SuCCESS

Strengthening Criminology Teaching
Fortaleciendo la Enseñanza en Criminología
Fortalecendo o Ensino da Criminologia

Findings of the learning mobilities of South American universities professors/researchers to European Universities

Outcomes of mobilities of teachers from

Universidad Antonio Nariño and Universidad Santo Tomás in Colombia

to University of Granada, University of Castilla-La Mancha, and University of Minho in Portugal and Spain.

Introduction

This e-brochure introduces the findings of the learning mobilities of South American Universities professors and researchers to European Universities, held in the framework of the SuCCESS project.

Professors and researchers from the Universidad Antonio Nariño and Universidad Santo Tomás had their learning mobilities between June and July 2022 to the University of Granada, University of Castilla-La Mancha, and University of Minho in Portugal and Spain.

This document is designed for professors, researchers, policymakers, and higher education enthusiasts interested in the evolution of criminology education. It is a reference to the findings of South American professors' learning mobility in European universities, to improve criminology education. In this document, you will discover:

Main Gains and Benefits

Discover how the mobility experiences of South American professors and researchers resulted in a better understanding of academic programmes, a greater emphasis on research, stronger professional profiles, and new tools. These meetings have resulted in worldwide collaborations that promote criminology education.

Lessons for Universities

Use the lessons learned from these mobility experiences to improve criminology programmes. These courses provide a route to success in everything from curriculum design to interdisciplinary collaboration.

Impact on Criminology Programmes

The criminology programmes were transformed and enhanced in areas such as improved curriculum development, higher emphasis on research excellence, and innovative teaching approaches. These modifications will support a better preparation of students for the modern criminal justice system.

Innovation in Teaching and Learning

Explore how mobility experiences have elevated pedagogical and methodological approaches, inspiring innovative teaching tools, enriched curricula, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

New Criminology Insights

Discover new perspectives on cybercrime, upgraded curricula, global research collaborations, innovative teaching methods, and educational resource sharing, all of which contribute to a comprehensive, practical criminology education.

1. What were the main gains and benefits of the mobilities?

Main Gains and Benefits

Enhanced Understanding of Academic Programs: Professors who participated in the mobilities identified the conditions required by the Educational Systems of Spain and Portugal for criminology master's programs. This understanding contributed to meeting the international standards, which can benefit higher education providers in Colombia.

Emphasis on Research and Training: The mobility experiences helped recognize opportunities and challenges in academic offerings related to criminology. Professors interacted with host university counterparts, gaining valuable insights into research, training, and university extension activities. These insights can inform the development of comprehensive criminology programs in other institutions.

Strengthening Professional Profiles: Through dialogue and sharing of experiences, strengths within the teaching staff were identified. This collaborative approach enhanced the training of students and allowed for a better understanding of academic offerings, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This strengthens the profile of criminology graduates and opens possibilities for new programs and alliances.

Exploring the Criminal Phenomenon: Professors learned about tools for criminal analysis and the use of technology in this field. They gained knowledge about different data analysis programs that facilitate the work of criminologists. These insights can drive improvements in postgraduate programs by applying new methodologies and technologies.

Building International Alliances: The mobility experiences helped consolidate communication channels and alliances for international cooperative research. Researchers from participating universities identified common interests and needs, creating opportunities for collaborative research projects, and sharing of expertise.

Recommendations for other Higher Education Organizations

Prioritize Understanding of the Global Academic Landscape: Higher education providers should prioritize understanding the global academic landscape in criminology. Identify the conditions required by international educational systems to align programs with international standards.

Emphasize Research, Training, and Interdisciplinary Approaches: Foster a culture of research and training in criminology programs. Encourage interdisciplinary approaches to provide students with a holistic understanding of the field.

Foster International Collaborations and Networks: Actively seek opportunities to build international partnerships and collaborations. Establish communication channels and alliances for cooperative research and sharing of best practices.

Invest in Modern Tools and Methodologies: Embrace modern tools and methodologies used in criminology research and analysis. Stay updated on technological advancements that can enhance the program's content and delivery.

Strengthen Ties Between Academia and Industry: Foster connections between academia and industry to ensure that criminology programs align with the needs of the job market. Encourage internships, guest lectures, and real-world applications of criminology knowledge.

1.1 Lessons learned for other universities to improve their criminology programmes

Enhance Curriculum Design

International Alignment: Collaborate with international institutions and experts to ensure that criminology programs meet international standards. This involves understanding the conditions required by the educational systems of countries known for their excellence in criminology education, such as Spain and Portugal.

Regular Curriculum Updates: Establish a mechanism for continuous curriculum improvement. Regularly review and update course programmes and content, integrating the latest research, technologies, and methodologies.

Foster Critical Thinking: Encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students. Design courses that challenge students to analyze real-world criminal phenomena and propose effective solutions.

Promote Interdisciplinarity

Cross-Faculty Collaboration: Facilitate collaboration between faculties or departments to create interdisciplinary criminology programs. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the field by incorporating insights from law, psychology, sociology, and other relevant disciplines.

Guest Lecturers: Invite experts from various fields, such as law enforcement professionals, psychologists, and sociologists, to deliver guest lectures or workshops. This exposes students to diverse perspectives and real-world experiences.

Invest in Faculty Development

Continuous Training: Support faculty members in their professional development through workshops, seminars, and training programs, including mobilities abroad to European universities. Equip them with the latest teaching methodologies and technologies.

Encourage Research: Promote a culture of research among faculty members. Encourage them to engage in research projects related to criminology, ensuring that their expertise aligns with the program's objectives.

International Collaboration: Encourage faculty members to participate in international academic mobility programs. These experiences can broaden their perspectives and enrich their teaching methods.

Explore Advanced Tools

Technology Integration: Invest in modern technologies and software tools for criminal analysis. These tools should be integrated into the curriculum to provide students with practical, hands-on experience.

Practical Training: Incorporate field visits to criminal justice institutions, forensic laboratories, and other relevant facilities. These visits expose students to real-world applications of criminological concepts.

Case Studies: Develop a library of case studies and simulations that challenge students to apply their knowledge to solve complex criminal cases.

2. Impact on the design of new or improved Criminology Programmes

Advanced Curriculum Development

Mobility experiences prompted the evolution of Criminology Programs into advanced, globally aligned curricula.

These curricula incorporate the latest trends, emerging topics, and international standards in criminology education.

Students benefit from a comprehensive, up-to-date education that reflects the dynamic nature of crime and security challenges.

Innovative courses and modules are introduced to engage students with contemporary issues in the field.

Faculty members are equipped with the knowledge and tools to deliver cutting-edge content.

Research Excellence

The impact of mobility experiences elevated the emphasis on research within Criminology Programs.

Students are encouraged and empowered to engage in research projects, contributing to the expansion of criminological knowledge.

Collaborative research initiatives with international partners enable institutions to tackle complex global criminology issues.

Research-centric curricula nurture critical thinking and analytical skills among students.

Academic institutions strengthen their position as hubs for criminological research.

Interdisciplinary Focus

Criminology Programs now prioritize an interdisciplinary approach to education.

Students explore criminology from diverse angles, integrating insights from law, psychology, sociology, and technology.

This holistic perspective equips graduates with a broader skill set, enabling them to address multifaceted criminological challenges.

Interdisciplinary courses foster a collaborative mindset, preparing students to work across disciplines in their future careers.

Academic institutions promote a culture of cross-disciplinary collaboration among faculty members.

Practical Orientation

Mobility experiences underscored the importance of practical orientation in Criminology Programs.

Programs incorporate practical experiences, such as field visits to criminal justice institutions, forensic laboratories, and simulations of real-world scenarios.

Graduates emerge with practical skills and a deeper understanding of the operational aspects of the criminal justice system.

Academic institutions establish partnerships with industry stakeholders to facilitate internships and practical placements for students.

2.1. Lessons learned for other universities to improve their criminology programmes

Build Global Networks

The mobility experiences underscored the importance of establishing global academic alliances. Universities looking to enhance their Criminology programs should actively seek partnerships with international institutions.

These partnerships offer collaborative research opportunities and student exchange programs, enriching the educational experience.

The lesson learned is that building a robust network of global connections fosters an environment of knowledge-sharing and mutual growth. Other universities should prioritize these connections.

Update Research Methodologies

Professors who participated in mobility programs gained modern research skills and approaches during their experiences.

Universities seeking program improvement should invest in faculty development by offering training in contemporary research methodologies.

This lesson highlights the value of faculty competence in delivering a high-quality education and underscores the need for continuous professional development.

Adopt Worldwide Perspectives

The mobility programs broadened the perspective of Criminology educators, encouraging them to align their programs with global criminology issues and strategies.

Other universities should take this lesson to heart and ensure that their Criminology programs incorporate a global perspective.

The inclusion of worldwide viewpoints equips students with a comprehensive understanding of criminology issues beyond regional boundaries.

Encourage Collaboration

Collaboration with foreign institutions emerged as a significant factor in enhancing program quality.

Universities seeking to improve their Criminology programs should actively seek out opportunities for collaboration with institutions abroad.

This lesson emphasizes that partnerships with foreign universities can lead to the exchange of best practices, joint research projects, and the sharing of resources.

3. Innovation in methodological and pedagogical aspects

Elevated Criminal Procedure Courses

The mobility programs significantly influenced the thematic and methodological design of Criminal Procedure courses.

The integration of knowledge gained from mobility experiences enhanced the overall learning experiences for students in these courses.

Professors incorporated novel concepts, such as therapeutic justice and gender analysis, into the curriculum. These additions expanded the scope and relevance of the courses.

Advanced tools and techniques acquired during the mobility programs were integrated into the courses, providing students with practical skills for real-world application.

Enriched Faculties

Beyond individual courses, the impact of mobility experiences extended to entire faculties, including Systems Engineering, Law, Psychology, and Science.

Course content was transformed to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives, fostering a holistic understanding of criminology.

Methodological approaches evolved to promote collaborative learning, encouraging students to draw insights from various disciplines to address complex criminological challenges.

Professors from different faculties collaborated to develop comprehensive programs that prepared students to analyze criminal phenomena from multiple angles, including legal, psychological, and scientific perspectives.

Innovative Teaching Methodologies

The mobility experiences inspired innovative teaching methodologies that moved beyond traditional lecture-based approaches.

Active learning strategies, such as case studies, group discussions, and hands-on exercises, were introduced to engage students and promote critical thinking.

The use of advanced tools and technology, such as qualitative research software and data analysis programs, became a cornerstone of pedagogy.

Professors leveraged these tools to create dynamic and interactive learning environments that mirrored the challenges and opportunities of the real world.

Collaborative Research Initiatives

The enriched faculties not only impacted teaching but also research initiatives.

Professors collaborated on research projects that transcended disciplinary boundaries, contributing to a wealth of knowledge in criminology.

Interdisciplinary research not only broadened the scope of inquiry but also led to innovative solutions for addressing complex criminological issues.

Students benefited from faculty-led research projects, gaining exposure to cutting-edge methodologies and insights.

3.1. Suggestions to find innovative aspects to improve methodological and pedagogical approaches

Enrich Course Content

Criminology programs can innovate by enriching their course content to encompass a broader range of relevant topics. Embrace emerging areas within criminology, such as cybercrime, environmental criminology, or restorative justice, to reflect contemporary challenges.

Encourage faculty to stay updated with the latest research and trends in criminology and incorporate this knowledge into their courses. This ensures that students receive a comprehensive education that is both current and forward-looking.

Foster a culture of continuous improvement, where faculty regularly review and update course content to remain relevant in the ever-evolving field of criminology.

Incorporate Practical Learning

To enhance methodological and pedagogical approaches, blending active learning strategies with real-world applications shall be used. Encourage students to apply criminological theories and concepts to practical scenarios.

Implement case studies, simulations, and hands-on exercises that challenge students to analyze and solve authentic criminological problems. These activities bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing students for future careers in the field.

Provide opportunities for internships, fieldwork, or experiential learning, enabling students to gain firsthand experience in criminology-related settings. Practical exposure reinforces classroom learning and cultivates valuable skills.

Promote Cross-Faculty Collaboration

Emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between criminology departments and related disciplines, such as law, psychology, sociology, and technology.

Encourage joint projects, courses, or research initiatives that bring together faculty and students from diverse backgrounds. Cross-faculty collaboration fosters a holistic understanding of criminology and equips students with multifaceted perspectives.

Establish interdisciplinary committees or working groups to facilitate communication and idea exchange between faculty members from different departments. These interactions can lead to innovative pedagogical approaches that draw from various fields.

Diversify Your Resources

To foster innovation, universities should offer access to a diverse set of learning tools and materials. Invest in digital resources, online platforms, and learning management systems that facilitate interactive and engaging learning experiences.

Leverage technology for virtual labs, simulations, and data analysis tools relevant to criminology. These resources allow students to explore criminological phenomena in a controlled and dynamic environment.

Encourage the development of open educational resources (OER) and shareable content that can be freely accessed and adapted by faculty. OER promotes flexibility and customization in course design, encouraging innovative teaching methods.

4. New content and educational materials

Enriched Cybercrime Insights

The mobility experiences provided valuable insights into the realm of Colombian cybercrime. Professors and educators gained a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and dynamics specific to cybercriminal activities in the region.

This enriched understanding of cybercrime serves as a foundation for developing specialized courses or modules within the criminology program. These courses can focus on topics like digital forensics, cyber threat intelligence, and cybersecurity policies.

Enhanced Curricula

The insights gained from mobility programs played a pivotal role in enhancing the overall curricula of criminology programs. Specifically, the curricula were refined to incorporate cybercrime-related content.

This enhancement ensures that students receive a well-rounded education that not only covers traditional criminology but also addresses contemporary issues like cybercrime. It equips graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to combat cyber threats in today's digital age.

Global Research Collaborations

The mobility experiences facilitated interdisciplinary research collaborations with international partners. These collaborations can extend to the field of cybercrime, where criminologists can work alongside experts in cybersecurity, computer science, and law enforcement.

Such collaborations pave the way for conducting cutting-edge research on cybercrime trends, prevention strategies, and criminal profiling. The resulting research findings can inform policy decisions and contribute to the development of effective cybersecurity measures.

Innovative Teaching Tools

To effectively teach cybercrime-related topics, new learning tools and assessment rubrics were developed. These tools are designed to engage students in the complexities of cybercrime investigations and prevention.

Innovative teaching tools may include virtual labs for hands-on experience in digital forensics, cybersecurity simulations, and interactive case studies. These resources make learning interactive and practical, preparing students for real-world challenges.

Resource Sharing

Encourage the sharing of educational materials related to cybercrime among criminology programs in Colombia, Brazil, and Peru. Collaboration on content development and resource sharing can expedite the integration of cybercrime topics into curricula.

Consider creating a digital repository or platform where educators can access and share teaching materials, research papers, and best practices related to cybercrime education. This promotes a collective effort to enhance cybercrime education across the region.

4.1. How to improve course contents and educational materials

Research and Insights

Generate Insights through Research: Encourage faculty and students to actively participate in research projects related to criminology issues, publishing findings in reputable journals.

Adapt Curricula to Address New Challenges: Ensure curricula are flexible and responsive to emerging criminology challenges, including cybercrime.

Collaboration and Engagement

Encourage Collaborative Research: Foster collaboration between criminology professionals, academics, and practitioners to enrich course content with practical insights.

Implement Active Learning Tools: Integrate active learning methods and techniques to engage students and bridge the gap between theory and practice.
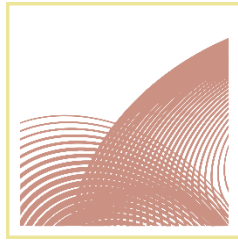
Assessment and Evaluation

Create Evaluation Guidelines: Establish clear assessment criteria aligned with course objectives to measure students' understanding and application of criminology concepts.

Continuous Improvement: Adopt a culture of continuous improvement by gathering feedback and data for informed curriculum updates.

Ethical and Legal Considerations

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union