

Module specification

When printed this becomes an uncontrolled document. Please access the **Module Directory** for the most up to date version by clicking on the following link: [Module directory](#)

Module Code	POL701
Module Title	Evidence Based Policing
Level	7
Credit value	30
Faculty	FSLS
HECoS Code	100486
Cost Code	GACJ
Pre-requisite module	N/A

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Core/Optional/Standalone
MSc Policing	Optional

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	32 hrs
Placement tutor support hours	0 hrs
Supervised learning hours e.g. practical classes, workshops	0 hrs
Project supervision hours	0 hrs
Active learning and teaching hours total	32 hrs
Placement hours	0 hrs
Guided independent study hours	268 hrs
Module duration (Total hours)	300 hrs

Module aims

This module aims to develop students' advanced understanding of evidence-based policing and its application within contemporary operational and strategic environments. It seeks to equip students with the skills to critically evaluate diverse forms of evidence, including academic research, organisational data, practitioner insight and community perspectives, and to assess their relevance, quality and limitations in informing policing decisions. The module aims to enable students to design robust, ethical and methodologically sound interventions or evaluations that address real policing challenges, and to enhance their capacity to support organisational learning, innovation and improved public outcomes. It also aims to promote critical engagement with the broader debates surrounding legitimacy, ethics, implementation and the Welsh policing context.

Module Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Critically evaluate the theoretical foundations, evolution and contemporary debates surrounding evidence-based policing, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of its relevance to modern policing practice.
2	Critically appraise a range of research methodologies and evidence sources used in policing, assessing their quality, validity, limitations and ethical implications when informing operational and strategic decisions.
3	Design a rigorous, ethically sound and methodologically appropriate evidence-based intervention or evaluation that addresses a defined policing issue, drawing on advanced research principles and crime-related data.
4	Synthesise research findings, practitioner expertise and community insight to develop a coherent, feasible and impact-focused proposal that supports organisational learning, implementation and improved policing outcomes.

Assessment

Students will produce a portfolio consisting of two integrated components that demonstrate their ability to critically analyse evidence, design a robust intervention or evaluation, and translate research insights into realistic policing practice.

Component A: Critical Evidence Analysis (1,500 words)

Students select a clearly defined policing issue (for example domestic abuse, vulnerability and mental health demand, neighbourhood ASB, stop and search, missing persons, digital fraud, or cyber-enabled crime). They undertake a critical analysis of the existing evidence base relevant to that issue. The analysis must:

- identify and evaluate key studies, data sources and relevant theoretical perspectives

- assess the quality, strengths and limitations of the evidence
- consider ethical, organisational and legitimacy implications
- highlight gaps, tensions or uncertainties in the current evidence base

Assesses LO1 and LO2.

Component B: Evidence-Based Policing Intervention or Evaluation Proposal (2,500 words)

Drawing on Component A, students design a feasible, ethically sound and methodologically robust intervention or evaluation aimed at improving policing practice in relation to their chosen issue. The proposal should:

- define the problem using appropriate crime, harm or demand data
- outline a clear, evidence-informed rationale for the proposed approach
- specify intervention detail or evaluation design (experimental, quasi-experimental, mixed methods, or realist)
- identify measurable outcomes, metrics and data collection strategies
- address implementation factors, including organisational culture, resources, partnerships and Welsh context
- consider ethical, equality and community legitimacy issues
- outline a realistic plan for monitoring impact and sustaining improvement

Assesses LO3 and LO4.

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Duration/Word Count	Weighting (%)	Alternative assessment, if applicable
1	1-4	Portfolio	4,000	100%	N/A

Derogations

None.

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Teaching and learning will follow the University's Active Learning Framework (ALF), combining synchronous and asynchronous activity. Online lectures will introduce core concepts, supported by interactive tasks such as case-study analysis, disclosure drafting, decision-making exercises and operational problem-solving discussions.

Welsh Elements

Students can present assessed and non-assessed work in Welsh, and can access all forms, resources, and email correspondence in Welsh where preferred. Students are also able to undertake personal tutorials and, where applicable, work placements through the medium of Welsh. All module information aligns with the Welsh language expectations set out in the programme specification, and appropriate support is available to ensure students can fully engage with the module in their chosen language.



Indicative Syllabus Outline

Indicative Syllabus Outline

- Foundations of Evidence-Based Policing
- Origins and development of evidence-based policing
- Key theorists, models and the distinction between evidence-based and experience-based practice
- Relationship with problem-oriented policing, situational crime prevention and crime science
- UK and Welsh policy context, College of Policing, PEEL, HMICFRS drivers for EBP
- Critical debates, benefits and limitations of EBP

Understanding and Appraising Evidence

- What counts as “evidence” in policing
- Research hierarchies and the “best available evidence” principle
- Experimental, quasi-experimental and mixed-methods approaches
- Qualitative evidence, practitioner insight and community voice
- Ethical, cultural and legitimacy considerations in the use of evidence
- Critical appraisal tools and evaluating the quality of studies

Research Methods for Policing

- Designing rigorous research for complex policing environments
- Causality, counterfactuals and internal/external validity
- Using police data: crime metrics, demand data, harm indices, spatial analysis
- Analytical concepts: effect sizes, significance vs practical significance, reliability and bias

Evidence-Based Approaches to Key Policing Issues

- Neighbourhood policing, hotspots and targeted patrols
- Domestic abuse, VAWG, safeguarding and vulnerability
- Stop and search, disproportionality and legitimacy
- Mental health, addiction and partnership responses
- Missing persons, risk thresholds and multi-agency analysis
- Cybercrime, digital evidence and online harms
- Roads policing, collisions and behavioural interventions

Crime Metrics, Patterns and Insight

- Crime concentration, chronic hotspots and near repeats
- Crime harm and severity scoring
- Use of mapping and simple spatial techniques
- Understanding demand, hidden harm and vulnerability indicators
- Interpreting local partnership data

Implementation and Knowledge Mobilisation



- From evidence to practice: mechanisms of change and organisational realities
- Barriers to implementation, including culture, risk, politics and resources
- Leadership and change management in support of EBP
- Stakeholder engagement, partnerships and Welsh context

Designing and Evaluating Evidence-Based Interventions

- Defining a policing problem using data and research
- Selecting appropriate intervention models
- Designing evaluation frameworks
- Choosing metrics and indicators of success
- Monitoring fidelity, displacement and unintended consequences
- Communicating findings to decision-makers and practitioners

Indicative Bibliography:

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

Essential Reading

Sherman, L. W. (1998) *Evidence-Based Policing*. Ideas in American Policing. Washington, DC: Police Foundation. <https://www.policinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Sherman-1998-Evidence-Based-Policing.pdf>

Lum, C. and Koper, C. S. (2017) *Evidence-Based Policing: Translating Research into Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

College of Policing (2023) *What Works Centre for Crime Reduction: Evidence Base*. College of Policing. (Online resource used nationally for EBP guidance.)

<https://www.college.police.uk/research/what-works-centre-crime-reduction>

Weisburd, D. and Telep, C. (2014) 'Hot Spots Policing: What We Know and What We Need to Know.' *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 30(2), pp. 200–220.

R V G Clarke, Eck, J.E. and United States. Department Of Justice. Office Of Community Oriented Policing Services (2009). *Crime analysis for problem solvers in 60 small steps*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. Of Justice, Office Of Community Oriented Policing Services. Available online (Revised 2016) <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-w0047-pub.pdf>

Recommended Reading

Mitchell, Renee, and Laura Huey, eds. *Evidence Based Policing: an Introduction*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2018.

Knutsson, Johannes, and Lisa Tompson, eds. *Advances in Evidence-Based Policing*. London: Routledge, 2019.



Sherman, L. W. “The Rise of Evidence-Based Policing: Targeting, Testing, and Tracking.” *Crime and justice (Chicago, Ill.)* 42.1 (2013): 377–451. Web.

Bullock, Karen et al. “Police Perceptions of Problem-Oriented Policing and Evidence-Based Policing: Evidence from England and Wales.” *Police practice & research* 23.6 (2022): 775–791. Web.

Spooner, Emma, Craig Hughes, and Phil Mike Jones. *Police Research and Evidence-Based Policing*. Ed. by Tony Blockley. St Albans: Critical Publishing, 2022. Print.

Administrative Information

For office use only	
Initial approval date	January 2026
With effect from date	September 2026
Date and details of revision	
Version number	1