PhD project title

Tackling unethical practice in the police force – exploring the variables which lead to voice, silence and direct action

Supervisors

Dr Sarah Brooks and Professor Penny Dick

Research centre

Institute of Work Psychology

Project description

The ethical behaviour of police officers was recently identified as a cornerstone of modern policing when, in 2015, the UK College of Policing introduced a Code of Ethics for all officers and staff (College of Policing, 2014). One way in which officers and staff can take action when faced with unethical practice is by voicing their concerns to a superior. A number of variables positively influence propensity to voice, for example, severity of the wrongdoing (King & Hermodson, 2000). However, police officers do not always report breaches of ethical behaviour, especially where these are perceived to be minor (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007), despite minor breaches having the potential to become major breaches if not thwarted (Kassing, 2009). To date, there is scarce empirical evidence of a longitudinal nature which illuminates the process by which severity of wrongdoing becomes more or less salient over time. Therefore, clarity is required about how minor and major breaches are defined and how the point is recognised where minor becomes major, and therefore worthy of voice. In addition, officers are encouraged to challenge unethical practice directly where this is the most sensible option. As a result, understanding the variables which lead to voice, silence or direct action is likely to help explain how police forces can implement policies and procedures which reduce unethical practices.

References


PhD candidate profile

The PhD candidate should meet the following requirements:
- Be enthusiastic, well-organised and have good inter-personal skills.
- High motivation and a keen interest in the research area.

- A first degree that is equivalent to a UK classification of upper second class honours or above. In addition, a good masters level qualification of merit or above, with a minimum of 60 per cent in the dissertation, research project element or equivalent experience. We also accept an MBA from an accredited school where the candidate can demonstrate that a significant research element has been undertaken. Applicants must also meet our English language requirements. For further information on entry requirements, please see: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/study/researchdegrees/howtoapply

Start dates
We have two start dates a year for PhD students. We strongly recommend that students start on 1 October as this makes it easier for students to attend compulsory training. However, we do recognise that not everyone will be able to commence studies at that time, so we also offer a second start date of 1 February.

Closing date for applications
Applications will be considered until a suitable candidate has been identified. For the 1 October start date, a full application must have been received by 15 July. For 1 February start date, a full application must have been received by 15 November.

How to apply
See http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/study/researchdegrees/howtoapply for full details of how to apply.

For an informal discussion about this opportunity, please contact: Sarah Brooks at s.brooks@sheffield.ac.uk.