

Criminology

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Preface

Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.

This subject benchmark statement, together with others published concurrently, refers to the **bachelor's degree with honours**¹. In addition, some subject benchmark statements provide guidance on integrated master's awards.

Subject benchmark statements are used for a variety of purposes. Primarily, they are an important external source of reference for higher education institutions (HEIs) when new programmes are being designed and developed in a subject area. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not a specification of a detailed curriculum in the subject.

Subject benchmark statements also provide support to HEIs in pursuit of internal quality assurance. They enable the learning outcomes specified for a particular programme to be reviewed and evaluated against agreed general expectations about standards. Subject benchmark statements allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design and can stimulate academic discussion and debate upon the content of new and existing programmes within an agreed overall framework. Their use in supporting programme design, delivery and review within HEIs is supportive of moves towards an emphasis on institutional responsibility for standards and quality.

Subject benchmark statements may also be of interest to prospective students and employers, seeking information about the nature and standards of awards in a given subject or subject area.

The relationship between the standards set out in this document and those produced by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies for individual disciplines will be a matter for individual HEIs to consider in detail.

This subject benchmark statement was produced by a group of subject specialists drawn from, and acting on behalf of, the subject community. The final draft subject benchmark statement went through a full consultation with the wider academic community and stakeholder groups. The process was overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). This subject benchmark statement will be revised no later than five years from its publication date, to reflect developments in the subject area and the experiences of HEIs and others who have been working with it. The review process will be overseen by QAA in collaboration with the subject community.

QAA publishes and distributes this subject benchmark statement and other subject benchmark statements developed by similar subject-specific groups.

¹ This is equivalent to the honours degree in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (level 10) and in the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (level 6).

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) came into force on 4 December 2006². The DED requires public authorities, including HEIs, to act proactively on disability equality issues. The Duty complements the individual rights focus of the *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA) and is aimed at improving public services and outcomes for disabled people as a whole. Responsibility for making sure that such duty is met lies with HEIs.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has published guidance³ to help HEIs prepare for the implementation of the Duty and provided illustrative examples on how to take the duty forward. HEIs are encouraged to read this guidance when considering their approach to engaging with components of the Academic Infrastructure⁴, of which subject benchmark statements are a part.

Additional information that may assist HEIs when engaging with subject benchmark statements can be found in the DRC revised *Code of Practice: Post-16 Education*⁵, and also through the Equality Challenge Unit⁶ which is established to promote equality and diversity in higher education.

² In England, Scotland and Wales

³ Copies of the guidance *Further and higher education institutions and the Disability Equality Duty*, guidance for principals, vice-chancellors, governing boards and senior managers working in further education colleges and HEIs in England, Scotland and Wales, may be obtained from the DRC at www.drc-gb.org/library/publications/disability_equality_duty/further_and_higher_education.aspx

⁴ An explanation of the Academic Infrastructure, and the roles of subject benchmark statements within it, is available at www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure

⁵ Copies of the DRC revised *Code of Practice: Post-16 Education* may be obtained from the DRC at www.drc-gb.org/employers_and_service_provider/education/higher_education.aspx

⁶ Equality Challenge Unit, www.ecu.ac.uk

1 Introduction

1.1 This subject benchmark statement establishes academic standards for criminology. It does not describe occupational or professional standards, although many occupational groups have contributed to the thinking that underpins this subject benchmark statement. Rather, the statement sets out the abilities and skills which any graduate from one of the courses listed in appendix A will be expected to possess. As such, it does not prescribe substantive content, but rather indicates the areas of knowledge which constitute the core of the discipline. Space is allowed for diversity and creativity in teaching as well as in research, thereby allowing new knowledge and creative interpretation to flourish. The document applies to all parts of the United Kingdom (UK), and it is expected that teaching and learning will reflect variations in local concerns and institutional arrangements.

1.2 The British Society of Criminology (the Society) is both well-placed to develop a subject benchmark statement for criminology, criminal justice, policing and related disciplines, and is also the only professional body which could do so. The Society is both a registered charity and a registered company. It is the only organisation representing professionals in the field of criminology in the UK. At the time of submission, the Society has 852 members. Of these, approximately 45 per cent work in higher education (HE) as either lecturers or full-time researchers; a further 17 per cent of members currently work in areas relating to the criminal justice system as practitioners, administrators, policy makers or researchers; 21 per cent of members are full-time postgraduate research students; and 17 per cent of members constitute a miscellaneous category of retired and other interested persons. Within itself, therefore, the Society represents both producers and users of the discipline of criminology.

1.3 The Society's constitution ensures that all categories of member are represented on its elected Advisory Council, and three Advisory Council members, from any category, serve as representatives on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee itself is elected by the membership.

1.4 The Society is a member of the Academy of Social Sciences, to which it from time to time nominates Members and Fellows.

2 Defining principles

2.1 Because of this open and democratic structure, the Society is in a strong position to understand and represent the educational and professional needs of criminology.

2.2 The purposes of this subject benchmark statement:

- to enable students to know what the subject entails and in general to choose a programme appropriate for their personal career plans
- to enable stakeholders and employers to know what skills can be expected from honours graduates in the subjects which fall under this subject benchmark statement
- to assist HEIs in designing and approving new programmes in criminology, criminal justice, police studies and related honours degrees

- to assist providers of criminology programmes who wish to develop or amend their programmes
- to assist external examiners and academic reviewers in establishing and comparing standards
- to facilitate European and international collaborative teaching programmes.

2.3 This subject benchmark statement sets out benchmark information for honours degrees in criminology and related subject areas as listed in appendix A. The statement should be regarded as representing minimum standards within an emergent discipline. It is intended, in dialogic mode, to encourage collaborative relationships between the areas of interest to which the benchmark statement applies and also within the social sciences more generally.

2.4 This subject benchmark statement applies to single honours degrees. As such, in its development the Society has engaged with the descriptor for a qualification at honours level in The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2001). We are aware that the structure of HE in Scotland is different from the rest of the UK and that the educational levels at which subject-specific skills and other skills will be achieved may vary. However, our discussions with Scottish colleagues (one of whom sat on the benchmarking group) revealed no disagreement in substance as to the skills to be acquired in the course of an honours degree in criminology or a related discipline, as defined in appendix A. In all four countries, the choice of areas to cover in combined and joint programmes will vary from institution to institution depending on factors such as the discipline with which criminology is combined, the concerns of designated employers, and the research profile of the teaching staff.

2.5 Criminology supplies a necessary knowledge base for a number of vocations, each of which will supplement the topics with units at an appropriate level relevant to their own professional and technical areas of expertise.

2.6 Notwithstanding the above, it is expected that all such programmes will enable students to develop:

- a basic understanding of the major theories which are deployed throughout the social sciences which allow us to understand the social and personal context of all aspects of crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance (for an elaboration of these terms, please see appendix B)
- an understanding of key concepts and theoretical approaches which have been developed in relation to crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance
- an understanding of the basic principles of social research as applicable to criminological topics; of what can be achieved by different methodologies and techniques; of when a particular methodology or technique is most appropriately used; of how the results of any particular study may be evaluated; and of the ethical principles governing criminological research
- a basic understanding of the principles of human rights and civil liberties which are applicable to policing, to the different stages of the criminal justice process, and to all official responses to crime and deviance
- an understanding of the dimensions of social divisions and social diversity in relation to criminological topics

- an understanding of the construction and influence of representations of crime and victims and of responses to crime and deviance as found in official reports, the mass media, and public opinion
- an understanding of the local, national, and international contexts of crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance.

2.7 Criminologists may be employed in a range of different departments. Therefore this subject benchmark statement specifies only the teaching to be provided and the learning required from the student. There are no prescriptions as to the institutional arrangements for delivery of subject matter, and cooperation between disciplines and departments within and between disciplinary boundaries is generally regarded as beneficial.

2.8 This subject benchmark statement specifies learning outcomes for the threshold standard that a single honours graduate in criminology must attain. It does not specify teaching and learning policies or methods, as these will be designed to suit the programme, the staff experience and the student body of each institutional provider. Similarly, there are no recommendations as to modes of assessment. Examiners, institutions and external examiners are expected, in general, to tailor assessment to a demonstration of the skill specified in the required learning outcome. Some more general requirements for teaching, learning and assessment are indicated in section 5.

2.9 In establishing the subject benchmark statement for criminology the following topics are dealt with:

- nature and extent of the subject
- subject knowledge and understanding
- subject-specific skills and other skills
- teaching, learning and assessment.

3 Nature and extent of criminology

3.1 Criminology draws on the range of human and social science disciplines. The subject is evolving in its theoretical and methodological development, reflecting the rapid social changes it tries to capture and the increasing cross-fertilisation of ideas and methods between the human sciences. In its modern forms, it is characterised by robust debates over how to:

- conceptualise and explain its subject matter
- operationalise its theories in conducting research
- inform debates over crime control policy, the scope of human rights, the links between criminal and social justice, and the expanding knowledge bases of the crime prevention, security, policing and justice-related professions
- develop and enhance its methodological and technical expertise
- manage the sensitive ethical issues arising from empirical research.

3.2 Criminology is both a theoretical and an empirical discipline.

3.3 At the heart of criminology are theoretical debates about a wide range of perspectives. Criminology emphasises the importance both of theoretical work and of a firm evidence base for its theories. It also engages in formal and critical evaluation of crime prevention, security and crime control policies, as well as of other responses to crime and deviance. However, in furthering these values, it needs to nurture a lively debate and dialogue between a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives, employing both quantitative and qualitative data. It must guard against attempts to foreclose this dialogue with the premature creation of theoretical or methodological protocols favouring particular sub-discipline fields, whether endorsed by state officials, by the mass media, or by fashions of academic thought.

3.4 Empirically, criminology is concerned with:

- processes of criminalisation and victimisation
- the causes and organisation of crime and deviance
- processes of preventing and managing crime and victimisation
- official and unofficial responses to crime, deviance and social harm
- representations of crime, offenders, victims and agents and agencies of control.

3.5 Given its strong policy orientation and close relationship with the criminal justice professions, many of criminology's most significant theoretical advances have been made through empirical studies. Criminology also contributes to and benefits from continuous theoretical debates within the social sciences. The vitality of the discipline also requires a continuous interchange between theory and analytic and evaluative research, and attention to increasingly salient ethical debates about crime, security, and human rights at international, national, regional and local levels.

3.6 Criminology is intrinsically a reflexive discipline, involving an understanding of contested values in the constitution and application of criminological knowledge.

4 Subject knowledge and understanding

4.1 Criminology, like all academic disciplines, is constantly changing. As such, the importance attached to different classical and contemporary theories will continually change. The constant emergence of new theories generates new areas of criminological enquiry. Such new areas of enquiry may also be generated by changing political and social concerns, or by changes within another discipline, such as philosophy. In spite of this constant production of new knowledge, however, the broad outlines of the subject area remain relatively constant.

4.2 Criminology includes knowledge and understanding of the following issues.

- The development of criminology as a distinct area of study and inquiry; its interdisciplinary nature; alternative theoretical approaches within criminology; contemporary debates about the content and scope of criminology.

- How crime, deviance and victimisation are socially and legally constructed; the different sources of information about crime and victimisation, how they are produced, including their location in particular legal, political, social and ideological frameworks, and how they can be interpreted; trends in crime and victimisation; different forms of crime and their social organisation; different theoretical approaches to the study, analysis and explanation of crime, deviance and victimisation; relationships between crime and social change and the impact of globalisation; relationships between crime, deviance and offending, victimisation, and social divisions such as age, gender, social class, race and ethnicity.
- The social and historical development of public policing; the organisation and powers of the police in different locations; functions, methods and strategies of policing; the practice and implications of particular policing strategies; the structure and culture of police work; policing diversity; new and emergent forms of private and state policing; the governance and accountability of policing in specific contexts, and issues of human rights and civil liberties in relation to policing.
- The development, role, organisation and governance of efforts to reduce and prevent crime and harm, and to ensure personal and public safety and security in different locations; the role of non-governmental agencies; the effectiveness of such measures and human rights issues in relation to preventive and pre-emptive measures.
- The social and historical development of the main institutions involved in crime control in different locations; the philosophy and politics of criminal justice and modes of punishment; the use of discretion in relation to justice processes including issues of discrimination and diversity; governance of criminal and youth justice and other crime control processes; the development of penal and alternative policies in different locations and their relationship to social change; the main forms of sentence and alternatives and the governance, roles and structure of the agencies involved, and offenders' experiences of adjudication and sentence.
- Representations of victimisation, crime and deviance, and of the main agents and institutions which respond to crime and deviance, as found in the mass media, in official reports and in public opinion.
- How to develop a reflective approach and a critical awareness of the values of local cultures and local politics, and of the student's own values, biography, and social identity, and how to bring these skills to bear in an informed response to crime and victimisation; and awareness of how political and cultural values, including their own, have an impact on responses to and rival interpretations of safety and security, crime control, policing, criminal and youth justice, sentencing, and alternative responses to offending.
- How to make ethically sound judgments in relation to research carried out by others or oneself.

5 Subject-specific skills and other skills

5.1 Students of criminology at honours degree level are expected to develop a range of skills that will enable them to work autonomously both as students and in subsequent employment.

5.2 The study of criminology enables students to develop a number of cognitive abilities and skills. These may be acquired in a range of teaching and learning situations, so that students will be able to become competent in:

- generating and evaluating evidence
- appreciating the complexity and diversity of the ways in which crime is constituted, represented and dealt with
- assessing the merits of competing theories relevant to crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance
- assessing the merits and diversity of objectives of competing responses to crime and deviance, including the protection of human rights
- gathering, retrieving and synthesising data and information
- making ethical judgments about published research
- making reasoned arguments
- interpreting quantitative and qualitative evidence and texts
- developing the ability to reflect in critical and constructive ways on their own learning.

5.3 The range of subject-specific abilities that students would normally be expected to develop during their undergraduate programme include:

- the ability to identify criminological problems, formulate questions and investigate them
- competence in using criminological theory and concepts to understand crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance
- competence in using criminological theory to elucidate representations of crime, victimisation, and responses to these, as presented in the mass media and official reports
- competence in explaining complex social problems in terms of criminological theory
- the capacity to analyse, assess and communicate empirical information about crime, victimisation, responses to crime and deviance, and representations of crime
- the ability to identify human rights issues in responses to crime and deviance
- the ability to recognise a range of ethical problems associated with research and to take action in accordance with the guidelines of ethical practice developed by the Society and cognate professional bodies

- the ability to identify and deploy a range of research strategies including qualitative and quantitative methods and the use of published data sources and to select and apply appropriate strategies for specific research problems
- the ability to present the philosophical and methodological background to the research of others and to one's own research.

5.4 Transferable skills. Many of the technical skills which criminology students will acquire are generic to all social sciences. These include:

- written and oral communication skills, including the clear presentation of research procedures, academic debates, and the student's own arguments
- skills of time planning and management
- the ability to work productively in a group
- the capacity to present data and evidence in an appropriate format for a variety of audiences
- the ability to formulate researchable problems within a general area of concern
- the ability to evaluate evidence of diverse kinds and to draw appropriate conclusions
- research design and data collection skills in relation to crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance, including knowledge of survey, experimental, and case study design; the identification of an appropriate sampling method; structured, semi-structured and indepth interviews; ethnography; evaluation methods; and the critical use of published data sources
- the ability to analyse data including indexing and retrieval of qualitative data, and an understanding of basic statistics (sampling, measures of significance and knowledge of the relevant software)
- reading skills: the ability to identify the most important arguments or evidence in a text and to record and/or represent these
- bibliographic and referencing skills: the identification of relevant published and web-based materials in relation to a particular topic
- computing skills in relation both to text and the presentation of basic research data.

6 Teaching, learning and assessment

6.1 Students studying for an honours degree in criminology should have access to a range of supportive learning resources including academic staff who are themselves engaged in scholarly activities; a range of paper and electronic resources including texts, monographs and journals; and computing resources including hardware, software and the necessary technical support.

6.2 Teaching, learning and assessment strategies in criminology should take account of the relevant section of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, published by QAA, and recognise that:

- criminology seeks to generalise on the basis of evidence. It is therefore neither purely deductive nor purely descriptive; theorisation needs both to guide the collection of data and to be grounded in evidence. Similarly, interpretation of

data has to be guided by theorisation. Students should, therefore, be given opportunities to acquire capacities of thinking in both abstract and concrete terms and to relate the two

- bodies of evidence are often consistent with alternative interpretations embodied in rival theoretical perspectives. Students are required to weigh alternative interpretations in terms of consistency with evidence, logic, fit with other findings, and breadth of explanatory power. Therefore students are provided with opportunities to rehearse and revise their own ideas
- criminology is a contested and often contentious discipline which is very likely to reflect current social, political and public disputes. Therefore students should be provided with opportunities to develop awareness of their own values and those of their cultural and political environment, and an appreciation of how alternative values impact upon rival interpretations of evidence
- criminology attracts students from diverse academic and social backgrounds. Their learning and skills development needs vary accordingly. To reflect this, degree courses need to provide flexible and varied teaching, learning and assessment strategies in order to ensure that all students have as equal an opportunity as possible to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to graduate in criminology.

6.3 Teaching and learning in criminology normally take place in a combination of some or all of the following contexts:

- lectures
- seminars and workshops
- tutorials
- independent study
- work experience placements
- flexible and distributed learning.

6.4 Lectures are normally used to provide an introduction to the main themes, debates and interpretations of their subject, conveying basic information, and signposting issues to be considered. Thus, they provide a common foundation of learning for all students. Lectures should encourage students' skills in listening, note-taking, reflection and their appreciation of how information is presented. Lectures may be enhanced by the use of audiovisual aids, including electronic presentational methods.

6.5 Seminars and workshops are normally used to provide opportunities for more student-centred and interactive learning. Usually organised around themes for discussion and/or designated reading, seminars and workshops aim to deepen students' knowledge of a particular subject, and their ability critically to examine alternative perspectives. They also aim to develop skills in information retrieval and presentation, communication skills and team/group work skills.

6.6 Tutorials are meetings between a staff member and an individual student or a small group. They serve varied purposes including: assessment of students' personal development and progress; helping students to develop learning skills; assisting students to make informed and realistic choices within their degree course; and providing support for individual or group project work, work-related placements, or dissertation supervision.

6.7 A large amount of student learning takes the form of guided independent study. This includes preparation for specific assignments but also reading and reflection on issues raised in the formally structured teaching contexts. Independent study generally takes the form of reading books and journals, including electronic resources. Web-based self-instructional packages and distance-learning packages may also be used.

6.8 Flexible learning is typically closely associated with distributed learning, as both emphasise the use of course materials outside the environment of the conventional lecture hall or teaching room and, in the case of distributed learning, the use of electronic learning technologies to support and facilitate teaching.

6.9 Work experience placements or internships in relevant agencies and organisations may be offered. Where these are available, they should provide students with work which will develop their criminological knowledge and relevant skills. Academic staff and agency mentors liaise in matching students with agencies and in providing support for the conduct of students' work.

6.10 Assessment is a crucial component of student learning. It is necessary to monitor student progress, motivate learning, provide feedback and to grade students. Methods of assessment should take account of the *Code of practice* and should, therefore, *inter alia*:

- reflect progression within the undergraduate programme. Thus, in the first year of an honours programme in criminology, the emphasis will normally be on developing basic research, information retrieval, and study skills. This should enable students at subsequent levels to strengthen their analytic, interpretative and communication skills and, by graduation, to demonstrate the problem-solving, evaluative and reflective skills intrinsic to the discipline and the attributes needed for self-managed, lifelong learning. It is expected that there will be greater opportunities for students to pursue more specialist courses in their second and third years of study (and fourth year for an honours degree in Scotland). Opportunities for the formal assessment of students' independent and more specialised study, eg the presentation of a dissertation, will normally occur in the final year
- combine the assessment of both knowledge and skills
- enable students to demonstrate their level of attainment and to demonstrate their full range of abilities and skills
- be varied
- reflect the desired learning outcomes for the programme and units within it.

7 Benchmark standards

7.1 The benchmark standards for criminology may be achieved in a number of ways and are compatible with a diversity of curricula and a variety of modes of assessment. Thus it is not assumed that the subject benchmark statement necessarily maps onto specific modules or units within a programme of study. It identifies the expected performance of individual students in relation to specific learning outcomes and provides a framework within which whole programmes can be reviewed. In this context, it should also be noted that the threshold achievement and typical achievement may have different implications for the review process. The threshold standard describes the minimally acceptable standards that students must achieve to secure an honours degree. The descriptors of typical achievement are less finely calibrated and describe the expected performance of the average student of criminology at honours degree level in the UK.

7.2 In interpreting and applying this subject benchmark statement, lecturers and directors of teaching and learning should pay particular attention to the definitions of key terms supplied in appendix B. These definitions offer detailed guidance as to the content designated by the terms 'crime', 'victimisation', 'responses to crime and deviance' and 'representations', and should be regarded as integral to the interpretation of the subject benchmark statement.

7.3 The subject benchmark statement has been organised so as to simplify and shorten its presentation and also to allow the possibility of amending the content periodically, as the discipline develops over time, by redrafting appendix C rather than the entire statement. In this way, the subject benchmark statement can keep pace with theoretical developments as well as changes in practice and policy.

Benchmark standards

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
An understanding of the key concepts and theoretical approaches that have developed and are developing in relation to crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance (see appendix C).	Able to describe a range of key concepts and theoretical approaches within criminology.	Able to describe and examine a range of key concepts and theoretical approaches within criminology, and to evaluate their application.
An awareness of how crime and victimisation are constructed in the media and by agents and practices of crime control.	Able to identify political and social processes of victimisation and criminalisation.	Able to appraise critically political and social processes of victimisation and criminalisation in the light of criminological theories.
Able to understand and demonstrate the relationship of social class, gender, age, race, ethnicity and other salient aspects of diversity in relation to crime, victimisation and responses to these phenomena.	Able to recognise patterns of social diversity and social inequality in relation to crime, victimisation and responses to these phenomena.	Able to provide an analytical account of social diversity and inequality and their effects in relation to crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance.

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
An understanding of the social and historical development of policing, of the changing values governing police work including human rights, of the structure and culture of police work in different locations, of policing diversity, and of new and emergent forms of private and state policing.	Able to recognise different police cultures, historical and contemporary trends in police work, and the implications of changes in the values governing police work and police practice in a diverse society.	Able to evaluate policing practices and developments in terms of changing values and relationships between individuals, groups, and public and private agencies in different locations.
An understanding of the social and historical development of punishment including courts and hearings for adults and young people; the governance and values of the relevant institutions; the theory and practice of sentencing; prison and community based penalties; and the place of human rights in these processes.	Able to recognise values and processes that underpin developments in youth and criminal justice and the practices of agencies which administer sentencing and alternatives.	Able to examine critically the values, practices and processes of governance including human rights that underpin youth and criminal justice and agencies which administer sentencing and alternatives.
An understanding of the organisation and governance of efforts to prevent harm and ensure personal safety, and of human rights issues in relation to these.	Able to identify and describe efforts to prevent harm and ensure personal safety and to describe value problems.	Able to apply conceptions of human rights in order to evaluate efforts to prevent harm and ensure personal safety.
An understanding of the nature and appropriate use of research strategies and methods in relation to issues of crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance.	Able to identify a range of different research strategies and methods; able to identify an appropriate strategy for specific research problems.	Able to examine a range of research strategies and methods and assess the appropriateness of their use; able to identify an appropriate strategy for specific research problems.
An understanding of the value of comparative analysis.	Able to recognise and illustrate the use of different approaches to comparison in relation to crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance.	Able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the use of comparison in relation to crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance.

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
An understanding of complex social problems and the relationships between them in terms of criminological theory and empirical evidence in relation to crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance.	Able to recognise and illustrate the relationship between a range of social problems identified by criminological theory and evidence.	Able to explain and evaluate complex social problems in terms of criminological theories of crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance.
An understanding of the distinctive character of the discipline of criminology in relation to other forms of understanding, such as other disciplines and everyday explanations.	Able to recognise ways in which the discipline of criminology can be distinguished from other forms of understanding.	Able to analyse ways in which the discipline of criminology can be distinguished from other forms of understanding.

Cognitive abilities

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
An appreciation of the complexity of crime and victimisation; able to assess the merits of competing theories and explanations.	Able to describe contrasting interpretations of crime and victimisation.	Able to assess a range of perspectives and discuss the strengths of each for the understanding of crime and victimisation.
An appreciation of the range of responses to crime and deviance (see appendix C) and an ability to interpret the values and practices of the agencies which administer them.	Able to describe the key agencies which respond to crime and deviance and the values which govern them.	Able to assess the values and practices of the key agencies which administer responses to crime and deviance.
An understanding of how to design research appropriately in relation to a specific problem, how to gather, retrieve and synthesise information, including comparative data; an understanding of how to evaluate research data including both quantitative and qualitative data.	Able to gather and summarise information.	Able to draw on materials from a range of sources and demonstrate an ability to synthesise them. Able to design and use appropriate research strategies for data collection using quantitative and qualitative methods. Able to apply basic statistical techniques where appropriate.

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
An understanding of how to assess the ethical issues arising in particular research situations.	Able to describe quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, and to undertake basic analysis.	Able to distinguish between ethical and unethical research practice.
Ability to review and evaluate criminological evidence.	Able to identify an ethically appropriate action. Able to cite evidence and make judgments about its merits.	Able to draw on relevant evidence to evaluate competing explanations.
Ability to develop a reasoned argument.	Able to contrast different points of view and discuss them in a logically coherent manner.	Able to evaluate the viability of competing explanations within criminology and to draw logical and appropriate conclusions.

Subject-specific skills

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
An ability to understand the nature of criminological questions and investigate them.	Able to recognise criminological questions.	Able to formulate and investigate criminological questions.
Ability to analyse, assess methodologically and communicate information and empirical research findings about crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance (see appendix C).	Able to summarise the findings of empirical research on criminological issues including the ability to identify the methodological framework used.	Able to summarise and explain empirical information and research findings about crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance; able to assess the methodology used.
Ability to identify a range of different strategies and methods and use appropriate research tools in relation to criminological problems, including quantitative, qualitative and evaluative techniques.	Able to apply basic research tools appropriately and in a preliminary way.	Able to apply basic research tools appropriately in relation to theoretically driven, exploratory, or evaluation research.
Ability to investigate criminological questions in relation to victimisation, crime, responses to crime and deviance, and representations of these.	Able to undertake a preliminary criminological investigation of crime, victimisation, responses to crime and deviance, and representations of these using qualitative and quantitative methods.	Able to gather appropriate qualitative or quantitative information to address criminological questions in relation to crime, victimisation, responses to crime and deviance, and representations of these, using qualitative and quantitative methods.

Benchmark	Threshold achievement	Typical achievement
Ability to identify the ethical issues and the range of ethical problems in research into criminological questions and to take action within the <i>Guidelines of Ethical Practice for Criminology</i> .	Able to recognise the ethical dimensions of research into criminological questions.	Able to recognise the ethical implications of research into criminological questions and to identify appropriate solutions.
Ability to undertake and present scholarly work.	Able to identify and select from appropriate criminological sources and to present the conclusions in an appropriate academic format.	Able to discuss criminological topics with an appreciation of criminological theory, of evidence, and of relevance to current debates and to present the conclusions in a variety of appropriate academic formats.
Ability to examine the relevance of criminological work on crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance, including representations of these in relation to issues of social, public and civic policy at a national, international and global level.	Able to identify and select criminological work which is relevant for policy in relation to crime, victimisation, criminalisation, responses to crime and deviance, and representations of these.	Able to comment on the value of criminological work on crime, victimisation, responses to crime and deviance, and representations of these in relation to policy questions at national, international and global levels.

Appendix A - Single honours degrees to which the subject benchmark statement for criminology will apply

Applied criminal justice studies
Applied criminology (criminal and community justice)
Applied social science (crime)
Applied social science (criminology)
Community justice
Community safety
Counter fraud and criminal justice
Crime and justice
Crime and society
Crime, deviance and society
Crime, law and policy
Crime prevention and criminal justice
Criminal justice
Criminal justice administration (police studies)
Criminal justice and criminology
Criminal justice and policing
Criminal justice studies
Criminology
Criminology and criminal justice
Criminological studies
Policing
Policing and criminology
Police studies
Security management
Youth justice

Appendix B - A note on terminology

All theoretical terms used within criminology are contested and subject to change. Moreover, the empirical referents are always changing. Thus in the 1960s the concept of deviance emerged; in the 1980s and 1990s the importance of private forms of policing was recognised, and latterly the concept of restorative justice developed. The current decade is witnessing new forms of global crime. Because these theoretical and empirical processes are ongoing, the Society has decided to reduce the number of terms used in this subject benchmark statement to a few which are basic and also capable of expanded interpretation. In this appendix, we indicate the areas of current concern which the terms denote, and which we would expect to form part of the current curriculum.

- **Crime** includes social harm and deviance, as well as the causes and social organisation of crime and processes of criminalisation.
- **Victimisation** includes both victims' and officials' perspectives, and includes harms from activities which may not have been criminalised.
- **Responses to crime and deviance** includes:
 - i safety and security/community safety, which in turn includes preventive and responsive measures which may be taken by private citizens, employers and teachers, private security, public police, and other agencies
 - ii policing, which in turn includes both public and private police, and both crime control and crime prevention. It is expected that local variations in policing organisations will be taken into account
 - iii criminal and youth justice processes
 - iv the administration of sentences and of alternative responses to offending
 - v all other preventive or post hoc responses to crime, deviance, criminalisation, social harm and victimisation
 - vi political and popular responses to crimes, harms and deviance.
- **Representations** include public opinion, the mass media, politicised and segmented images, and official documentation.

Each heading denotes a large area of research, the precise content of which can, and we hope will, be debated in constructive ways for our discipline.

Appendix C - What is criminology?

Criminology is a rapidly growing discipline which has emerged in the context of other social science disciplines, most notably sociology and social policy. However, aspects of law, psychology and political science are also relevant to contemporary criminology. In order to find out whether or not criminology is, today, a distinct discipline, the Society undertook research based on the programme specifications of a number of single honours criminology degrees and joint degrees in which criminology supplies half of the curriculum. We wanted to find out what is actually taught across a range of institutions, and to base the proposed subject benchmark statement on that core.

Our first set of empirical data was supplied by the Centre for Teaching and Learning in Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) in the form of programme specifications and data derived from university websites. The Society received data about 33 institutions from this source. Data derived from seven of the institutions had to be discarded, usually because the institution offered only courses leading to postgraduate degrees. One further institution gave names of such generality to its courses that they could not be classified.

Additional programme specifications were provided by 10 universities either spontaneously or in response to the Society's efforts to ensure an adequate coverage of policing curricula. These included data on 14 single honours and two joint honours programmes in eligible subject areas. Specifications for one ordinary degree and one Foundation Degree have been helpful in reinforcing the main findings, while not themselves included in the analysis. Two of the courses for which details were supplied were sub-specialisations within the core discipline, and these too have not been included in the analysis. We analysed the content of single and joint honours courses separately. Multiple combinations have not been included, and joint courses have been included only for institutions which do not offer a single honours programme. A limitation of these data is that not all responding institutions gave full details of their optional courses in the information packs sent. The quantitative analysis for optional courses must therefore be read as indicative of the subject matter only. The number of institutions recorded as delivering a course on a particular subject is not an exact representation.

One programme was analysed from each institution, since the subject repeated across programmes could bias the results. The only exception was the inclusion of honours degrees in both criminal justice studies and policing offered by one institution, as the subject benchmark statement is intended to provide a framework for both subject areas. This led to the inclusion of eight additional honours degree programmes in the analysis. One institution offered only a joint programme and this was also included. (See footnote below for the list of institutions whose course content was included in the analysis⁷.)

⁷ Universities whose courses were included in the content analysis discussed in the Letter of Request to QAA, and which therefore informed the development of this subject benchmark statement: Anglia Ruskin University; University of Wales, Bangor; University of Birmingham; Blackburn College; Brunel University; University of Buckingham; University of Cambridge; Canterbury Christ Church University; University of Chester; Coventry University; Derby College; Edge Hill University; University of Essex; University of Glamorgan; Greenwich University; Hull University; Keele University; University of Kent; University of Leicester; University of Lincoln; Liverpool Hope University; London Guildhall University (now London Metropolitan University); London School of Economics and Political Science; Loughborough University; University of Portsmouth; Roehampton University; University of Salford; University of Sheffield; Sheffield Hallam University; Southampton Solent University; University of Southampton; Staffordshire University; Sunderland University; University of Teesside; Thames Valley University; University of Wales, Swansea; University of Westminster; University of Wolverhampton.

Table 2 Database for content analysis* (43 institutions plus one additional programme)

	Single honours	Joint honours	No applicable programme [Postgraduate, combined honours, Foundation or pass degree, or specialised sub topics]	Total
Original sample	16	11	6	33
New sample	9	1	1	11
Total	25	12	7	44

*Analysis based on the 'most criminological' programme offered by each of 43 sampled institutions plus one additional course.

Single honours criminology

Twenty-two of the 25 single honours programmes analysed provided sufficient data for a content analysis to be carried out. In addition to introductory courses, all but one of the single honours programmes offered courses (usually required) on the criminal justice system/crime and justice, and all single honours programmes offered a course on policing. Courses on research methods were offered by 20 of the 22 programmes, courses on criminology or theory by 18 and courses on punishment, penal practice or penology also by 18 of the 22 programmes for which we had data. Specialised courses on counting crime or on evaluation were offered in some programmes, in addition to more general methods courses. The following topics were each offered on at least half (11) of the courses analysed: youth offending/young people and crime; victim related courses; psychology; crime and the media. Other topics occurring more than five times included historical approaches, comparative or international approaches, crime prevention and control, and criminal law. This last topic, when offered, was usually a required course. More than half the programmes appeared to offer more general social theory under a range of titles including concepts of society and social order. These courses, like criminal law, were usually compulsory when offered.

Joint honours degrees: criminology 50 per cent

All but one of the joint honours courses offered one or more courses on the criminal justice system or the criminal courts (11 of 12). Leaving aside the introductory courses, the other well represented subjects were theory (seven of 12) and research methods (six of 12). This almost certainly underestimates the theory content, but courses with very general titles such as Crime and Society have been left out of this analysis. Courses on penology/punishment/penal practice were offered in five institutions, while one focused mainly on community justice and community sentences. Courses on crime and gender, victimisation and/or fear, and crime prevention were each identified in four of the curriculum statements. Policing, one of the most popular courses in the single honours programmes, appeared in only three of the joint programmes in our (non random) sample.

The evidence indicates that the conceptual framework in common lies in criminological theory, offered in 18 of the 22 single honours courses either by name or simply as 'criminology', and in seven of the 12 joint degree programmes. The substantive core emerges strongly as analysis of the criminal justice system in both single and joint

honours degrees. Analysis of the organisation and practice of policing has a central place in single honours courses, but not in joint programmes (three of 12). Theories of penality and punishment are also less frequently found in the joint offerings (five of 12). The strong presence of research training on the single honours programmes indicates that the subject is seen as empirically grounded; it also appears in six of 12 criminology contributions to joint honours degrees.

Two additional points must be recorded. First, the range of specialist courses is immense: drug related crime, terrorism, child abuse, juvenile justice, violence in many guises, gender and crime/justice, corporate and environmental crime, ethnicity and offending/victimisation, specific areas of policy making, forensic psychology: the list is potentially infinite. It reflects the intellectual liveliness of the discipline, the power of its theories and the emergent versatility of its methods.

Secondly, the programme specifications for police studies, with one exception, share core elements with criminology, criminal justice and other programmes. This had been a matter of concern to the Benchmarking group when agreeing to include policing degrees, but the concern proved unfounded. It is also clear that the shared core elements leave plenty of curriculum space for a range of sub-specialisms, including police studies, to flourish.

Research on policing began within the disciplines of sociology and history in the late 1960s, moving to criminology as that discipline itself became established. Its growth has corresponded with a strong movement to professionalise policing in the UK, so that the intellectual trajectory has been from relatively autonomous research in the academic setting (which continues) to the identification of a place for a critical approach to theory and research in professional police education.

The distinctiveness of criminology

Criminology has a long theoretical tradition, many parts of which have provided specialised concepts which continue to shape the discipline: Becker's key concept of 'deviance' (1963) is a case in point. Even earlier, Edwin Sutherland (1940) provided the basis for theoretical self criticism by pointing out that theory can obscure as well as enlighten, that the theory (as well as the practice) of his day rendered the crimes of corporations invisible. This history is constitutive of criminology as a discipline, what a lawyer would call 'trite knowledge', that which hardly needs to be spoken.

This unique theoretical tradition continues to be developed, as evidenced by the recent growth of interest in international networks and the widespread use of concepts developed within the discipline of criminology such as 'responsibilisation' (displacing responsibility for crime prevention onto communal organisations), 'transgressive' criminology (which challenges established disciplinary boundaries) or 'status offences' (activities attracting legal sanctions against women or children for actions which would not be sanctioned for an adult male or, in some cases, any adult). Another example is the continuing development of the concept of state crime, from the active perpetration of harm to culpable failure to protect. In criminal justice and policing programmes the idea of community safety as a public good has emerged.

It is of increasing importance that not only academic criminologists but also practitioners have the capacity constantly to appraise and evaluate research evidence. In terms of methodology, criminology, while deploying the full range of accepted social scientific methods, has also developed methods which are appropriate to its own objects of analysis. The most familiar of these are the survey of self-reported crime and the crime victim survey. The latter technique has been elaborated and supplemented to explore

more complex harms such as violence against women and racist harassment and repeat victimisation. Filming and closed-circuit television cameras have also been used to construct both qualitative and quantitative criminological data, most recently on the raced practices of private security personnel and on police treatment of suspects in custody. These significant technical developments are supported by methodological and conceptual advances: concepts such as 'occidentalism' and 'glocalisation' increasingly reshape both fieldwork and analytic strategies.

Criminology: a rendezvous discipline which is also distinct

Criminology can be seen as a rendezvous discipline, a site at which social scientific disciplines interact. We approach the distinctions between the different social sciences in dialogic mode, not seeing the differences as barriers but rather as opportunities for debate and development. Such debates may usefully occur about the meaning of concepts which have a strategic place in more than one discipline. Currently the concept of globalisation provides such a site for debate.

It is in this dialogic spirit that some distinctions between criminology and what might be described as both user and contributor disciplines are set out below.

Criminology and sociology

As a field of study, criminology is held together by a substantive concern: crime. This concern typically forms only a small part of a sociology degree programme. Moreover, while it would be fair to say that there has been a close relationship between the development of criminological and social theory, it is important to recognise that criminologists have also been influenced by theoretical developments in a range of disciplines, of which sociology is only one. Nonetheless, the close relationship between criminology and sociology continues and contemporary criminologists share with sociologists and other social scientists theoretical concerns in relation to social stratification and social division, governance, risk and globalisation, for example, to the development of which several social science disciplines have contributed.

Criminology is also distinctive in that it has developed, and continues to develop, its own theoretical concepts and theoretical traditions. One example is the sub-field of victimology, developed within criminology. The recent growth of interest in 'cultural criminology' also moves beyond the customary concerns of sociology. Similarly recent criminological analyses of genocide and genocide trials use concepts and debates derived from law, politics, and philosophy as well as sociology, but the substantive concerns and the specific integration of these concepts and debates is uniquely criminological.

In general, the substantive areas of concern of criminology, criminal justice studies and police studies are therefore now too many to be included within a sociology degree, given the numerous other requirements of that discipline.

Criminology and law

The degree of overlap in subject matter between criminology and law programmes is very slight. Law students need to learn rules and their diverse (as between the European Union and the UK) modes of interpretation, as well as legal philosophy. They also study the structure and operation of the legal system and the criminal justice process.

Criminologists learn rules and interpretive rules, if at all, only later in their careers in relation to a particular research field. Nor do they necessarily learn jurisprudence,

although they are now expected to know about human rights in relation to policing and the criminal justice system. The only substantive areas of overlap lie in the study of police powers and practice, and court processes.

It is also the case that the subject benchmark statement for law says little about empirical research methods beyond retrieval of legal information. Criminology students, on the other hand, might well be expected to demonstrate some knowledge of the philosophical foundations of different research methods and some proficiency in the use and evaluation of empirical research using qualitative and quantitative methods.

Criminology and political science

The areas of common concern between criminology and politics/political science are relatively few in this country, although the greater congruence in the United States, where political scientists have concerned themselves with the operation of state agencies such as criminal courts and regulatory agencies, indicates a potential overlap. More recent work, for example, research on genocide and in relation to state crime, suggests the possibility of a closer relationship between the two disciplines as the processes and effects of globalisation are increasingly addressed by social scientists.

Criminology and social policy

Social policy and criminology have in common a precarious existence as applied disciplines which means that there may be strong external pressures to underplay the theoretical work on which they depend. Given the common focus on looking at social problems/harms/needs and their alleviation or control (with crime a paradigmatic example of a 'social problem'), it is surprising to note that the two disciplines have had only limited forms of cross-fertilisation in recent decades.

In the Subject benchmark statement for social policy, social administration and social work, of the 27 themes and issues outlined as indicative of social policy degrees, only one topic ('crime and criminal justice policy') has any direct relevance to the core concerns of contemporary criminology. Recent publications indicate that the institutional focus of social policy is on the 'production, organisation and consumption of welfare' (not including freedom from crime) while 'issues in social policy' only mentions crime briefly with regard to 'young people'. In terms of the service-based issues confronted by social policy analysts, crime control appears peripheral to this discipline. Moreover, the transnational and global dimensions of contemporary crime and justice are not addressed by social policy, which remains largely pegged to the activities of state and regional governments. In contrast to social policy, criminology is a fast growing discipline in both teaching and research terms both in the UK and internationally in the post-welfare state era.

The strongest intellectual connection between the two disciplines lies in the shared emphasis on the links between poverty/inequality/marginalisation/social exclusion and criminalisation. A recent example of different approaches to a shared area of concern has emerged in relation to violence against the aged in families and care homes.

Criminology and forensic psychology

The subject benchmark statement for psychology⁸ makes it clear that postgraduate studies in psychology are likely to be necessary for the acquisition of a practice skill such as forensic psychology (4.b.i). As a result at undergraduate level there is a great deal in

⁸ The references to the subject benchmark statement for psychology refer to the version published in 2002. The references may not relate to any updated versions.

both subject skills (4.b.ii) and generic skills (4.b.iii) that a criminologist could accept. However, a degree in criminology would not qualify a candidate for registration for a practice qualification or for training in a skill such as forensic psychology.

In terms of subject matter, both criminology and forensic psychology study the nature of and reasons for violence and other forms of offending, issues related to the working of the criminal justice system, issues relating to victimisation, and issues relating to punishment. Despite this overlap there are clear differences. Criminologists are concerned with social censure and the cultural and political processes whereby certain kinds of behaviour are criminalised (and others not); these questions are not addressed within forensic psychology; criminologists are also concerned with the social harms resulting from, for example, corporate crime, state crime, or living in a community perceived to be unsafe. As one of our respondents put it, 'forensic psychology focuses more on the individual within a given context, while criminology focuses on the situation (including individuals)'. These differences in the object of analysis arise from differences in theory. Criminology tends to deploy concepts of class, gender, race, ethnicity, the state, the person, the polity and culture which have been developed within sociology, cultural studies, feminist theory and political science. In addition to its own concepts, these social scientific concepts are intrinsic to criminological analyses, whether theoretical or practice oriented. Critical analysis and deployment of these concepts is not intrinsic to psychology. Criminological theory itself develops such concepts further, viz the example of 'responsibilisation' referred to above as a new way of theorising the relationship between the central state and the voluntary sector or citizenry.

Towards distinctiveness

In summary, criminology has emerged as a discipline distinct from other, related, social sciences in terms of its subject matter, its theoretical concerns and development, its methodologies and techniques. (It is also distinct in the careers for which it equips its undergraduate students, see appendix D.)

Aspects of the conceptual framework are shared with some of the cognate disciplines: the 'grand theories' with sociology, social policy and politics; theories of justice and of human rights with law; somewhat less is shared with psychology: some quantitative methodologies and some substantive issues which none the less may be differently conceived. Criminology has developed a distinct theoretical tradition, which has enabled it to expand its substantive concerns in an exponential manner, resulting in a plethora of optional courses, any one of which could itself develop into a new core unit. Above all, it is largely this explosion of imaginative growth that cannot be contained within the established disciplines.

In addition, and increasingly, professional criminologists and graduates are being called upon to advise and inform the work of crime control agencies: from preventing youth offending to advising the prison service about deaths in custody; from the role of the police in community safety teams to the structure and functioning of the people trade; from how to count family violence to how to prevent it; from institutional racism to the management of diversity. Criminology must develop in its own way to meet these challenges of the twenty-first century. The new problems demand new theories and new methods, and teaching must reflect this. In summary, not only does criminology not share a sufficiency of the conceptual framework of any other discipline, but the movement is centrifugal. This rapidly growing separation needs the particular kind of light touch steering which only subject specific benchmarks can provide.

Appendix D - What careers are open to graduates with degrees in criminology, criminal justice, policing and related disciplines?

Not all the degrees which are organised in relation to the subject benchmark statement for criminology lead to the same career opportunities. (See appendix A for the list of degrees.) Most obviously, degrees in police-related subjects probably lead to a job in public or private policing or HM Customs and Excise. No follow up research on police studies graduates or, indeed, criminal justice related programmes, has as yet been carried out. However, and with the assistance of C-SAP, the Society carried out a study of nine universities which were known by C-SAP to have carried out a first destination careers study for graduates in criminology. Exact numbers were not available for all respondent institutions, so in these cases one graduate only was counted for each of the destinations identified.

Table 1: Favoured occupations: candidates graduating in criminology in 2002, 2003 or 2004

Job	%
Support roles	15.3
Higher education	14.3
Policing or police research post	10.3
Probation	8.3
Prison-related	7.9
Other crime-related	4.4
Legal	2.5
Research	0.5
Home Office	0.5
Unrelated to programme	36.0
	100.0
	N203

The 'unrelated to programme' figure may be a function of the large number of joint programmes, where the second subject may have led to the chosen career. It is also the case that a graduate's first job is often a temporary one, not fully representative of career choice. The two real surprises were the large numbers (15.3 per cent) of criminology graduates entering support roles in a wide range of fields such as homelessness, refugee work, victim support, or non-governmental organisation researcher. A minority in this category chose conventional social work. The other surprise is that 14.3 per cent of criminology graduates enter postgraduate education. Only two of these 29 graduates chose to enter into teaching by embarking on a Postgraduate Certificate of Education. The other choices are not documented.

The remaining categories also deserve a word: more graduates entered research or analytic posts in policing than became trainee police officers. In this sense the 0.5 per cent indicated as entering research is an underestimate of the numbers gaining employment as a result of their research skills. The 'other crime-related' is the most heterogeneous category including, for example, work in private security, the immigration service, and one insurance claims examiner. The probation and prison-related categories are the most straightforward.

Appendix E - Membership of the benchmarking group for criminology

Dr Maureen Cain (Chair)	University of Birmingham
Professor Hazel Croall	University of Strathclyde
Colin Dunnigan	formerly of University of Teesside
Professor Gordon Hughes	then of Open University, now of Cardiff University
Dr Mike Nash	University of Portsmouth
Professor Tim Newburn	London School of Economics and Political Science
Professor Kevin Stenson	then of Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, now of Middlesex University
Maggie Sumner	University of Westminster
Stephen Tong	Canterbury Christ Church University
Dr Azrini Wahidin	then of University of Kent, now of University of Central England in Birmingham

In association with:

Professor Mike Neary	Centre for Learning and Teaching in Sociology, Anthropology and Politics
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Secretary to the committee:

Alison Wagstaff	University of Birmingham
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