



## E75 Enriching the Forensic Science Curriculum Through a Guided Study Abroad Experience

*Kimberlee Sue Moran, MSc\*, Rutgers University - Camden, Camden, NJ 08102; Karen S. Scott, PhD, Arcadia University, Glenside, PA 19038*

**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will understand how the forensic science curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels can be enhanced through a forensic science learning abroad class and trip.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by offering an educational model that can both enrich students' perspectives of their chosen fields and expose them to alternative systems of criminal justice and forensic science practice.

Study abroad opportunities are a feature of most higher education institutions in the United States. Students can choose to spend a semester or even an entire year at a foreign university, usually during the student's Junior year. According to the Institute for International Education, about 16% of all students earning a bachelor's degree will study abroad at some point.<sup>1</sup> However, some students see a full semester abroad as too much of a commitment, especially for those with demanding or highly structured major requirements. More desirable are short-term trips lasting one week to ten days that are designed around a specific theme or topic. These trips are facilitated by faculty members and include an on-campus component prior to, and sometimes after, the travel component. More universities are implementing such study abroad programs targeting the Spring semester in order to utilize Spring break for the planned trip. Students and, more importantly, parents see short-term study abroad trips as safer as they tend to be heavily scheduled with little free time. For faculty, the ability to rely on an educational travel agent reduces planning responsibilities. Some organizations also provide tour guides, removing some of the supervisory burden from the traveling faculty member(s). After attending this presentation, attendees will learn how the forensic science curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels can be enhanced through a forensic science learning abroad class and trip. This presentation will address the learning goals of a forensic science study abroad class, how to plan the international component, whether to engage with an international education provider, and how to deliver the on-campus course content. A study abroad class called "International Perspectives of Forensic Science" was designed and executed at Arcadia University in 2016. The trip took place over two weeks in May and included site visits in both Scotland and England. In 2018 it was adapted to fit into the Spring Break format at Rutgers University-Camden. Both versions of the trip will be compared and recommendations regarding duration, content, budgeting, and other logistical considerations will be presented.

The next generation of forensic scientists has the opportunity to improve the profession through leadership and creative problem-solving. By broadening students' outlook through international experiences, educational programs can guide students toward more innovative thinking. Study abroad also provides faculty with the ability to network with international counterparts, leading to additional exchange and research prospects.

### Reference(s):

- <sup>1</sup> Baer, Julie. Open Doors 2018: Report on International Educational Exchange. Institute of International Education, 2018.

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### Education, International, Curriculum