

# A Peep Into the Criminology Program of Higher Education Institutions in the Province of Cagayan

Melody A. Cudal<sup>1</sup>

1 – University of Cagayan Valley, Philippines

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the criminology programs offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) in the province of Cagayan, exploring how these programs operate by providing a clear picture of the current state of program implementation and their compliance with established regulatory standards.

Guided by a qualitative-descriptive design, the study draws on the perspectives of Deans, Faculty members, and students who directly engage with the criminology program. Findings show that while criminology programs generally meet the minimum requirements mandated by regulatory bodies, several operational challenges persist--particularly those related to limited facilities, outdated crime laboratory equipment, inadequate faculty training, and insufficient budget allocation, which hinder the full realization of the criminology curriculum. The study emphasizes the need for modernization through improved laboratories, upgraded equipment, and stronger administrative and faculty support to sustain and ensure quality criminology education in the province.

**Keywords:** *Peep, Criminology Program, Higher Education Institution, Program Operation, Regulatory Standards, Qualitative-descriptive design*



## I. INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of higher education continues to evolve as institutions respond to growing demands for competitiveness, societal progress, and national development. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are expected to design programs that equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for both local relevance and global engagement. In this context, continuous evaluation and improvement of academic programs are essential to ensure their quality and effectiveness. For the criminology programs in particular, the need for responsiveness to emerging social issues and rapidly changing crime environments has become more urgent than ever.

Criminological training is vital in preparing professionals who will work in law enforcement, public safety, and corrections, especially given the increasing complexity of crime, such as cybercrime, human trafficking, and transnational crime (Global Organized Crime Index, 2023). The need for standardized curriculum, qualified faculty, and adequate facilities are emphasized by frameworks such as UNODC (2010) and CHED (2005). Despite the existence of these frameworks, many higher education institutions (HEIs) have experienced challenges in implementing the curriculum due to limited resources, outdated materials and inadequate faculty development/training (UNESCO, 2015; Dula, 2018; Gupta, 2014). This is further amplified in rural areas such as Cagayan, where there is difficulty aligning the curriculum, determining the competence of the teaching staff, and delivering quality teaching and learning (ADB, 2011; Habiatan, 2022).

Necessity for HEIs to meet an acceptable minimum standard has recently been addressed by new policies, such as the 2025 CHED-PRC Certificate of Program Compliance (COPC) requirement. Unfortunately, these institutions are struggling to come into compliance due to inadequate equipment, weak laboratory facilities, and limited opportunities for field training (CHEDRO II, 2020; Refugia, 2021; Taguba, 2022). In addition, there is little or no empirical literature available focusing on these issues in Cagayan. The current study will attempt to fill this void by examining the criminology programs offered at a select number of HEIs during the Academic Year 2024-2025 and will produce evidence-based recommendations for improvement in terms of program compliance, quality assurance, and producing competent, ethical graduates.



### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to determine how several Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) within the Province of Cagayan have implemented their Criminology programs, what problems they have encountered while doing so, and what variables influenced the program's success. Further, this study aims to create a proposed plan to improve those current programs.

### **Limitations**

Relevantly, the study is limited to challenges in the Criminology programmes of some HEIs located in Cagayan Province for the AY 2024–2025, based on information from the administrators, faculty, and student representatives who participated in those programmes. The six participants included two administrators, two senior/tenured faculty members, and two student representatives from CSU Piat, CSU Carig, F.L. Vargas College, and the University of Cagayan Valley. A qualitative-descriptive study was conducted through direct interviews with the participants. The purpose of the study was to understand participants' experiences and their institutional contexts; statistical analyses were not used. The findings represent the actual contexts of the institutions where data were collected; thus, the findings cannot be generalized outside these institutions.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A qualitative research method was used in this study to investigate the lived experiences of faculty and students involved in the criminology curriculum of select higher education institutions in Cagayan. The goal was to understand how faculty and students perceive and experience the curriculum in classroom environments. This study explored what participants found useful, what challenges they faced, and their opinions regarding institutional support, faculty competence, and resources available. Through this method of data collection the researcher was able to capture the voices of the participants and develop a deeper understanding of their experiences. Ultimately, this study provides an empathetic and applicable perspective on the factors that affect program delivery.

### **Participants of the study**

Cagayan Province had various Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that offered Criminology programs; but four (4) HEI had been purposefully chosen as a participant in this study, and an equal number of six (6) participants from each (24 total) institution. The respondents were selected based on their roles in administration (program management), faculty (curriculum delivery), and students (lived learning experience), and were primarily based on data saturation principles that Creswell describes. Therefore, the resulting themes are both focused and reliable, as well as representative of the major content themes present in this study.

### **Data Gathering Tool**

A semi-structured interview guide was created for researchers to obtain data from administrators, faculty, and students at selected higher education institutions (HEIs) in Cagayan. Each participant group had separate open-ended questions about governance, faculty qualifications, relevance of the curriculum, facilities, and institutional support. The interviewer's guide was adapted from the CHED last year's Institutional Self-Assessment (ISA) Tool and aligned to the phenomenological approach of the study. By acting as a framework through which the participants could describe their lived experiences, it allowed each participant to provide their perspectives with freedom and meaningfulness. While the guide was validated by criminology experts, there are two types of questions for Administrator; Faculty; & Student leaders were organized in three sections respectively; with corresponding separate, well-defined respondent groups.

### **Data Gathering procedure**

The starting point of the research consisted of coordinating with the chosen HEIs as well as obtaining the informed consent of the participants involved in the study. After the consent was obtained, semi-structured interviews were carried out with administrators, faculty and students for a period of 30 to 45 minutes, and then each interview was recorded, transcribed, checked for accuracy, and completed with member checking to verify participants' responses and thereby provide data credibility and trustworthiness.



### Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the data starting with transcripts being read multiple times - thus getting to know the experiences of those who participated in the research. Significant statements were coded by using the Saldana method and grouped into different categories into larger themes. Data saturation occurred when there were no further discoveries or emergent theme(s) from the data, culminating in the data being described by one or a number of participants multiple times over. Final themes were also interpreted in relation to the research questions

### Ethical And Legal Considerations

The research project received ethical approval prior to its undertaking. Every participant gave their voluntary consent prior to their participation in the research project, fully informing them of the purpose of the research project and their rights (i.e., confidentiality regarding their identity while participating in the research; no obligation to participate in the research). All interviews were conducted with respect for the participants; data from the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and member-checked for accuracy, credibility, and trustworthiness. The anonymity and confidentiality of each participant were maintained throughout the research project. Ethics approval was obtained for any ethical issues or concerns related to limited disclosure of sensitive information, and triangulation of data was performed for purpose of supporting the credibility of results.

### III. RESULT and DISCUSSION

Table 1a. Description of faculty members on the operation of the criminology program in their institutions

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Faculty Narratives</b>
<b>Standards Compliant</b>	The higher level of authority provides administrative and basic requirements
	Financial assistance to both students and faculty members Compliance with CHED and other accreditation standards Instructional needs and material resources support



Testimonies from faculty also reveal that "standard compliance" as an emerging trend is evident throughout the criminology programs, indicating that the resources required for meeting established operational and academic standards are available within higher education institutions. Generally, criminology programs in Cagayan follow established standards with regard to faculty qualifications, facilities, and curriculum implementation. The results of this study are in agreement with Springael Espinala (2023) and Habiatan (2022), whose findings suggest that qualified faculty, adequate facilities, and mandated curricula are keys to providing quality criminology education. Therefore, it appears criminology programs within Region II meet or exceed the level of compliance found in other institutions of higher education regarding standards established by the Philippines.

Table 1b: Description of student leaders on the operation of the criminology program in their institutions

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Students Narratives</b>
	Positive learning environment despite the limitations of facilities
<b>Quality education</b>	Helps students realize the value of quality education offers a real-life experience and adherence to the law to its students Provides career- relevant and personal growth

The information provided in Table 1b concerning student leaders reflects the positive effects of quality education resulting from exciting learning opportunities established through Cagayan's criminology programs to develop competent, ethical professionals. This evidence resonates with Baynosa & Canape (2025), who stated, "Many factors affect the engagement of students; thus, organizations must provide support for teachers so they can deliver effective instructional strategies". In addition to the evidence provided by Baynosa and Canape, CHED Memorandum Order No. 21, s. 2015 and Taguaba (2021) also affirmed the importance of meeting standards and managing programs effectively to help students have experienced positive learning situations to improve their overall experience within a program as well as the degree to which that program is successful.



Table 2a. challenges encountered in the criminology programs of higher education institutions, as described by administrators.

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Administrators Narratives</b>
<b>Operational Constraints</b>	Lack of program control due to institutional and resource constraints Delays in administrative approval. Scarcity of faculty and work overload Resource allocation and decision making

Cagayan criminology schools face an emerging issue of "administrative institutional constraints impacting the faculty's academic capacity," which has negative effects on faculty performance, instructional delivery, and the operation of all programs. Zalsos and Corpuz (2024) also reported that limited training, weak planning frameworks, and insufficient resources create low-quality education. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2023) stressed that the lack of adequate support, facilities, and funding also impacts effective program management. Similar to this, Morong & Achas (2025) found that professional development programs for faculty, instability in administration, and inconsistent leadership create adverse impacts on program compliance and quality in criminology programs.

Table 2b. Challenges encountered in the criminology programs of higher education institutions, as described by faculty members.

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Faculty Narratives</b>
<b>Program Constraints</b>	Faculty development and organizational structure Instructional Challenges and Faculty Adaptation. Administrative support and environment Administrative Priorities and Resource Management

Table 2b outlines the challenges faced by criminology programs from faculty testimonials; the overall trend is informed by the emergent theme "Program Constraints." This emergent theme is supported by the findings of Jingco et al. (2021) who identified instructional barriers including inadequate training and inadequate support, and by Taga (2025) who identified how disparities in infrastructure, workload, and inadequate institutional support impact faculty



readiness and development. In conclusion, the results of this study suggest that in order to provide quality education and sustainable criminology programs, there must be efforts to remove these institutional and instructional barriers.

Table 2c. Challenges Encountered in the Criminology Program of the Higher Education Institutions as described by student leaders.

Emergent Themes	Experience Descriptors from Students Narratives
Performance Challenges	Leadership-related and time management challenges. Balancing academic responsibilities and leadership roles. Overcoming academic difficulties Time management in pursuing education

Looking at Table 2c, we can see that the major theme of “Performance Challenges” refers to many student leaders’ inability to balance their academic and leadership responsibilities. Bercilla et al. (2023), Dael & Villocino (2025), and Aquino and San Luis (2024) show that student leaders experience many performance challenges, including time constraints, heavy workloads, emotional fatigue, and lack of institutional support, and that they all impact student leaders’ performance and well-being. In summary, the results of this study demonstrate that if institutions provide effective institutional support and develop time management strategies, student leaders will have greater success in the areas of academics and leadership.

Table 3. Institutional Or Contextual Factors Encountered That Influence the Effective Operation of the Criminology Program

Emergent Themes	Experience Descriptors from Faculty Members' Narratives
<b>Limited funding and resources</b>	Inconsistent administrative support Budget constraints Dean's support and administrative challenges in the program implementation Compensation challenges amidst supportive leadership

Table 3 shows the elements impacting the efficiency of criminology programs in Cagayan. Faculty members noted that limited financial and physical resources were concerns when providing students with the tools needed for a high-quality education. Furthermore, outcomes indicate that there is a strong correlation between the level of institutional support, adequate funding levels, and criminology program performance. This correlation was corroborated by Flores (2025), who reported that numerous SUCs in the Philippines experience inequitable distribution of support services/resources, limited to negligible financial autonomy, and bureaucratic impediments to providing faculty and student support services/resources. Additionally, Bayudan-Dacuycuy et al. (2024) stated that having a financial sustainability plan is essential for maintaining facilities and supporting faculty development initiatives. Collectively, the aforementioned studies demonstrated that funding restrictions are a significant obstacle to providing Criminology Programs and enhancing their effectiveness.



Table 4a. Description of Faculty Members in Their Preparation and Qualifications for Teaching Criminology

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Faculty Members' Narratives</b>
<b>Empowered excellence</b>	Professional development despite limited opportunities Effective teaching despite qualification gaps. Comprehensive preparation in teaching criminology Varying levels of readiness in teaching

Emerging from table 4A is an overarching theme, which states that "faculty are committed to enhancing their skill sets and improving their instructional practices through professional development and continuing education," and that continuing education and ongoing professional development have a positive impact on faculty commitment (Tallungan et al., 2023) and that faculty performance is positively impacted by continued professional development in the areas of effective teaching practices (Salih et al., 2025). Delima (2025) further states that the ongoing development of faculty and sustaining faculty credentials is necessary to sustain quality academic programs and accreditation standards.

Table 4b. Description of professional development or support provided for faculty members

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Faculty Members' Narratives</b>
<b>Professional Growth</b>	Insufficient Institutional Support Constraints in Faculty Training Utilization. Facilitative Faculty Professional Growth Navigate Personal Readiness and Teaching

The primary idea throughout criminology faculty professional development reflects the theme of "support in professional growth" indicated by a sign of one's commitment for enhancing their professional skills but is limited by barriers related to institutional constraints, funding deficit, and administrative limitations. Specifically, studies conducted by Tulo and Lee (2022), Chavez (2025), Taga (2025), and Herrero and Despi (2025) suggest that faculty members require structured support—examples include providing faculty with mentors; providing multiples work sessions; offering faculty with incentive programs—to enhance their teaching



effectiveness, develop networks of contacts for conducting professional activities, and to promote faculty success.

Table 4c. Description of teaching experience that significantly affected the confidence, motivation, or sense of responsibility as a teacher

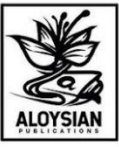
<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Faculty Members' Narratives</b>
<b>Collaboration</b>	Leadership and students' behavior Subject mastery and teaching resources. Practical experience and continuous learning Student behavior and teacher dedication

Research proves that teacher/student collaboration is an invaluable tool for improving teachers' confidence, teachers' motivation, and teachers' sense of responsibility; creating a well-functioning learning climate that encourages both teacher and student development. Oblianda (2024) indicates the role of structured support (mentoring) in developing teacher confidence and student motivation. Gamuza, Lachica, and Bautista (2025) added to this idea by stating that experienced teachers have a much higher rate of effectiveness and confidence when they teach than those less experienced. Dominado (2024) supported the notion that a combination of collaborative efforts (i.e., collaboration, mentoring, professional development, and a positive school culture) strengthen teacher confidence and professionalism.

Table 4d. Description of an experience where an instructor made learning more effective or more difficult

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Experience Descriptors from Faculty Members' Narratives</b>
<b>Instruction Relevance</b>	Teaching style and instructor preparedness Instructor clarity and practical experience. Clear instructions and practical context on student understanding Clarity of instruction and use of Real-Life examples

Table 4d elucidates the theme of 'Instructional Relevance,' wherein criminology instructors enhance student learning via real-world connections to their lesson and learning



activities. Evidence from Chavez (2024), Mallillin et al. (2023), and Inoncillo (2024) demonstrate that having strong pedagogical skills, engaging students in interactive activities and employing resources effectively, increases student engagement (and faculty effectiveness) within distance or technology-enhanced modes of teaching.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Criminology programs in Cagayan are typically up to date with their standards, however, changing students and generational influences require upgrades in order to assist faculty, administration, and provide a quality educational experience. There is ongoing progression of institutions while facing administrative, instructional, and resource issues; additional financial and administrative assistance is necessary for supporting professional development and improving education outcomes. The research results indicate that there is a strong association between program facilities, resources, and leadership and the overall quality of programs; however, inequities across colleges and universities within higher education limit consistency in progress.

Using System and Implementation Theory, this research conceptualizes the criminology program as an interconnected system of faculty, curriculum, facilities, and administration; when any of these components exhibits weakness, overall program quality will suffer. Implementation Theory emphasizes how policies will be implemented based upon available resources, intended outcomes, and organization commitment. The findings of this research support the need for a coordinated and balanced approach among administrators, faculty, and students to develop academically qualified, ethically sound, and professionally competent criminologists to meet the needs of law enforcement and public safety.

#### **V. RECOMMENDATION**

As part of the results and findings of this study, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. HEIs in Cagayan should enhance their continual compliance as a result of data received from the accrediting agency;
2. Criminology programs in Cagayan must be continually compliant with CHED via program assessment. The evaluation of curriculum shall establish the currency of programs related to current trends in criminal justice education;



3. The administrative support provided to faculty should be enhanced through improved coordination, resources, and professional development; in addition, student leaders should have access to leadership and time management assistance. This will ensure that they can improve their academic and organizational performance;
4. Faculty and student motivation, confidence, and effective learning will be enhanced by professional development, mentoring, and innovative teaching approaches;
5. Institutions of Higher Learning must modernize criminology resources and facilities to adhere to current global trends;
6. Future research can examine the relationship between accredited institutions and their performance, and give an overall perspective on the operations and challenges faced by criminology programs in other regions as well.

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