



B126 Student Outcomes as Standards for Accreditation of Undergraduate Forensic Science Programs

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After attending this presentation the participant will understand: 1) the history of outcome-based specialized accreditation; and 2) the student outcomes identified as standards for accreditation of undergraduate forensic science programs in USA.

Undergraduate forensic science programs in institutions of higher education are experiencing unprecedented growth in numbers of programs offered and, as a result, student enrollment numbers are increasing. Currently, however, undergraduate forensic science programs are not subject to professional specialized accreditation. This study seeks to identify desirable student outcome measures for undergraduate forensic science programs that should be incorporated into such an accreditation process.

To determine desirable student outcomes, three types of data were collected and analyzed. Existing undergraduate forensic science programs were examined with regard to degree requirements, curriculum content, and student outcomes. Accreditation procedures and guidelines for other science-based disciplines were examined to provide guidance on outcome-based accreditation processes for undergraduate forensic science education programs in the USA. Expert opinion was solicited from forensic science educators, crime laboratory directors, recent program graduates, and other forensic scientists via a structured Internet-based survey. Based on the analyses of these data, preliminary student outcomes suitable for use in the accreditation of undergraduate forensic science programs were determined.

The results of this study can be used to identify student outcomes and to suggest accreditation guidelines for undergraduate forensic science programs based on those outcomes.

NOTE: The final analyses are currently being done as of July 2002, for anticipated completion in August/September 2002.

Outcomes, Accreditation, Undergraduate Programs