs can help address skills deficits, those that focus primarily or solely on skills and applied knowledge are seen as too narrow. There are “always voids” in terms of what current criminology and criminal justice programs can provide.

Other interviewees noted that policing is a complex enterprise requiring multiple forms of knowledge and varied skillsets to meet the diverse array of current and future challenges. As one senior officer expressed, “On a national level, and certainly on a lower level, we’re looking at 15-20% of our business being crime focused, that’s it.” Thus, “If you’re only focused on criminology and you think the only thing we are is crime fighters, then you’re missing really what public policing is all about.” This officer “could see somebody coming from business school ... being able to compete and contribute equally to somebody having criminology.” A recruiter for another service also spoke to the complexity of policing and the need for applicants from diverse educational backgrounds:

We have people [...] from different backgrounds, whether it’s criminology, psychology, business [...] we’ve got people on the job that were former architects, veterinarians. We have people with business backgrounds. We have people that have a really high skillset in IT [...] we can utilize those other skills.

Similarly, a senior officer stated, “I can take an accounting grad and teach him or her to be a police officer, but I cannot teach them accounting, and we need accountants in policing because we’re

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

running businesses.” A senior officer stated he always advises applicants and current officers looking for more education to consider disciplines outside of criminology and criminal justice. “I think they need to look outside the box at different things that are offered.” Since police agencies “have so many partners that we communicate with and stakeholders”, he suggests individuals explore public administration programs.

Recruiting officers also acknowledged that having a criminal justice or criminology degree makes little difference to recruiting outcomes because subject matter knowledge in one or more areas of criminology is unlikely to shape their work as rookie constables in patrol positions. For example, one recruiter noted: “I don’t see a difference in candidates from the get go, [...] and I don’t see a difference in candidates who are on the road.” Echoing the comments of other officers interviewed for this study, she added, “a criminology student coming into policing may have some of the subject matter we’re going to cover or they’ll have to know, but inevitably people catch up.” Considering the possibility that knowledge acquired for a criminology or criminal justice program might assist an officer’s later career, this recruiter replied, “I can’t answer that question down the road, but my gut feeling would be no.” A senior officer, however, could answer the question and did: “I don’t believe that it assisted me, as compared to anybody else with a different degree. I think it gives you a general idea of the criminal justice system in Canada, but I don’t think it’s a necessity to have a criminology degree...”

Participants also felt that, as long as someone had strong verbal and other skills desired by police agencies, degree type makes little difference. “We get as many good candidates from a physiology program, as we do from the criminology program,” one recruiter explained, “because there is no difference.” Further, if a candidate is particularly strong in verbal communication and other areas, holding a diploma or degree also makes little difference. Speaking of both those with

and without degrees, one recruiter commented, “I think you can teach them both to be skilled at this job.” We explore this theme further in the next section.

### **Competency Models: Skills Over Educational Background**

In Canada, many, if not most, police services employ competency models in hiring and promotion decisions. These models are built on a set of competency profiles linked to the tasks and qualifications deemed necessary for each of the different major roles within an organization. Peeters (2014, p. 91) has suggested that “a competency profile should refer to the integration of knowledge, abilities and attitudes that are needed to act and behave adequately at work.” The Police Sector Council (PSC) (2013, p. 22) has defined competencies “as observable abilities, skills, knowledge, motivation or traits defined in terms of the behaviours needed for successful job performance.” These can be divided into generic (‘critical thinking’) and specific competencies (‘ability to conduct interviews and interrogations’) (Peeters, 2014). Regardless of which area a competency falls within, it must be associated with a set of standardized and measurable tasks or assessments clearly tied to an organization’s mandate and objectives (PSC, 2013; Peeters, 2014).

In the province of Ontario there are generally three forms of competency models in use. Most police services across Ontario employ the Constable Selection System (CSS), a proprietary competency evaluation process created by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) and the provincial Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections. A second model is that created by the Police Sector Council (PSC), a recently defunct national initiative for addressing human resource issues in policing. The third model consists of modified versions of the first two systems, adapted for a service’s specific use. Each of the police services represented in this paper uses one of these systems in its recruitment process.

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

Given the proprietary nature of the OACP model, to demonstrate how competencies working in policing hiring decisions, we focus instead on the PSC model<sup>5</sup> and those responsibilities associated with general duty work, and the competencies identified as necessary for that work.

According to PSC (2013), the primary responsibilities of a general duty Constable are:

1. Apply relevant legislation, policies, procedures
2. Use equipment and technology
3. Maintain safety of self and others
4. Conduct general patrol
5. Respond to calls for service
6. Assist victims of crime
7. Conduct investigation
8. Apply detainee management
9. Deliver court testimony.

To perform these tasks, the required behavioral competencies are: adaptability; risk management; problem solving; stress tolerance; interactive communication; teamwork; organizational awareness; written skills; and ethical accountability and responsibility (PSC 2013).

The focus on skills as a critical component of hiring rather than qualifications why degree type appears to make little difference in policing recruitment decisions. To the extent that the ability to develop written, verbal and problem-solving skills, as examples, is not unique to a criminology or criminal justice program, we can understand why degrees in business, accounting, psychology and other fields would hold at least an equal value.

Throughout each of the interviews, we asked both recruiters and senior officers for their views on what traits, skills, and knowledge their police services look for in potential recruits. We also asked what, if any, model they employ to help them make those evaluations. Given that the CSS model is the most commonly used in Ontario, most services mentioned using some version of this model. For example, one service focused on only five of the CSS core competencies:

---

<sup>5</sup> In discussions with officers who have worked with both the CSS and PSC models, most have said that while there are some differences, they are fundamentally similar.

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

relationship-building skills, evidence of a flexible attitude, self-confidence, self-control and valuing diversity. When asked if strong communication skills were also important, a recruiter explained;

Within all those skillsets, or all those competencies, we look at your interview process. We're grading communication in all of them. It's not a stand-alone competency in and of itself because it flows through every single one of them.

Recruiters and senior officers in services that do not use the CSS model pointed to similar traits as important criteria, but were more apt to say they look carefully for strong verbal and written skills.<sup>6</sup>

The competency models do not privilege or prioritize candidates with previous crime and criminal justice knowledge. As one senior officer stated, "what we're looking for [...] the ability to understand and solve human problems and, to a certain extent, to move away from what would [...] catch[ing] bandits and arrest[ing] people." Another was even more forthright in her assessment: "when you walk in the door in policing, you're not expected to write essays. What you're expected to do is have all of those hard skills that you need to land on the road with on day one to do the job."

## Conclusion

Colleges and universities have developed a wealth of materials to market their criminology and criminal justice programs. Most of these schools imply or claim they provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for an exciting career in policing. And yet, evidence does not show that these programs provide any significant advantage in the police recruitment process. The

---

<sup>6</sup> None of the above is to say that applicants are not subjected to fitness, psychological and other tests, but rather that the results of these tests form part of the pre-screening process. Our focus was more on the interview and subsequent selection panel, which, as each of our participants noted, are evaluative processes that are informed by the competency models they use.

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

current study explored this topic through interviews with both police recruiters and senior officers across eighteen different police services in the province of Ontario.

Our results suggest that, while having a degree in the field of criminology or criminal justice may give an initial lead to applicants, any advantages from this education are often nullified shortly after applicants begin training or enter the field. Although a few interviewees felt that a criminology degree might eventually benefit someone further in their career, most believed that police organizations needed individuals with diverse forms of knowledge and skill sets. Some stressed that degrees in business were particularly helpful to those interested in management positions. As one interviewee explained, “I’m not aware that any one particular program that is better suited for policing than not.”

Interview data shows most participants felt that the experience of obtaining any degree gives applicants the most valuable job skills. Interviewees who answered “yes” to the question went on to qualify their answers, saying that it was the skills gained by obtaining post-secondary education rather than the degree content that police organizations value.

Considering the recruitment process as a whole, skills and personal qualities are determining factors in applicant success, over and above degree content. Modern recruitment typically relies on competency models. These models identify the primary responsibilities of a constable, and match these to core skills and personal qualities deemed necessary in their work environment. For example, the performance of a patrol officer’s tasks requires characteristics and skills such as adaptability, interactive verbal communication, and strong written skills. None of these skills are specific to the domain of criminology, but rather can be developed within any undergraduate degree program, or in the workplace.



## Degrees and Police Recruiting

It is important to mention some limitations of our study. Firstly, the study focused on police recruiting by organizations within the province of Ontario. While a minority of these services use a national-level set of selection standards, or their own internal criteria, the majority rely on provincial standards that may or may not be comparable to other jurisdictions. Our results are, therefore, not generalizable to agencies or states that rely on selection processes that favour criminology or criminal justice degrees.

A second limitation worth considering is that some of the organizations participating in this study use a pre-interview screening process. In some instances, candidates with a criminology or criminal justice degree receive higher scores than those with other degrees. However, as we have observed, once the interview phase of the recruitment process begins, degree content appears largely immaterial to the odds of success.

Despite its limitations, our study has important implications for universities offering criminal justice or criminology education. Besides dispelling the notion that criminology graduates are preferred over other degree holders by the police, the study shows that universities and colleges need to either ensure their course curricula align more closely with the hiring needs of police and other criminal justice agencies. They must be careful in their messaging to potential applicants, avoiding suggestions that a certificate, diploma or degree in criminology or criminal justice will provide a necessary advantage, or fast track, to a policing career. One way to make the criminology students more marketable is for the programs to focus on the modes of content delivery. Research shows that police organizations value programs that develop student skills through role playing, simulation exercises and by incorporating group activities for problem solving, in order to prepare future recruits for their role as police officers (authors, 2017).

### References

- Bartels, L., McGovern, L., & Richards, K. (2015). Degrees of difference? A preliminary study of criminology degrees at Australian universities. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 48(1), 119–146.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). pp. 77-101.
- Bunce, L., Baird, A., & Jones, S. (2016). The student-as-consumer approach in higher education and its effects on academic performance. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-21.
- Carlan, P. (2007). The criminal justice degree and policing: Conceptual development or occupational primer? *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 30(4), 608-619.
- Courtright, K. & Mackey, D. (2004). Job desirability among criminal justice majors: Exploring relationships between personal characteristics and occupational attractiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 15(3), 311-26.
- Farrell, B. & Koch, L. (1995). Criminal justice, sociology, and academia. *The American Sociologist*, 26(1), 52-61.
- Flanagan, T. (2000). Liberal education and the criminal justice major. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 11(1), 1-13.
- Frederick, B. (2012). The marginalization of critical perspectives in public criminal justice core curricula. *Western Criminology Review*, 13(3), 21-33.
- Hamer, J. & Lang, C. (2015). Race, structural violence, and the neoliberal university: The challenges of inhabitation. *Critical Sociology*, 41(6), 897-912.
- Manis, J., Archbold, C., & Hassell, K. (2008). Exploring the impact of police officer education level on allegations of police misconduct. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 10(4), 509–523.
- Medicine Hat College. (2010). Criminal justice [Formal description]. Retrieved from <https://www.mhc.ab.ca/ProgramsandCourses/Academic-Programs/Programs-of-Study/Criminal-Justice>
- Ontario Association of Police Services Board. (2017). Member survey results – police services act rewrite. Retrieved from OAPSB website: <https://oapSB.ca/wp-content/uploads/OAPSB-Survey-Results.pdf>
- Paoline, E., Terrill, W., & Rossler, M. (2015). Higher education, college degree major, and police occupational attitudes. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 26(1), 49-73.

## Degrees and Police Recruiting

Paynich, R. (2009). *The impact of a college-educated police force: A review of the literature*. Milton, MA: Curry College

Police Services Act, R.S.O. [1990, c. P.15]. Retrieved from the Ontario Laws website:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p15>

Peeters, H. (2014). Constructing comparative competency profiles. In P. Stanislas (Ed.), *International perspectives on police education and training* (pp. 90-113). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Saunston, H. & Morrish, L. (2010). Vision, values and international excellence: The 'products' that university mission statements sell to students. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of education and the student as consumer* (pp. 73-85). London: Routledge.

Schanz, Y. (2013). Perceptions of undergraduate students on criminology and criminal justice education in the United States: An empirical analysis.' *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 8(2), 105-119.

Steinmetz, B., Schaefer, B., del Carmen, R., & Hemmens, C. (2014). Assessing the boundaries between criminal justice and criminology. *Criminal Justice Review*, 39(4), 357-376.

Thomas, D.R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27 (2), 237-246.

Wimshurst, K. & Allard, T. (2007). Criminal justice education, employment destinations, and graduate satisfaction. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 40(2), 218-235.

Worden, R. (1990). A badge and a baccalaureate: Policies, hypotheses, and further evidence. *Justice Quarterly*, 7(4), 565-592.

**Table 1**

<b>Interview Questions</b>
1. My first question is about the needs of policing services today, in terms of recruits, because it has changed from the old days when recruits had to be strong and tough. But since things are more complex today, what skills do you think are most needed in recruits you hire today?
2. There is a guide to Competency-based Management in police services, prepared by the Police Sector Council, which is based on best practices in policing across Canada. One of the areas it deals with, is the assessment of a candidate’s suitability for recruitment and selection, against defined competencies. Do you make use of this guide during the recruitment and selection process? If not, how do you determine the suitability of a candidate? *
3. In your experience, do you feel that the current police education programs in Ontario, deliver the types of content you feel is needed by potential recruits? I mean are they doing a good enough job at preparing people for the reality of policing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you please provide some examples of programs that you feel deliver the needed content?</li> <li>- Can you please provide some examples of content you feel is missing in college/university programs?</li> </ul>
4. Do you find any difference between the skill set of criminology graduates versus those with other degrees?
5. What forms of education do you think would be most useful (in terms of modes of delivery? (i.e., classroom lectures, internships, other forms of experiential learning, simulation and role play exercises?)
6. Would you expect the new recruits to have an idea about crime analysis, forensics, research or criminal law?
7. How useful do you think it would be for the in-coming recruits to have some basic knowledge of any of the big topics in policing, like intelligence-led policing, problem-oriented policing, community policing or evidence based policing?

\*Only the recruiters were asked this question.