



D41 A Review of Forensic Science Programs in the United States

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn information regarding the characteristics of the bachelor and master forensic science programs.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by providing knowledge of the forensic science education in the United States.

Over the last 30 years, the number of institutions offering forensic science higher education programs has increased from 21 to 120. However, despite an increase in student interest and program availability, there has been a consistent reluctance to hire individuals with degrees in forensic science. This is due in part to a lack of information available about these programs, in terms of course offerings, equipment available to students, degree or certificate requirements, and other important aspects of the programs. Additionally, while accreditation by the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) ensures adherence to certain standards, it is not required. As a result, it is possible for the curriculum of forensic science higher education programs to vary considerably.

To obtain an understanding of the variance observed in forensic science higher education programs and their course offerings and requirements, the existing academic Forensic Science programs in the United States were invited to participate in an electronic survey. The survey requested information regarding the number of courses, subject inclusion, pre-requisites, degree requirements, available instrumental and academic resources, and experience, degree level, and participation of faculty.

It was found that, of the responding institutions, relatively few of them are FEPAC accredited, although most intend to apply or have applied for accreditation. It was also observed that, in general, the responding programs vary considerably in terms of their size and subject coverage.

Following this presentation, attendees involved in forensic science higher education programs will have a greater understanding of the offerings of other institutions, and may subsequently choose to adapt their curriculum such that greater standardization of degree requirements would be possible. This would enable laboratory directors and supervisors to better understand the qualifications of students graduating with a degree in forensic science.

Forensic Science, Education, Standardization