



Criminalistics Section – 2009

A2 The Future of Forensic Science Education

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After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand the status of forensic science education efforts, including programs, graduate programs, accreditation, and curricula, with an international perspective.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by providing a perspective for forensic science education to grow and improve as the foundation for forensic science as a separate profession.

Forensic science education has become a global enterprise and the growth of programs worldwide has spurred various efforts towards improving their quality and validity. Accreditation programs in the United States and the United Kingdom have been instituted in the last few years as a check on the rapid growth of programs in response to the popular media. A set of controlled relationships exists in Australia which guide and shape academia's response to the profession's needs. Canadian, with more programs in Australia, faces a choice between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Australian models. Concurrently, the profession has begun to embrace accredited programs and has recognized the value of such a process; however, some still do not see the value of a separate forensic science degree. The accreditation programs, for their part, have been seeking external recognition for their processes to legitimize their efforts to the community. All of this is occurring in an environment where forensic science is under siege, accused of a variety of sins, including negligence, incompetence, and cronyism.

The stage is set for forensic science to step into its next phase of development. Any profession is only as good as the educators who incubate its practitioners. For forensic science to improve, forensic science educational programs must be the first bastion of quality. They cannot do this, however, without a solid, complicit integration with the profession and its stakeholders. Therefore, forensic science faces a choice: Continue on a path to being "mere technicians" at the mercy of attorneys and the courts or to strap on the responsibility of being a true and separate science.

Education, Accreditation, FEPAC