

# AKKREDITERINGS- RAPPORT

## Master in Digital Policing

The Norwegian Police University College  
Politihøgskolen

2025



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<b>Grad/studiepoeng</b>	Master § 2-6 /120 studiepoeng (ECTS)
<b>Sakkyndige</b>	Joe Carthy, Darren Hayes, Tord Apalvik
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## Forord

NOKUT ensures the quality of Norwegian higher education through, among other things, supervision of institutions' systematic quality work, accreditation of new study programs, and supervision of established programs. Universities and university colleges have varying authority to establish study programs. If institutions wish to establish a program beyond their authority, they must apply to NOKUT for accreditation of the program.

The expert committee appointed by NOKUT has assessed the application from The Norwegian Police University College for accreditation of master's in digital Policing. The committee has compiled its assessments in this report.

### About this report

NOKUT's method for accrediting study programs, as described in Appendix 2 of this report, allows the committee to revise its assessments and conclusions during the evaluation process if new information becomes available. That is the case in this report. The committee's additional assessments are presented under the relevant provisions.

Hege Brodahl

Head of Higher Education

All NOKUT's assessments are public, and this and similar reports will be electronically available on our website [www.nokut.no](http://www.nokut.no)

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# 1 Information regarding the applicant institution

The Norwegian Police University College (PHS) was founded in 1920 as the National Police College and was accredited as a university college in 2004. As an accredited university college, PHS has the academic authority to establish its own bachelor's degree programmes but must apply to NOKUT for accreditation of master's and doctoral degree programmes. PHS offers a three-year basic education for the police, a master's degree in police science, an experience-based master's degree in investigation and, in collaboration with NTNU, an experience-based master's degree in digital forensic and cybercrime investigation, a master's degree in police management which is a joint degree with Copenhagen Business School and Linnæus University (Linnéuniversitetet), in addition to more than 100 different continuing education programmes.

PHS is applying for a master's degree in Digital Policing.

## 2 Decision

*Vilkårene i forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven §§ 1-10 til 1-18 av 1. august 2025 er oppfylt.*

*NOKUT akkrediterer Master in Digital Policing (120 studiepoeng) ved Politihøgskolen. Studiet er en mastergrad etter § 2-6, jf. forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven.*

*Akkrediteringen er gyldig fra vedtaksdato.*

## 3 Expert assessment

This chapter is the expert committee's assessment. The term "we" refers to the expert committee as such.

New regulation, including accreditation of study programmes, came into force on 1 August 2025. The Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the Academic Supervision Regulations have been merged into a single set of regulations: *Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven*. The changes to the regulations do not contain any material changes. This report includes references to the sections of the new regulations.

### 3.1 Summary

The Norwegian Police University College (PHS) is seeking accreditation for a Master's degree in Digital Policing. The expert committee has thoroughly evaluated the application and provides the following assessment.

The application is comprehensive and well-documented, demonstrating PHS's capability to deliver a high-quality educational programme. The proposed master's programme aligns with the strategic goals of PHS and addresses a critical need for advanced digital policing skills in the current law enforcement landscape. The committee acknowledges the rigorous academic and practical components of the programme, including the strong focus on independent work and the substantial scope of the curriculum.

The programme structure, with specializations in Digital Forensics and Cybercrime Investigation and Prevention, offers a robust and versatile educational path for students. The inclusion of core modules totaling 22.5 ECTS in each specialization ensures depth and expertise in these critical areas. The flexibility of full-time and part-time study options is a significant strength, catering to a diverse student demographic.

However, the requirement that at least 10 per cent of the teaching staff must be professors or dosent is not fulfilled.

#### Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.

With the updated information about the academic staff, all the requirements for accreditation of the study programme are considered fulfilled.

PHS has also addressed several recommendations regarding the future development of the programme. Certain suggestions have been modified or removed where they are no longer applicable.

### 3.2 Basic prerequisites for accreditation

#### 3.2.1 Demands expressed in the Universities and College Act

##### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-1 (4) It is a condition for accreditation being granted that the requirements of the Universities and University Colleges Act are met. Regulations adopted under the authority of Section 3-2 of the Universities and University Colleges Act shall form the basis for the accreditation.

**Academic Supervision Regulations**

Section 2-1 (1) The requirements of the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges and its corresponding regulations must be met.

**New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-10 Generelle vilkår for akkreditering

Et vilkår for akkreditering av studietilbud er at kravene i universitets- og høyskoleloven med forskrifter er oppfylt.

**Assessment**

The programme meets the requirements set out in the former national Master's Degree Regulations (Regulation to the Act relating to universities and university colleges (*Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven*), including a minimum of 30 ECTS credits allocated to independent work (master's thesis) and a total programme scope of 120 ECTS credits. The programme offers two specializations: Digital Forensics and Cybercrime Investigation and Prevention, each comprising 22.5 ECTS of core modules. It may be completed as either a full-time or part-time course of study.

Admission requirements include a bachelor's degree in police education or a bachelor's degree with a specialization of at least 80 ECTS credits (or 120 ECTS credits in an integrated program) in relevant fields such as digital/computer forensics, data science, cyber/data/information security, law, criminology, analytics, or other subject areas pertinent to digital policing.

Admission ranking is based on a weighted average of grades from the applicant's bachelor's degree, in accordance with §5 of the Regulations on Admission to Master's Programs at the Norwegian Police University College (PolitiHøgskolen), including the allocation of any additional qualifying points.

The programme primarily targets police officers in Nordic countries who are currently working, or will be working, with digital evidence. It is also open to employees in other European police services or governmental agencies engaged in similar work. Additionally, the programme is accessible to civilians, including those seeking future careers in law enforcement roles related to digital policing. This inclusive approach—welcoming both police personnel and civilians—is viewed as a positive feature, provided it can be implemented effectively in practice. The restriction to applicants with relevant academic backgrounds is considered appropriate and well-founded.

The admission process applies quota-based selection for Nordic and other European applicants with police training or employment in police services, allocating 35% of available places to each group. While the application states that the primary target group is Nordic police officers or those employed within Nordic police institutions, the equal quota distribution is intended to foster cross-border learning and networking. However, it is not entirely clear whether the institution aims to achieve 35% representation from each group in practice. If that is the objective, the application would benefit from a clearer description of how the institution intends to recruit and fill the "European quota."

Both the diploma and the diploma supplement are reported to contain adequate and accurate information, in line with applicable standards.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Consider aligning the defined primary target group with the established quota distribution, or alternatively, to revise the quota to better reflect the stated target group.

### 3.2.2 Information about the programme

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-1 (2) Information provided about the programme must be correct and show the programme's content, structure and progression, as well as opportunities for student exchanges.

#### New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):

##### § 1-11 Krav til studietilbudet

k. Informasjonen om studietilbudet skal være korrekt, vise studiets innhold, oppbygging og progresjon, herunder muligheter for studentutveksling.

## Assessment

A well-founded justification for the establishment of a Master's programme in Digital Policing is provided. The emphasis on a Nordic and European scope is timely. The proposed structure and content of the two specializations are clearly defined and appropriately delimited.

The program's overall design is coherent, ensuring academic progression and student development through clearly structured and sequential modules. Opportunities for student exchange are incorporated into the program; however, the application could more explicitly explain the exchange process better. Further comments on internationalization are provided in sections 3.3.7 and 3.3.8 of the application.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- More explicitly identify the most appropriate periods within the programme for student exchange and provide additional information on how such exchanges will be facilitated in practice.



### 3.3 Demands to the educational provision

#### 3.3.1 Learning outcome and title of programme

##### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (1) The learning outcomes for the programme must be in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, and the programme must have an appropriate title.

##### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

c. Læringsutbyttet skal være i samsvar med Nasjonalt kvalifikasjonsrammeverk for livslang læring for det aktuelle nivået.

a. Studietilbudet skal [...], ha [...] og et dekkende navn.

#### **Assessment**

The learning outcomes are clearly described in terms of the Knowledge, Skills, and General Competence appropriate for such a programme. Tables 2, 3 and 4 detail the learning outcomes: 6 for knowledge; 6 for Skills and 8 for General Competence.

A clear rationale for the choice of learning outcomes as well as clarification of the purpose of the programme which is in line with other such programmes on offer internationally.

A cogent case is made that upon successful completion of the Master's programme the students will not only have advanced knowledge and skill in digital policing but will also have the skills necessary to independently maintain their own personal currency in the discipline.

The title of the programme Master in Digital Policing is appropriate. It clearly communicates the nature and purpose of the programme as the term digital policing is widely used in the law enforcement community. In addition, the two tracks of the programme (Digital Forensics and Cybercrime Investigation and Prevention) are also widely used and understood.

The fight to prevent cybercrime and the tasks to protect society and fight crime are cross-border and hence international, the programme title is in English. The language of instruction of the programme, following the common language of cybercrime, is English.

#### **Conclusion**

The requirements are fulfilled.

#### 3.3.2 The programme's academic update and professional relevance

##### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (2) The programme must be academically up-to-date and have clear academic relevance for further studies and/or employment.

**New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):****§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud**

- a. Studietilbudet skal være faglig oppdatert og ha tydelig relevans for videre studier eller arbeidsliv.

**Assessment**

The programme's structure is comprehensive in terms of the range of topics covered. Operating systems and files systems are the bedrock of understanding digital evidence and these are covered in the modules. The programme also includes courses related to computer memory, malware, mobile forensics, and network forensics. Not all degree programmes cover crypto assets or data mining, which are very helpful to practitioners, yet this programme does, which is to be complemented. The other modules, which form other tracks, are very practical and beneficial to a law enforcement professional.

As far as we can tell, the programme application does not discuss artificial intelligence (AI), which is a critical element of many technology-related degree programmes. In terms of digital forensics, many crimes are being committed, using AI, while AI can also be used to assist investigations. Machine learning (ML), including computer vision, is being used or will be used. For example, the evaluation of large datasets, related to criminal activity, which can be used to predict where crimes will occur, which in turn will assist with the deployment of policing resources.

**Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.**

Although the relevance of AI and machine learning is not directly stated in the study plans, PHS will address this and explore its political use in law enforcement across at least four modules.

**Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Address the relevance of AI and machine learning in the development of new course modules.

**3.3.3 The programme's workload****Academic Supervision Regulations**

Section 2-2 (3) The total workload of the programme must be between 1,500 and 1,800 hours per year for full-time students.

**New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):****§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud**

- f. Studietilbudets samlede arbeidsomfang skal være på 1500–1800 timer per år for heltidsstudier.

## Assessment

The total student workload is calculated in accordance with standardized practice at the Norwegian Police University College (PHS), where each credit corresponds to an expected workload of 28 hours. This amounts to 1,680 hours annually for full-time students and 840 hours for part-time students. The workload includes lectures, seminars, group work, coursework, independent study, and supervision. The programme emphasizes a varied range of learning activities with a high degree of student engagement. A detailed breakdown of the expected workload per activity is provided in Appendix “Table 6” of the application. The workload estimation appears to be carefully considered and balanced.

However, self-study remains inherently more difficult to assess, particularly given that the programme is delivered entirely online. While the estimation cannot be regarded as fully robust, the institution is encouraged to implement mechanisms to validate actual workload—such as gathering systematic student feedback and using standardized tools like the *Studiebarometeret*.

The programme includes several well-considered measures to support student engagement and participation. In the initial phases of the programme, learning is structured around organized teaching activities that include practical and independent components. As student’s progress, the learning trajectory gradually shifts toward more independent study. In the final year, the majority of the student workload is expected to be self-directed, particularly during completion of the master’s thesis. Further comments on this are provided in Section 3.3.5 of the application.

### Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.

PHS has confirmed a system for student follow-up beyond feedback from *Studiebarometeret*. Additional follow-up mechanisms include end of module evaluations and pro-active follow-up. More concise description on how these is conducted would strengthen the application. However, the mechanisms described are deemed sufficient.

## Conclusion

The requirement is fulfilled.

### 3.3.4 The programme’s content, structure and infrastructure

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (4) The programme’s content, structure and infrastructure must be adapted to the programme’s learning outcomes.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

##### **§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud**

d.Studietilbudets innhold, oppbygging og progresjon skal være tilpasset læringsutbyttet.

h. Studietilbudets organisering og infrastruktur skal være tilpasset læringsutbyttet og stå i forhold til antallet studenter.

## Assessment

The three categories of Learning Outcomes highlighted in the application are Knowledge (with subcategories of K1-K6 in Table 2), Skills (with subcategories of F1-F6 in Table 3) and General Competence (with subcategories of G1-G8 in Table 4). After reviewing all the courses, in each semester, it is clear that the learning outcomes are addressed across the degree programme. The organisation of the courses, or progression, makes sense in terms of the structure of the degree programme.

In terms of infrastructure, students have access to the basic resources that you would expect to find in this type of degree programme, such as a learning management system, online academic library resources, and IT support.

It was helpful to learn that the students will conduct their labs, or practical exercises, through a Virtual Training Environment (VTE). However, not a lot of detail was provided about how this important part of the programme infrastructure would be managed by the college and the course instructor. For example, would the instructor be responsible for providing forensics images, creating course exercises and managing access to the VTE or would this largely be the responsibility of a virtual lab manager or other support staff.

A review of Appendix 3 indicates that the courses being provided are comparable with other master's degree programs in digital forensics. The content of the programme, as outlined in this section, makes sense, in terms of the course content and the progression of the modules. It is good to see that *Course 1: Introduction to Digital Policing* contains content related to social, legal and ethical issues associated with digital forensic investigations. The content in *Course 2a File System Forensics* seems similar to courses in other digital forensics degree programmes and courses. The content in *Course 2b Operating Systems* is also an important foundational course to me part of a degree programme, like this, which is it.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Provide additional information about management of the VTE.

### 3.3.5 Teaching, learning and assessment methods

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (5) The teaching, learning and assessment methods must be adapted to the programme's learning outcomes. The programme must facilitate students taking an active role in the learning process.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

##### § 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

e. Undervisnings-, lærings- og vurderingsformer skal være tilpasset læringsutbyttet og utformet slik at de fremmer at studentene tar en aktiv rolle i å forme læringsprosessen.

## Assessment

As outlined in the application, the teaching and learning methods are well-aligned with the overall purpose and character of the programme. The institution acknowledges that, as the programme is delivered entirely online, it will demand a higher degree of independent work compared to traditional, campus-based master's programs. The amount of self-directed study is substantial throughout. In response to these conditions, the institution has implemented a range of measures to support teaching quality and ensure student participation, with the aim of achieving the program's intended learning outcomes.

Most study modules include compulsory coursework that must be completed and approved in order for students to be eligible for final examination. The institution benefits from experienced academic staff with extensive expertise in digital forensics and investigation, as well as many years of practical use of the Canvas learning platform and other digital teaching tools.

To promote active participation and provide a sense of academic community, students will be assigned to academic groups during the first year of study. Each group will be led by an academic group leader who offers general guidance and facilitates discussions. These groups are scheduled to meet online every two months.

Appendix 4 (Education Plan) provides an overview of the work and teaching methods employed across the various subjects. The range of methods—including synchronous lectures, discussion forums, live demonstrations, in-class exercises, gamification elements, case studies, and research-driven assignments—appears well-suited to support student engagement in an online learning environment.

Appendix 11 outlines the institution's procedures for student follow-up, with clear commitments to response times and feedback on graded work. However, the routines described are somewhat limited and rely mainly on reactive measures. It is advised that the program consider strengthening its approach by incorporating more proactive and structured follow-up strategies. This could include clearer mechanisms for monitoring student engagement, more defined intervention practices, and additional opportunities for regular, formative interaction.

All courses in the master's programme conclude with an examination. The assessment methods require active engagement with the course material, and they are both diverse and clearly described. Mandatory coursework requirements and assessment formats in the individual course descriptions are consistently and transparently presented.

### Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.

PHS uses proactive follow-up techniques during current courses and training offerings, and this will also be implemented for this programme.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Strengthening its approach by incorporating more proactive and structured follow-up strategies.

### 3.3.6 Links to research and/or artistic development work and academic development work

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (6) The programme must have relevant links to research and academic development work and/or artistic research.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

g. Studietilbudet skal ha relevant kobling til forskning eller kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid og faglig utviklingsarbeid.

#### **Assessment**

As pointed out in the application, digital policing has for many years been providing methods and practice in policing and education via computer forensics and online investigation and other relevant forms. It draws from well-established scientific disciplines such as computing, mathematics, forensics, law, criminology, sociology, psychology, and several other scientific disciplines.

The staff who will teach this study typically have research competence and are active researchers. Through the Master's thesis, the programme will involve training in scientific methods in collaboration with and under the guidance of practicing researchers.

The team are or have already been involved in significant national and international research projects that are directly relevant to the content of a Master's in Digital Policing. These projects have involved research on mobile forensics, digital tools for law enforcement, training delivery and so on.

This research has enabled the academic team to develop and deliver state of the art training which can now be used on the new programme.

The team members have also developed extensive international networks that they can leverage as a source of additional expertise for the programme.

The programme is linked to research and professional development work in that the topics covered in the programme take the concepts and teaching aids from relevant research literature. The syllabus is largely based on existing research literature, and they will typically be updated over time so that the teaching materials are adapted to the level, scope and uniqueness of the programme. The fact that the students are part of an environment where R&D activities take place, contributes to ensuring that the study programme has a satisfactory connection to research and professional development work.

In digital forensics and the cybercrime investigation and prevention, the importance of honing the student's research skills at an early stage is recognised. Students are introduced to simple research tasks at the earliest opportunity in the programme via research-based assignments which help the student develop these skills. Research-based tasks will require that students research a particular topic or artefact and describe their findings in a report

style submission. Such assignments will greatly improve the student's project planning and research skills throughout the programme.

The application notes that the number of publications at level 2 is small in comparison to the level 1 publications. However, it must be pointed out that international organisations which focus on law enforcement will typically be in the same situation. These organisations are usually focussed on the pressing needs of law enforcement, so it is reasonable to expect that more publications will be at level 1.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Continuously aim to increase the opportunities for staff to publish at level 2.

### 3.3.7 The programme's internationalisation arrangements

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (7) The programme must have internationalisation arrangements adapted to the programme's level, scope and other characteristics.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

##### § 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

- i. Studietilbudet skal ha ordninger for internasjonalisering som er tilpasset studietilbudets nivå, omfang og egenart. Studietilbud som fører fram til en grad, skal i tillegg ha faglig relevante ordninger for internasjonal studentutveksling.

## Assessment

The MSc in Digital Policing is international by design, delivered in English and aimed at an international target group. The academic staff is multinational and actively engaged in relevant international networks, including NORDCOP. The program's international orientation is further supported through plans for internationally focused teaching and research activities, guest lectures, and opportunities for both student and staff exchanges. Additional comments regarding international student exchange are provided in Section 3.3.8 of the application.

The institution is advised to:

- Further formalise and strengthen partnerships and international arrangements.

#### Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.

PHS are in the process of renewing and formalising partnership arrangements. They have established cooperation with more partners, such as the University of the Arctic Network and EUROPOL EC3.

## Conclusion

The requirement is fulfilled.

### 3.3.8 The programme's arrangements for international student exchange

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (8) Programmes that lead to a degree must have arrangements for international student exchanges. The content of the exchange programme must be academically relevant.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

##### § 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

i. Studietilbudet skal ha ordninger for internasjonalisering som er tilpasset studietilbudets nivå, omfang og egenart. Studietilbud som fører fram til en grad, skal i tillegg ha faglig relevante ordninger for internasjonal studentutveksling.

### Assessment

The applicant indicates that, where possible, student exchange will be facilitated during the period of study. Exchange may be undertaken as an alternative to elective modules of either 7.5 or 15 ECTS. The proposed exchange opportunities appear academically relevant. Notably, students may enrol in courses at Halmstad University—Advanced Computer Networks and Security (15 ECTS) or Applied Data Mining (7.5 ECTS)—or participate in a Blended Intensive Programme at the Police Academy of the Netherlands (7.5 ECTS). The courses at Halmstad University are delivered on-site, while the Blended Intensive Programme combines short-term physical mobility with a virtual component.

One limitation is that none of the current exchange opportunities constitute a full-semester (30 ECTS) option. This implies that students seeking to spend an entire semester abroad—particularly full-time students—would need to take at least one course from the regular programme concurrently, which may pose logistical and academic challenges.

Additionally, it is noted that the agreement with the Police Academy of the Netherlands is set to expire this year. The institution is encouraged to ensure the renewal or replacement of this agreement to secure continued exchange opportunities.

### Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Further formalize and strengthen partnerships to facilitate for additional opportunities for student exchange.

### 3.3.9 Supervised professional training

#### Academic Supervision Regulations



Section 2-2 (9) Programmes that include supervised professional training must have formal agreements between the institution and the host for the supervised professional training.

**New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

I. For studietilbud med praksis skal det foreligge praksisavtale mellom institusjon og praksissted.

**Assessment**

Not applicable for this programme.

### 3.3.10 The programme's defined limitations and academic breadth

Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-2 (1) Master's degree programmes shall be defined, delimited and have sufficient academic breadth.

**New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbud

- a. Studietilbudet skal være definert og avgrenset, ha tilstrekkelig faglig bredde (og et dekkende navn.)

**Assessment**

This programme is well defined and clearly delimited to the field of digital policing. As the programme proposal outlines, digital policing is considered as any role exercised in a police/law enforcement professional context with regards to cyber and digital investigations. This includes digital forensics, online investigation and cybercrime investigation and prevention. In this context, the study represents. The two tracks of the proposed programme adhere to this description of digital policing. In this regard, the programme compares favourably to international best practice for such programmes.

It provides in-depth coverage of the professional requirements in digital forensics, online investigation and cybercrime investigation and prevention.

The programme content is aligned with state of the art research in all the areas covered by the programme. In addition, students take modules that develop their own research skills as well as giving them experience of research methods and project planning.

The academic breadth of the programme is clearly appropriate both in the depth of the courses and the amount of material covered in the programme. In this regard, the programme is in line with similar master's programmes that are offered internationally.

**Conclusion**

The requirements are fulfilled.

## 3.4 Faculty / teaching staff

### 3.4.1 The faculty / teaching staff's composition, size and competence

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (1) The faculty / teaching staff for each programme must be of a size proportionate to the number of students and the programme's characteristics, be stable over time in terms of competence and have a composition that covers the programme's topics and subjects.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-12. Generelle krav til fagmiljø

Første ledd: Fagmiljøet tilknyttet studietilbudet skal ha en størrelse som står i forhold til antallet studenter og studiets egenart, være kompetansemessig stabilt over tid og ha en sammensetning som dekker fag, emner og veiledningen som inngår i studietilbudet.

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-2 (2) Master's degree programmes shall have a broad, stable faculty / teaching staff comprising a sufficient number of staff with high academic expertise in education, research or artistic research and academic development work within the field of study. The faculty / teaching staff shall cover the subjects and courses that the study programme comprises. Staff members in the faculty / teaching staff in question must have relevant expertise.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-14. Særskilte krav til studietilbud på høyere grad

Første ledd: Fagmiljøet skal være bredt og ha relevant, stabil og høy kompetanse innenfor utdanning, faglig utviklingsarbeid og forskning eller kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid.

§ 1-12. Generelle krav til fagmiljø

Første ledd: [...] og ha en sammensetning som dekker fag, emner og veiledningen som inngår i studietilbudet.

### **Assessment**

The PHS academic environment is appropriate to deliver the academic and pedagogical requirements for this programme. Sufficient staff at PHS conduct active research within the core areas of the master's programme. This applies to professors, associate professors, lecturers, and research fellows. The staff are actively publishing in the relevant areas, as outlined in Appendix 8.

It is clear from Appendix 7 where staff qualifications and experience are described, that the staff have the requisite research, teaching and pedagogic experience to deliver this programme.

The teaching delivery will be distributed over a minimum of seven people with one coordinator per subject. A number of the staff have special competences, and they will make valuable contributions to teaching. This means that the professional environment

consists of between 5 and 10 people through internal and external sources. The master's programme will have one study / programme leader who is responsible for the overall study and quality assurance.

The number of students and the extent of teaching, supervision and research related to this programme indicate that 5.1 full-time equivalents (FTE) are required for 30 students. The 5.1 FTE teaching staff will therefore comprise of seven people. When the programme is fully operational, the total number of students will be 100. PHS aim to hire two additional employees with relevant competence which would increase the academic environment to a total of 7.1 FTE consisting of nine people. Thus, this gives 14.1 full-time or part-time students per staff member. In addition, the supervision capacity will be strengthened by bringing in external staff for activities such as examination and assessment.

This staff student ratio compares very favourably with other international institutions.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- continue to strengthen the teaching staff to ensure stable teaching capacity and high academic expertise in education, research and academic development.

### 3.4.2 The faculty / teaching staff's educational competence

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (2) The faculty / teaching staff must have relevant educational competence.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-12 Generelle krav til fagmiljø

Tredje ledd: Fagmiljøet skal ha relevant utdanningsfaglig kompetanse i universitets- og høyskolepedagogikk og -didaktikk, samt kompetanse til å utnytte digital teknologi for å fremme læring. Institusjonen skal legge til rette for oppdatering og utvikling av fagmiljøets kompetanse.

## Assessment

Appendix 7 provides a comprehensive review of the teaching staff's credentials. Most of the teaching staff possess a doctoral degree (PhD) and have relative experience in academia and policing. It does appear that the teaching staff fulfil the necessary requirements in terms of full-time staff employed by the college. There are of course two unfilled University College Lecturer / Associate Professor positions and at this time we do not know their credentials.

Three of seven teaching staff has completed a course in basic pedagogical competence. Others have acquired educational competences through teaching practise and through other pedagogical education. Many of the teaching staff has experience in teaching and in delivering courses online.

Educational competence means pedagogical or didactic expertise to promote learning, including knowledge and skills in the development and implementation of teaching and

counselling at university and college level (University and University Colleges Regulation Section 3-8). With plans to increase the academic environment, it is expected that the requirement for educational competence, hence in pedagogy for teaching at universities and university colleges, will be met in connection with new appointments.

## Conclusion

The requirement is fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Further keep attention on the development of the teaching staff's pedagogical and digital competence.

### 3.4.3 Academic leadership

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (3) The programme must have a clear academic leadership with defined responsibilities for quality assurance and the development of the study programme.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-11 Krav til studietilbudet

j. Studietilbudet skal ha en tydelig faglig ledelse med et definert ansvar for kvalitetssikring og -utvikling av studiet.

## Assessment

The proposal clearly describes the organisation of the programme in terms of the academic leadership provided. It also clarifies how the responsibilities for quality assurance and programme development are managed.

This programme will be run under the umbrella of the Postgraduate Studies Department, specifically under the remit of the Section for Investigation (EVU). The section leader will have the overall responsibility to ensure that quality assurance guidelines are followed. PHS has a quality assurance team at institutional level, who ensure that all programmes meet the required standards.

There will be one programme leader responsible for the smooth running and quality assurance of the programme. This programme leader can call on the quality assurance team for support. This programme leader will also work with the postgraduate studies team and the academic team so that academic quality standards are maintained.

PHS are also providing a senior adviser to be responsible for the administration of the programme and to support the programme leader. Track coordinators and module coordinators will also be appointed.

A variety of additional supports are also available including project and thesis supervisors as well as support for IT services, Student Wellbeing, Online learning and the support of the Student Council.

We find that PHS has clear academic management with defined responsibility for quality assurance and development of the programme.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.4.4 Staff with primary employment

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (4) At least 50 per cent of the academic full-time equivalents affiliated to the programme must be staff with their primary employment at the institution. Of these, academic staff with at least associate professor qualifications must be represented among those who teach the core elements of the programme. In addition, the following requirements apply to the faculty / teaching staff's level of competence:

- a) For first-cycle programmes, at least 20 per cent of the members of the faculty / teaching staff must have at least associate professor qualifications.
- b) For second-cycle programmes, at least 50 per cent of the members of the faculty / teaching staff must have at least associate professor qualifications. At least 10 per cent must have professor or docent qualifications.
- c) For third-cycle programmes, the faculty / teaching staff must consist of academic staff with at least associate professor qualifications. At least 50 per cent must have professor qualifications.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

##### § 1-12. Generelle krav til fagmiljø

Andre ledd: Minst 50 prosent av årsverkene tilknyttet studietilbudet skal utføres av ansatte i hovedstilling ved institusjonen. I de sentrale delene av studietilbudene skal det være ansatte i hovedstilling med førstestillingskompetanse. Førstestillingskompetanse innehas av ansatte i førstestilling og andre med doktorgrad. Førstestillinger er stillingene førstelektor, førsteamanuensis, dosent og professor.

##### § 1-14. Særskilte krav til studietilbud på høyere grad

Andre ledd: Innenfor studietilbudets fagområde skal minst 50 prosent av årsverkene i fagmiljøet ha førstestillingskompetanse og minst ti prosent av årsverkene ha professor- eller dosentkompetanse. For studier med obligatorisk praksis kan inntil ti prosent av årsverkene utgjøres av ansatte i delte stillinger og erstatte årsverk med førstestillingskompetanse. Slike delte stillinger kan ikke erstatte andelen årsverk med professor- eller dosentkompetanse.

## Assessment

A review of Table AXI, in Appendix 7, indicates that at least 50 per cent of the teaching staff, in the degree programme, associated with academic full-time equivalents have full time employment at the institution.

The core elements of this programme are Digital forensics (with the modules File System Forensics, Operating System Forensics and Mobile Forensics) and Cybercrime Investigation and Prevention (with modules Cybercrime Investigation and Prevention and Online and Open Source Techniques for Investigation and Prevention).

Among those who teach the core elements of the programme are academic staff with at least associate professor qualifications (førstestillingskompetanse). And they have their

primary employment at The Norwegian Police University College. Thus they fulfil the requirements in Section 2-3 (4), first paragraph of the Academic Supervision Regulation /Section 1-12 First paragraph in the new regulation.

The requirement Section 3-2 (4) letter b)/Section 1-14 in the new regulation “at least 50 per cent of the faculty possess at least the position of associate professor (førstestillingskompetanse)” is fulfilled. However, there are only 0,4 FTE with professor qualification. 0,4 FTE of the total teaching staff (5,1 FTE) is 7,8 per cent. The requirement is that at least 10 per cent must be professors or dosent. This requirement is not fulfilled.

The institution is required to:

- Hire or increase the percentage of academic staff with professor or dosent qualifications.

#### Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.

PHS has documented that since the application was submitted in 2023, one of the teaching staff has been appointed to professor and two has been appointed to associate professors (førsteamanuensis). With these changes the requirements of quantitative requirements are fulfilled. Additionally, another two of the academic staff that are associate professors, have applied for professorial and dosent positions.

### **Conclusion**

The requirements are fulfilled.

### **3.4.5 The faculty / teaching staff’s research and/or artistic research and academic development work**

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (5) The faculty / teaching staff must be actively engaged in research and academic development work and/or artistic research, and be able to demonstrate documented results with a satisfactory quality and scope in relation to the programme’s content and level.

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-2 (3) The faculty / teaching staff must be able to demonstrate documented results at a high level, and results from collaborations with other faculty / teaching staffs, nationally and internationally. The institution’s assessments shall be documented so that NOKUT can use them in its work.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-14 Særskilte krav til studietilbud på høyere grad

Tredje ledd: Fagmiljøet skal drive forskning og kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid og faglig utviklingsarbeid innenfor studietilbudets fagområde. Fagmiljøet skal kunne vise til dokumenterte resultater på høyt nivå, av en kvalitet og i et omfang som er tilfredsstillende for studietilbudets innhold og nivå i samsvar med kvalifikasjonsrammeverket nivå 7. Fagmiljøet skal kunne vise til resultater i samarbeid med andre fagmiljøer nasjonalt og internasjonalt.

## Assessment

A review of Appendices 7 and 8 reveals that the teaching staff are actively involved in academic research and academic development work related to the proposed degree programme. The research being conducted at PHS has resulted in the development of several tools for law enforcement (FREETOOL). PHS also delivers training to digital forensic analysts (PDP2). PHS contributes to various online tools, which are utilized by law enforcement agencies internationally.

We find the documented results at a sufficiently high level with collaboration with relevant national and international faculties and institutions.

### Assessment after response from the institution to the initial report.

PHS highlighted the fact that they have become a member of EUROPOL EC3, which is to be commended and beneficial for the programme.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.4.6 The faculty / teaching staff's external participation

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (6) The faculty / teaching staff for programmes that lead to a degree must actively participate in national and international partnerships and networks that are relevant for the programme.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-12 Generelle krav til fagmiljø

Fjerde ledd: Fagmiljøet tilknyttet studietilbud som fører fram til en grad og andre studietilbud av et omfang på 60 studiepoeng eller mer, skal delta aktivt i relevante nasjonale og internasjonale samarbeid og nettverk.

## Assessment

There is evidence to support the faculty's participation in both national and international partnerships, which are relevant to the degree programme. There has been a regional focus with an active Nordic Police Research network, which promotes research related to policing – primarily in Norway and Sweden, using newsletters, meetings and a biannual conference. PHS is also a founding member and participant in the Nordic Computer Forensic Investigator collaboration, which includes several European partner countries beyond Scandinavia.

PHS participates in numerous other collaborative groups and satisfies the requirements.

## Conclusion

The requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.4.7 Supervision of professional training

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (7) For programmes involving mandatory supervised professional training, the members of the faculty / teaching staff must have relevant and updated knowledge from the field of the professional training. The institution must ensure that professional training supervisors have relevant competence and experience in the field of the professional training.

#### **New regulation (Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven):**

§ 1-12. Generelle krav til fagmiljø

Femte ledd: For studietilbud med obligatorisk praksis skal fagmiljøet tilknyttet studietilbudet ha relevant og oppdatert kunnskap fra praksisfeltet. Institusjonen må sikre at praksisveilederne har relevant kompetanse og erfaring fra praksisfeltet.

#### **Assessment**

Not applicable for this programme.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the written application and the attached documentation, the expert committee concludes the following:

**The committee recommends accreditation of the Master in Digital Policing at The Norwegian Police University College (Politihøgskolen).**

The committee has provided advice for the further development of this educational provision.

## 5 Documentation

20/101054-1 Politihøgskolen – søknad om akkreditering av Masters in Digital Policing (120 ECTS)

20/101054- 2 Politihøgskolen – Institusjonsprofil

20/101054-20 Tilsvar til oversendelse av utkast til rapport – Akkreditering av Master in Digital Policing ved Politihøgskolen



## Appendix

### ***Learning outcome of the programme***

#### Knowledge (K)

After completing a Master's degree, the students can:

- K1 Demonstrate advanced knowledge in the field of digital policing
- K2 Critically describe the relationship between crime prevention, criminal investigation, and digital forensics in digital policing
- K3 Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the scientific methods in planning and conducting research in the field of digital policing
- K4 Display advanced knowledge in the investigation of emerging digital threats
- K5 Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the ethical implications of digital policing
- K6 Describe digital policing as an element of police science

#### Skills (S)

After completing a Master's degree, students can:

- F1 Apply scientific/research-based knowledge and methods to digital policing
- F2 Critically evaluate existing theories and methods within digital investigations and work independently with practical and theoretical problem solving
- F3 Utilise relevant scientific/research-based methods to research and develop techniques and procedures required to combat digital crime
- F4 Critically analyse the relevance and utility of various information sources
- F5 Conduct independent ethical research in the field of digital policing with increased insight, integrity, and confidence
- F6 Recognition, use, and validation of appropriate tools in digital policing

#### General Competence (G)

After completing a Master's degree, students can:

- G1 See the field of digital policing in a broader perspective
- G2 Communicate methods and results to specialist and wider audiences
- G3 Critically reflect on professional and ethical practice in digital policing and its effect on the wider society
- G4 Collaborate with relevant parties in the investigation of digital crime

G5 Conduct research and development projects independently

G6 Apply knowledge and skills in new areas of digital policing

G7 Contribute to innovative processes in digital policing

G8 Plan and conduct effective and lawful investigation or prevention of cybercrime or cyber-enabled crime

## ***The accreditation process***

NOKUT makes an administrative assessment to ensure that the application and documentation is suitable for external expert review. For applications that have been approved administratively, NOKUT appoints external experts for the evaluation of the application. The external experts have declared that they are legally competent to perform an independent evaluation, and carry out their assignment in accordance with the mandate for expert assessment passed by NOKUT's board, and in accordance with the requirements for educational quality as determined by the Regulation to the Act relating to universities and university colleges (*Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven*). The institution is given the opportunity to comment on the committee's composition.

NOKUT is responsible for the training and guidance of the experts during the entire process. Based on the documentation the expert committee writes their assessment. The expert committee conclude either with a yes or no, as to whether the quality of the educational provision complies with the requirements in the Regulation to the Act relating to universities and university colleges (*Forskrift til universitets- og høyskoleloven*). NOKUT also requests that the expert committee advise on further improvements of the programme. All criteria must be satisfactorily met before NOKUT accredits a programme.

If the expert committee recommends accreditation of the programme, the report is sent to the applicant institution, which is then given one week to comment on factual errors. If the committee do not recommend accreditation of the programme, the applicant institution is given three weeks to comment and make smaller adjustments to the programme. The committee receives the institutions comments and submits a revised assessment. The Director of The Department for Accreditation and Quality Assurance/Head of Higher Education then reaches a final decision about accreditation.

## **Presentation of the expert committee**

The Academic Supervision regulations section 5-6 determine the expert committee requirements for accreditation of study programmes at the bachelor's and master's level.

### **Professor Joe Carthy, University College Dublin**

Joe Carthy is a Full Professor of Computer Science at University College Dublin, holding a BSc (1981) and PhD (2002) in Computer Science and a Graduate Diploma in University Teaching and Learning (2006). He was College Principal (CP) and Dean of Science at UCD from 2011 to 2021 and Head of School from 2007 to 2011. He is the founder and was the first director of the UCD Centre for Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Investigation (CCI) which was established in 2007. Carthy has supervised 18 PhD and 20 MSc research students to completion. He is also responsible for the launch of the first online MSc in Forensic Computing and Cybercrime Investigation in the world. To date approximately 1600 law enforcement officers from all over the world have graduated from this programme.

### **Associate Professor Darren Hayes, PACE University**

Darren Hayes is a professor and Director of Cybersecurity, at Pace University in New York. Hayes has been listed as one of the Top 10 Computer Forensics Professors. He frequently presents at conferences and workshops worldwide, on topics ranging from cybersecurity, threat intelligence, and digital forensics. Hayes is an accomplished author and in late 2020, he published "A Practical Guide to Digital Forensics Investigations" and in 2024 published "CISSP Certification Guide". Hayes has served as a subject matter expert for both criminal and civil investigations. He also conducts training for law enforcement agencies both domestically and internationally. Hayes has a B.A. (Hons) in History from University College Dublin, an HDBS from the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, an MSc in Information Systems from Pace University, a Doctorate in Computing from Pace University, and a PhD in Industrial Engineering from Sapienza University, Rome, Italy.

### **Student Tord Apalvik, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)**

Tord Apalvik is a student at NTNU and is completing a part-time master's degree in war and society. He also holds a master's degree in international relations. He has experience as a student leader, from the university board and three years on the education committee at Nord University. Apalvik has been a member of two previous expert committees appointed by NOKUT in connection with supervision and study programme accreditation. Apalvik is an advisor at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment.



DRAMMENSVEIEN 288 | POSTBOKS 578,1327 LYSAKER | T: 21 02 18 00 |