

Employability and Curriculum-Employment Relevance Among B.S. Criminology Graduates of a Private Accredited Higher Education Institution in Cabanatuan City

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the employability and curriculum-employment relevance of Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduates of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges in Cabanatuan City. A descriptive-survey design covered 194 graduates from Academic Years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, with 175 respondents (90.21%). Data were gathered using a questionnaire adapted from the Commission on Higher Education Graduate Tracer Study and analyzed through frequencies, percentages, and weighted means. Results showed that 64.57% were employed; among employed graduates, 74.33% obtained their first job within one year, 61.06% entered professional, technical, or supervisory positions, and 61.06% earned PHP 25,000 and above at entry level. Moreover, 88.50% rated

the program relevant or very relevant to their work. Overall weighted means were 4.29 for relevance and 4.28 for significance. Professional competence, responsibility and accountability, communication, and critical thinking were the leading employability attributes. The findings support continued strengthening of licensure readiness, practical training, recruitment preparation, leadership, adaptability, career development, and institutional linkages.

Keywords: *graduate employability, criminology education, graduate tracer study, curriculum relevance, job-program congruence, licensure readiness*

INTRODUCTION

Graduate employability is an important higher-education outcome because it reflects how effectively academic programs prepare graduates for labor-market entry and professional practice. Graduate tracer studies provide evidence on employment status, job relevance, waiting time, occupational position, and workplace competencies and can support curriculum evaluation, quality assurance, and institutional accountability (Clarke, 2018; Cook, 2022; Tutor et al., 2021).

In criminology education, graduates may pursue careers in law enforcement, corrections, fire protection, investigation, security, public safety, government service, and related fields. These occupations require technical competencies together with communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, ethical decision-making, human relations, leadership, and adaptability. Philippine tracer studies likewise identify communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and human-relations skills as relevant to criminology graduates' work (Din et al., 2023; Nayoyos-Refugia, 2024).

Employability therefore extends beyond obtaining a job to include congruence between academic preparation and occupational requirements. Guided by Holland's (1959) Theory of Career Choice, the study considered the compatibility of graduates' preparation and competencies with their employment

environments. It examined the academic background, employment characteristics, curriculum-employment relevance, perceived significance of the program, and personal and academic factors influencing employability among BS Criminology graduates of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges (MVGFC).

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design, specifically the descriptive-survey method, to describe the academic and employment conditions of BS Criminology graduates without manipulating variables.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, a private higher education institution offering a Level III accredited BS Criminology program based on the institutional information used in the study.

Sampling Technique

Complete enumeration was initially intended for 194 graduates from Academic Years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. A total of 175 graduates participated, resulting in a 90.21% response rate.

Table 1. *Population and Sample of the Study*

Batch/Year	Population	Sample	Retrieval Rate
2018-2019	87	77	88.51%
2019-2020	107	98	91.59%
Total	194	175	90.21%

Research Instrument and Data Gathering

The questionnaire was adapted from the CHED Graduate Tracer Study and contextualized to the objectives of the investigation. It was administered online through Google Forms and distributed through Facebook and Google Mail. Follow-up communications were undertaken when necessary. Informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and data security were observed.

Statistical Treatment

Frequency counts and percentages were used for categorical variables. Weighted means were used for Likert-type indicators measuring perceived relevance and significance of the BS Criminology program to present employment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Academic Background and Licensure Outcomes

The prospect for immediate employment was the leading motivation for pursuing BS Criminology (41.14%), followed by strong passion for the profession (35.43%). The pattern shows that program choice was shaped by both employment expectations and intrinsic professional interest, consistent with findings on career motivations among criminology students (Trebilcock & Griffiths, 2022; Nobis, 2025).

Table 2. *Selected Academic and Licensure Findings*

Indicator	Result
Immediate employment as motivation	41.14%
Strong passion for the profession	35.43%
No identified award	92.00%
2019 MVGFC CLE passing rate	53.25% vs. 44.11% national
2021 MVGFC CLE passing rate	38.06% vs. 34.19% national

Delay to complete formal review	40.00% of those delaying
Failure linked to focus/concentration	53.62% of non-passers

MVGFC exceeded the national CLE passing rate in both examination periods included in the study. Among graduates delaying the examination, completing a formal review was the leading reason. Among non-passers, difficulty maintaining focus and concentration was the leading reported reason, followed by insufficient academic preparation and difficulty in selected professional subjects. These findings support diagnostic assessment, structured review, remediation, mentoring, and subject-specific intervention (Robiños et al., 2023; Detran et al., 2025).

Employment Characteristics

Of the 175 respondents, 113 or 64.57% were employed. Among employed graduates, 74.33% obtained their first job within one year. Walk-in application was the most common job-search method, showing the importance of direct personal initiative, while information from friends and recommendations also demonstrated the role of informal networks.

Table 3. *Employment Characteristics*

Indicator	Result
Employed	113 (64.57%)
Unemployed	62 (35.43%)
Employed within one year	84 of 113 (74.33%)
Walk-in application	60 of 113 (53.10%)
Professional/technical/supervisory position	69 of 113 (61.06%)
Entry salary PHP 25,000 and above	69 of 113 (61.06%)
Relevant/very relevant program-job match	100 of 113 (88.50%)

Most employed graduates entered professional, technical, or supervisory positions, and the same proportion reported entry-level salaries of PHP 25,000 and above. The results indicate comparatively favorable occupational placement among employed respondents, although outcomes varied. Related tracer studies likewise report criminology graduates entering law enforcement, public safety, and other professional sectors, with outcomes affected by institutional, geographic, qualification, and labor-market conditions (Cadelina & Engalan, 2024; Baybado & Estacio, 2025).

Curriculum-Employment Relevance and Significance

Program-job congruence was high: 58.41% of employed graduates rated the program very relevant and 30.09% rated it relevant, for a combined 88.50%. The overall weighted mean for relevance was 4.29. Skills applicable to current work responsibilities ranked first at 4.52, followed by knowledge needed to perform the present job effectively at 4.47.

Table 4. *Program Relevance and Significance*

Measure	Highest-Rated Indicator	Mean	Overall Mean
Relevance	Skills applicable to current work	4.52	4.29
Significance	Competencies helped qualify for employment	4.51	4.28

The overall weighted mean for significance was 4.28. The highest-rated indicator was that competencies acquired from the program helped graduates qualify for present employment (4.51), followed by contribution to effective job performance (4.48). Comparatively lower, although still highly rated, indicators involved recruitment preparation and career advancement, pointing to opportunities for stronger career coaching, agency-specific recruitment preparation, licensure support, leadership development, and continuing professional development.

Personal and Academic Factors Influencing Employability

Table 5. *Personal and Academic Factors Influencing Employability*

Graduate Attribute	Frequency	Percentage
Professionally competent	50	28.57%
Responsible and accountable	43	24.57%
Effective communicator	36	20.57%
Critical thinker	24	13.71%
Ethical	8	4.57%
Lifelong learner	8	4.57%
Interpersonal/collaborative skills	6	3.43%

Professional competence was the most frequently identified employability factor, followed by responsibility and accountability, effective communication, and critical thinking. The pattern indicates that graduates viewed employability as a combination of discipline-specific competence and transferable professional attributes. This supports a balanced curriculum that develops technical proficiency alongside communication, accountability, critical thinking, ethics, teamwork, and lifelong learning (Din et al., 2023; Baybado & Estacio, 2025).

Implications for Curriculum Enhancement

The findings provided the basis for a Comprehensive Criminology Employability and Curriculum Enhancement Program. Proposed measures emphasize career orientation, student support, academic and leadership development, institutionalized licensure preparation, subject-specific remediation, strengthened career placement, agency recruitment-cycle orientation, annual curriculum-industry alignment, enhanced experiential learning, advanced professional and technology-related competencies, integrated ethics and employability skills, alumni career development, and institutionalized tracer-study monitoring.

CONCLUSION

The BS Criminology program of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges generally provided graduates with relevant academic preparation, professional competencies, values, and practical foundations that supported transition to employment and professional practice. Employability reflected the combined influence of curriculum relevance, professional competence, communication, critical thinking, responsibility, accountability, licensure readiness, and access to employment opportunities. The strong program-job congruence and high perceived relevance and significance indicate that the curriculum was responsive to many occupational demands encountered by graduates. However, unemployment, delayed employment, licensure-readiness concerns, recruitment requirements, and lower ratings in career preparation indicate areas for continued enhancement. Sustained curriculum review, experiential learning, licensure preparation, career development, agency partnerships, and systematic monitoring of graduate outcomes are therefore important to maintaining relevant and quality criminology education.

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