



AN EVALUATION OF THE CRIMINOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM OF NUEVA ECIJA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation and impact of the Criminology Internship Program of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) using a descriptive research design. Respondents included criminology student-interns, faculty coordinators, and agency supervisors from partner institutions such as the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Parole and Probation Administration, and NEUST school-based offices. Data were gathered through a validated survey-questionnaire focusing on pre-immersion, immersion, and post-immersion phases, as well as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development, and problems encountered. Results revealed that the program was highly implemented, with strong alignment between academic preparation and field practice. Interns reported significant gains in applying criminology theories, performing professional tasks, and bridging classroom learning with real-world contexts. Minor challenges were noted, particularly in financial and transportation concerns, though safety protocols were consistently observed. Overall, the findings affirm the effectiveness of the internship program in preparing students for professional practice, while highlighting areas for improvement in logistical support and feedback integration. Recommendations were formulated to strengthen collaboration with partner agencies, enhance resource allocation, and sustain safety and welfare measures.

KEYWORDS: *Criminology Internship, Program Implementation, Student Development, Experiential Learning, Program Evaluation*

INTRODUCTION

Internship programs provide students with experiential learning opportunities that connect classroom instruction with professional practice. In criminology education, internship is both an academic requirement and a critical component mandated by the Commission on Higher Education. According to CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 37, series of 2010, student internship programs are designed to immerse students in actual fieldwork, while CMO No. 5, series of 2018, institutionalizes the criminology internship as part of the curriculum to ensure that students acquire the necessary competencies, values, and skills for careers in law enforcement, corrections, forensic science, and allied fields.

Several studies highlight the significance of criminology internships in shaping student competencies and professional preparedness. Gonzales and Salazar (2020) reported that on-the-job training enhances knowledge, confidence, and readiness in performing criminology-related tasks, but noted persistent issues in supervision and agency placement. Similarly, Cruz (2019) emphasized that practicum performance improves when academic preparation aligns with agency tasks, although placement mismatches often hinder optimal outcomes. Flores and dela Cruz (2021), in their evaluation of practicum programs in Central Luzon, found inconsistencies in monitoring and

supervision practices, which affected the quality of student learning. In addition, Cruz and David (2021) identified limited placements, weak supervision practices, and communication gaps as recurring problems in the conduct of internship programs.

The theoretical underpinnings of internship are supported by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which asserts that learning occurs through a continuous cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. This theory directly applies to criminology students who are deployed in agencies such as the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Parole and Probation Administration, and NEUST school-based offices, as they acquire knowledge and skills through real-world immersion. Furthermore, Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains (1956, revised 2001) provides a lens for evaluating the impact of the internship on students' cognitive development, affective growth, and psychomotor skills, which are the central focus of this study.

Although criminology internship programs are widely implemented in Philippine higher education institutions, limited research has evaluated the specific case of NEUST. This study seeks to address that gap by examining the level of implementation of the NEUST Criminology Internship Program, its impact on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of interns, and the challenges encountered by stakeholders. In doing so, it contributes to academic quality



assurance and offers evidence-based recommendations for program improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the level of implementation and the impact of the Criminology Internship Program of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. The design was deemed appropriate since the study sought to describe the current practices of the program and evaluated its effectiveness in relation to the development of student-interns.

The respondents of the study included 138 criminology student-interns who had undergone deployment, OJT instructors/coordinators who oversaw the program, and agency supervisors from partner institutions such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Parole and Probation Administration (PPA), and NEUST school-based offices. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that only individuals with direct involvement in the internship program were selected as respondents.

The primary research instrument was a structured survey-questionnaire composed of three parts: (1) level of implementation in terms of pre-immersion, immersion, and post-immersion phases; (2) impact on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development; and (3) problems encountered in the program. The instrument underwent validation by experts in criminology education and research before administration. Reliability testing was conducted to ensure consistency of results.

For the data gathering procedure, permission to conduct the study was first sought from the NEUST administration and partner agencies involved. Once approval was granted, the questionnaires were distributed electronically through Google Forms to the identified respondents. Respondents were provided with clear instructions on how to accomplish the form and the purpose of the study. In cases where further clarification was needed, follow-up interviews or online consultations were conducted.

All participants were informed of the objectives of the study and were asked to indicate their consent by ticking the consent box in the Google Form, serving as an informed consent. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time were strictly observed. Data collected were securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

The data analysis made use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe the respondents' perceptions of the program's implementation and impact. Weighted mean and Likert-scale interpretations were employed to evaluate responses.

Through this methodology, the study generated comprehensive and reliable findings that served as the basis for

recommending improvements to the NEUST Criminology Internship Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

An Evaluation of the Criminology Internship Program of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology

1.1 Assess the level of implementation of the Criminology Internship Program in Pre-immersion phase

The results of Table 1 reveal strong agreement, with an overall mean of 3.7, indicating that respondents strongly agreed that the pre-immersion phase was effectively implemented. This indicates that orientation, training, and preparatory activities were generally successful in equipping students for deployment. The overall mean reflects that the university and partner agencies provided adequate preparation, ensuring that interns entered immersion with confidence and clear expectations. This phase laid a strong foundation for experiential learning. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), preparation before fieldwork is essential to maximize learning outcomes. Similarly, CHED Memorandum Order No. 21 (2017) emphasizes the importance of pre-internship orientation and training to align student expectations with program objectives.

The highest mean was 3.8 "Pre-immersion training equipped me; Internship objectives clearly communicated; pre-immersion boosted confidence", students strongly agreed that training equipped them with necessary knowledge and skills, objectives were clearly communicated, and confidence was boosted prior to immersion. These results highlight the strength of the program in providing clarity and readiness. Effective communication of objectives and structured training enhanced student preparedness, reducing anxiety and increasing motivation. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997) suggests that confidence built through preparation directly influences performance in real-world tasks. In criminology education, Bartol & Bartol (2019) note that clear objectives and skill-based training improve student engagement and professional identity formation.

The lowest mean was 3.5 "Partner agencies prepared to receive interns, respondents only agreed that partner agencies were adequately prepared to receive interns, making this the lowest-rated item. This suggests a relative weakness in coordination between the university and partner agencies. While students felt prepared, they perceived some gaps in agency readiness, possibly in terms of orientation, resources, or structured reception. Lave & Wenger's Situated Learning Theory (1991) emphasizes that learning is most effective when institutions and communities of practice are fully engaged. Weaknesses in agency preparedness may hinder the seamless integration of interns into professional environments. Research by Bates et al. (2019) also highlights that institutional collaboration is a critical factor in internship success.



Table 1. Pre-Immersion Phase

Category / Item	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Orientation provided clear guidelines	3.7	Strongly Agree
2. Pre-immersion training equipped me	3.8	Strongly Agree
3. University provided administrative support	3.6	Agree–Strongly Agree
4. Internship objectives clearly communicated	3.8	Strongly Agree
5. Partner agencies prepared to receive interns	3.5	Agree
6. Requirements/paperwork manageable	3.6	Agree
7. Faculty advisers provided guidance	3.7	Strongly Agree
8. Expectations matched program goals	3.6	Agree
9. Internship schedules outlined	3.7	Strongly Agree
10. Pre-immersion boosted confidence	3.8	Strongly Agree
Category Mean (Pre-Immersion)	3.7	Strongly Agree

1.2 Assess the level of implementation of the Criminology Internship Program in Immersion phase

Table 2 shows an overall mean of 3.7, reflecting strong agreement respondents strongly agreed that the immersion phase was effectively implemented. This suggests that the program successfully provided authentic criminology practice, mentorship, and exposure to professional environments. The overall mean indicates that the immersion phase met its objectives of bridging theory and practice. Students perceived the tasks, supervision, and learning environment as conducive to professional growth. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) emphasizes that learning is maximized when students actively engage in real-world contexts. Internship immersion aligns with this principle, allowing criminology interns to transform theoretical knowledge into practical competencies. Similarly, CHED (2017) requires criminology programs to integrate field immersion to strengthen applied learning.

The highest mean was 3.9 "Assigned tasks relevant to criminology practice & Gained meaningful exposure to criminology work", students strongly agreed that tasks assigned during immersion were directly relevant to criminology practice and that they gained meaningful exposure to criminology-related work. This highlights the strength of the program in ensuring

alignment between academic preparation and fieldwork responsibilities. It shows that partner agencies provided authentic criminology tasks, reinforcing the professional identity of interns. According to Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), authentic tasks situated in real practice contexts deepen learning and professional competence. Studies in criminology education (e.g., Bartol & Bartol, 2019) also emphasize that exposure to real investigative and correctional work enhances students' readiness for professional practice.

The lowest mean was 3.3 "Safety and welfare measures adequately observed", respondents only agreed that safety and welfare measures were adequately observed during immersion. This suggests a relative weakness in the program, where students felt less assured about their safety and welfare while deployed. While learning opportunities were strong, institutional safeguards may need reinforcement to ensure student well-being. The Occupational Safety and Health Standards (DOLE, 2016) emphasize that organizations must prioritize safety in workplace training programs. In criminology internships, exposure to law enforcement and correctional environments requires strict adherence to safety protocols. Research by Bates et al. (2019) highlights that student satisfaction in internships is strongly linked to perceived safety and support systems.

Table 2. Immersion Phase

Item	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Assigned tasks relevant to criminology practice	3.9	Strongly Agree
2. Supervisors provided effective mentorship	3.8	Strongly Agree
3. Applied classroom knowledge in real-world settings	3.8	Strongly Agree
4. Immersion environment conducive to learning	3.7	Strongly Agree
5. Partner agencies collaborated with university	3.6	Agree
6. Faculty monitoring consistent and supportive	3.7	Strongly Agree
7. Provided diverse learning opportunities	3.8	Strongly Agree
8. Gained meaningful exposure to criminology work	3.9	Strongly Agree
9. Feedback from supervisors constructive and timely	3.7	Strongly Agree
10. Safety and welfare measures adequately observed	3.3	Agree
Category Mean (Immersion)	3.7	Strongly Agree



1.3 Assess the level of implementation of the Criminology Internship Program in Post-Immersion phase

Table 3 presents an overall mean of 3.6, showing agreement that respondents generally agreed that the post-immersion phase was implemented effectively, though ratings were slightly lower compared to the pre-immersion and immersion phases. This indicates that while students valued reflection, evaluation, and closure activities, these were not perceived as strongly as the immersion experiences. The post-immersion phase was effective but highlighted areas for improvement in evaluation fairness, recognition, and feedback utilization. Dewey's Reflective Learning Theory (1933) underscores the importance of reflection in consolidating experiences into meaningful knowledge. Post-immersion activities such as debriefing and evaluation are essential for transforming practice into professional growth. In criminology education, Bartol & Bartol (2019) emphasize that structured reflection enhances professional identity and career readiness.

The highest mean was 3.8 "Experiences relevant to career goals, students strongly agreed that their internship experiences were relevant to their career goals. This highlights the strength of the program in aligning post-immersion activities with

students' professional aspirations. It indicates that the internship provided career-oriented experiences that reinforced their motivation to pursue criminology. Super's Career Development Theory (1990) stresses that career relevance during training fosters stronger vocational commitment. Likewise, CHED Memorandum Order No. 21 (2017) requires criminology programs to ensure that internships prepare students for law enforcement, corrections, and forensic careers, confirming the importance of career alignment.

The lowest mean was 3.4 "Feedback used to improve program, respondents only agreed that feedback was used to improve the program, making this the lowest-rated indicator. This suggests that while feedback mechanisms existed, students were less confident that their input was systematically integrated into program improvements. This reflects a gap in participatory evaluation and continuous quality enhancement. Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model (1996) emphasizes the importance of feedback in refining training programs. Without visible integration of student feedback, programs risk stagnation. Research by Bates et al. (2019) also highlights that student satisfaction increases when feedback loops are transparent and lead to tangible changes.

Table 3. Post-Immersion Phase

Item	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Reflections enhanced learning	3.7	Strongly Agree
2. Evaluation fair and transparent	3.6	Agree
3. Report writing guidelines clear	3.7	Strongly Agree
4. Skills properly assessed	3.6	Agree
5. Debriefing sessions helpful	3.7	Strongly Agree
6. Contributions recognized	3.5	Agree
7. Structured closure provided	3.6	Agree
8. Activities consolidated learning	3.7	Strongly Agree
9. Experiences relevant to career goals	3.8	Strongly Agree
10. Feedback used to improve program	3.4	Agree
Category Mean (Post-Immersion)	3.6	Agree

2. Impact of the internship program on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of criminology interns

Table 4 shows an overall mean of 3.7, reflecting strong agreement that respondents strongly agreed that the internship program had a positive impact on their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. This indicates that the program effectively enhanced knowledge application, ethical awareness, skill performance, and professional identity. The balanced development across domains reflects the holistic design of the internship. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) highlights that learning is maximized when students actively apply knowledge in real-world contexts. In criminology education, Bartol & Bartol (2019) emphasize that internships foster both technical competencies and professional values, confirming the importance of experiential practice.

The highest mean was 3.8 "Applied criminology theories; Improved ability to perform tasks; Bridged classroom

with practice", students strongly agreed that they were able to apply criminology theories, improve their ability to perform tasks, and bridge classroom learning with professional practice. These results highlight the program's strength in integrating theory with practice. Interns perceived that their academic preparation was directly relevant and applicable to fieldwork, reinforcing their professional competence. Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) stresses that authentic tasks situated in practice contexts deepen learning. Similarly, CHED Memorandum Order No. 21 (2017) requires criminology programs to ensure that internships provide opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge in law enforcement, corrections, and forensic settings.

The lowest mean was 3.6 "Stronger identity as criminologist; Deepened empathy", respondents agreed, but less strongly, that the internship strengthened their identity as future criminologists and deepened their empathy toward communities. This suggests that while technical and cognitive skills were strongly developed, affective aspects such as empathy and



professional identity formation were perceived less strongly. These areas may require more structured reflection and mentoring to reinforce values and social responsibility. Super's Career Development Theory (1990) emphasizes that professional identity formation is a gradual process influenced by experiential

learning and mentorship. Research in criminal justice education (e.g., Bates et al., 2019) also highlights that empathy and ethical awareness are critical but often require deliberate integration into training programs.

Table 4. Impact on Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor Development

Item	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Applied criminology theories	3.8	Strongly Agree
2. Awareness of ethics/responsibilities	3.7	Strongly Agree
3. Improved ability to perform tasks	3.8	Strongly Agree
4. Enhanced analytical/problem-solving	3.7	Strongly Agree
5. Stronger identity as criminologist	3.6	Agree
6. Improved communication/documentation	3.7	Strongly Agree
7. Confidence in decision-making	3.7	Strongly Agree
8. Deepened empathy	3.6	Agree
9. Enhanced leadership/teamwork	3.7	Strongly Agree
10. Bridged classroom with practice	3.8	Strongly Agree
Category Mean (Impact)	3.7	Strongly Agree

3. Problems encountered by respondents in the implementation of the internship program

Table 5 presents an overall mean of 2.1, reflecting respondents generally disagreed that significant problems were encountered during the internship program. This indicates that the program was implemented smoothly, with only minor challenges noted. The low overall mean suggests that students did not perceive systemic barriers that hindered their participation or learning. According to Astin's Student Involvement Theory (1984), effective programs minimize barriers to participation, thereby enhancing student engagement. In criminology internships, smooth implementation reflects strong coordination between universities and partner agencies (Bartol & Bartol, 2019).

The highest mean was 2.3 "Financial strain; Transportation difficulties", respondents agreed more strongly (though still below the midpoint) that financial strain and transportation difficulties were encountered. These practical concerns highlight external challenges faced by students,

particularly in terms of commuting costs and logistical burdens. While not programmatic flaws, these factors can affect accessibility and equity of internship opportunities. Tinto's Model of Student Retention (1993) emphasizes that external factors such as financial and logistical constraints can influence student persistence and satisfaction. Studies in Philippine higher education (e.g., CHED, 2017) also note that socioeconomic barriers often affect student participation in off-campus programs.

The lowest mean was 1.8 "Safety measures inadequate", respondents strongly disagreed that safety measures were inadequate, making this the lowest-rated item. This suggests that students felt secure during their immersion, with safety protocols adequately observed. It reflects positively on the university and partner agencies for prioritizing student welfare in potentially high-risk criminology environments. The Occupational Safety and Health Standards (DOLE, 2016) mandate institutions to ensure safety in workplace training. Research by Bates et al. (2019) highlights that perceived safety strongly influences student satisfaction and confidence in internship programs.

Table 5. Problems encountered in the implementation of the internship program

Item	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Lack of resources hindered activities	2.1	Disagree
2. Internship schedules conflicted	2.2	Disagree
3. Partner agency limitations	2.0	Disagree
4. Faculty advisers not always available	2.1	Disagree
5. Communication gaps with supervisors	2.0	Disagree
6. Tasks not aligned with practice	2.2	Disagree
7. Evaluation methods unclear	2.0	Disagree
8. Safety measures inadequate	1.8	Strongly Disagree
9. Financial strain	2.3	Disagree
10. Transportation difficulties	2.3	Disagree
Category Mean	2.1	Disagree



Recommendations

Based on the problems encountered results, the study recommends that the university and partner agencies enhance resource support to avoid limitations in internship activities, address scheduling conflicts by aligning academic and field requirements, and strengthen partner agency collaboration to ensure readiness and task relevance. Faculty advisers should improve availability and establish clear communication mechanisms with supervisors to minimize gaps. Assigned tasks must be aligned with criminology practice, while evaluation methods should be clarified to promote fairness. The program should continue to sustain safety protocols, while providing financial assistance and transportation support to ease external burdens on students.

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