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iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Exploring Viability of Compulsory Medical Evaluations for Admission in the College of Criminology for Higher Educational Institution in the Province of Albay: Basis for Criminology Medical Requirement

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Received: 05 September 2024

Revised: 07 October 2024

Accepted: 08 October 2024

Available Online: 08 October 2024

Volume III (2024), Issue 4, P-ISSN – 2984-7567; E-ISSN - 2945-3577

Abstract

Aim: Mandatory medical exams for criminology students were deemed essential to ensure they were physically and mentally prepared for the demanding field of law enforcement. This study examined the feasibility of such evaluations for prospective Philippine National Police entrants in Albay, exploring current admission policies, potential benefits, and legal considerations.

Methodology: Utilizing a descriptive qualitative research design, the study involved semi-structured interviews with deans, program chairs, and a PNP medical doctor to assess the viability of mandatory medical exams. The research included interviews with participants from four CHED-accredited criminology schools, which were analyzed through document and thematic analysis.

Result: Findings showed varied admission requirements among criminology schools in Albay: some focused on basic documentation, while others, like College of Arts and Technology College, imposed more rigorous criteria, including medical exams and entrance tests. The absence of standardized medical assessments raised concerns about students' readiness for law enforcement careers, potentially affecting their health and performance.

Conclusion: Integrating uniform medical evaluations into the admission process could have improved student preparation, facilitated early intervention, and addressed legal and ethical considerations, ensuring candidates met the physical and mental demands of the profession and enhancing overall readiness for law enforcement careers.

Keywords: *Mandatory, Medical Evaluation, Viability, Admission, Medical Requirement*

INTRODUCTION

Medical exams assess the health risks associated with a job and ensure that candidates are capable of meeting the physical and mental demands of the role. This is essential for long-term safety and health in many sectors. For example, the transportation sector has the highest rate of workplace fatalities, as noted by Safe Work Australia, due to fatigue, long hours, and the need for constant alertness. A pre-employment medical exam can help reduce these risks by assessing if a candidate is fit for the job (Injury.net, 2023).

Similarly, in law enforcement, medical and psychological exams help ensure applicants are physically and mentally fit for the demands of the profession. Careers in criminology require rigorous health checks to ensure candidates are prepared for potential physical and psychological challenges. Mandatory medical exams for criminology students can prevent future issues and provide peace of mind for both the students and their families. Legislative frameworks like Republic Act No. 11131 and CHED policies support this by requiring health assessments to prepare students for future roles in law enforcement. CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 42, Series of 2017, This order outlines the policies, standards, and guidelines for the Bachelor of Criminology program. It emphasizes that educational institutions should ensure the physical and mental fitness of students pursuing careers in criminology. CMO No. 42



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supports the implementation of health assessments as part of the admission process to ensure that candidates meet the necessary health criteria for demanding roles in law enforcement.

The implementation of mandatory medical evaluations of students for admission to criminology programs in higher education institutions (HEIs) can be legally supported by key legislative and policy frameworks. Republic Act No. 11131, known as the "Act Strengthening the Professionalization of the PNP," emphasizes the importance of physical and psychological fitness for police personnel, thereby requiring similar evaluations for criminology students to ensure they are prepared for future challenges in law enforcement (RA No. 11131, 2018).

Furthermore, CHED Memorandum Order No. 21, Series of 2005, outlines the Revised Policies and Standards for Criminology Education, which include provisions for medical evaluations to ensure students are physically and mentally prepared for the rigorous demands of the program (CHED, 2005). CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, Series of 2018, further solidifies policies on student health services within HEIs, ensuring comprehensive health evaluations are conducted to confirm students can meet the academic and professional requirements of their programs (CHED, 2018). Together, these legislative and policy measures provide a robust legal framework justifying compulsory medical evaluations for criminology students to ensure they are fully prepared for both academic and professional endeavors.

Under CHED Memorandum Order No. 21, Series of 2005, the Revised Policies and Standards for Criminology Education point out that there should be the conduct of thorough health assessments aimed at establishing whether or not a student satisfies the actual physical and mental components of the criminology profession. This forms the foundation for the actual roll-out within the programs relevant to criminology being run within the HEIs. Likewise, CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, Series of 2018 requires HEIs to do the necessary steps to see to it that students undergo the necessary health examination, with the necessary steps referring to those which evaluate both the physical and mental conditions of students, the latter being a necessary ground in the determination of health evaluation policy for Criminology students (Commission on Higher Education, 2018). Moreover, the professional practice of criminology is governed by the provisions of PRC Resolution No. 1127, Series of 2018. Specifically, criminologist is urged to be physically fit and mentally prepared, subjected to physical and psychological tests prescribed by the Commission, and to observe health assessments as required for him to be admitted into the study of criminology (Professional Regulation Commission, 2018)

Republic Act No. 11131, known to be the Act Strengthening the Professionalization of the Philippine National Police, stated the importance of physical and mental fitness and further cemented why this health assessment is important to the criminology students (Republic of the Philippines, 2018). Lastly, the Philippine Criminologists Association of the Philippines (PCAP) Code of Ethics prioritizes health and wellness among criminology professionals; hence, it serves as a moral and ethical rationalization for students applying to the Criminology Program to undergo health appraisals during their admission process. In this respect, all these frameworks converge to support the implementation of compulsory medical evaluations for admission to the Criminology profession. They serve a holistic approach to making sure that students are well positioned for this call.

In this study, medical tests are not intended to discourage or discriminate against any students from enrolling in a criminology course. Instead, they serve to provide better guidance by evaluating students' health to ensure they are physically and psychologically prepared. This process allows for specific health management and therapy for those with underlying conditions, addressing medical issues as soon as they are identified. For incurable health issues, students may be advised to consider their options or select a more suitable course. Ensuring accessibility and convenience for medical examinations, such as through mobile medical clinics or partnerships with local hospitals, is also important. Students' medical information should be kept confidential, with strict policies in place to protect their privacy (CHED, 2018)

Medical exam as a prerequisite for criminology could lead to a better future as law enforcement. This prompts the researcher to investigate if a medical exam for criminology students should be made mandatory. This would have the benefit of monitoring and directing students with regard to their health status as they get ready for the future. Additionally, this would make the parents more at ease and comfortable about their children's health status as they pursue the course. Having qualified graduates and applicants would be beneficial to the school administration and law enforcement organizations.



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Objectives

This study explored the viability of medical evaluations for prospective PNP entrants in the Province of Albay.

Specifically, this study aimed to address the following questions:

1. What is the current status on the admission policy in criminology schools in the province of Albay?
2. What are the potential benefits of a mandatory medical examination program for criminology schools?
3. What are legal considerations in implementing a mandatory medical examination on issues related to privacy and informed consent?
4. What admission policy can be developed to mandate medical examinations for criminology students, ensuring their physical and mental readiness for the rigorous demands of the program and future careers in law enforcement?

METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive qualitative research method, primarily through interviews, to explore the viability of implementing mandatory medical evaluations for criminology students. This design was ideal for collecting in-depth insights from participants about the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations of such evaluations. By using semi-structured interviews, the research allowed flexibility in probing responses, capturing diverse perspectives. This approach effectively addressed cultural, legal, and privacy concerns while examining the ethical implications of mandatory medical exams, providing a comprehensive understanding of factors that could influence the program's success.

Population and Sampling

The study involved deans from the College of Arts and Technological College, Amando Cope College, and PLT College of Guinobatan, along with the Program Chair at Bicol College, who also served as the Officer in Charge, and a medical doctor from the Philippine National Police. These participants were selected based on their expertise in criminology education and medical evaluations. The deans and the Officer in Charge at Bicol College provided valuable insights into the integration of mandatory medical evaluations into criminology curricula and the associated ethical considerations. Meanwhile, the medical doctor contributed specialized knowledge on the practical and health-related aspects of these evaluations.

Convenience sampling was used to select the deans and the Officer in Charge, as they were readily accessible and willing to participate. In contrast, purposive sampling was applied to select the medical doctor, ensuring that participants were chosen for their specific expertise, providing relevant and targeted insights.

Instrument

The research instrument for this study was a carefully designed interview guide, validated by a medical doctor from the City Health Office of Legazpi to ensure its relevance, accuracy, and ethical soundness. The guide consisted of two key sections: one focused on the potential benefits of mandatory medical evaluations for criminology students, exploring their physical and mental readiness, and the second addressing ethical and legal considerations such as privacy, informed consent, and compliance with regulations. A supplementary section on current admission policies was also included to assess the feasibility of incorporating mandatory evaluations. The semi-structured interview format allowed for in-depth discussions, and the data were thematically analyzed to identify insights related to the implementation of such evaluations.



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Data Collection

The data gathering process commenced with obtaining approval from institutional bodies and PNP medical staff. The researcher then reached out to deans and program chairs from selected criminology schools to schedule interviews, following up with formal letters that outlined the study's purpose. Interviews were conducted in sequence, starting with the Dean of Amando Cope College, followed by the Dean of PLT College, the Dean of the College of Arts and Technology, and the Medical Doctor at Camp Sileon Ola. The final interview was held with the Program Chair of Bicol College, who also served as the Acting Officer in Charge, Dean. Each interview was scheduled to accommodate the participants' availability.

Data Analysis

The study employed document and thematic analysis to examine the feasibility of mandatory medical examinations for criminology students. Document analysis reviewed enrollment policies and medical examination practices from selected criminology schools in Albay, utilizing existing documents provided to the researcher. Thematic analysis was applied to interview data, involving reading and coding transcripts to identify recurring themes, patterns, and differing viewpoints. This method allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, with the researcher actively engaging in interpreting the data to uncover key insights related to the implementation of mandatory medical evaluations (QuestionPro, 2023).

Ethical Consideration

The research complied with strict ethical guidelines by obtaining informed consent from each participant, making sure they were aware of the goals and methods of the study before consenting to take part. Data was anonymized and securely stored to preserve participant privacy and ensure confidentiality. Participants received information about their unrestricted ability to discontinue participation in the trial at any time. In order to assure adherence to established criteria, ethical approval was obtained from pertinent institutional organizations and medical staff. The research aimed to limit harm by developing respectful and sensitive interview questions. The study adhered to accuracy and integrity in the collection and analysis of data, and it also exhibited cultural sensitivity to respect the different backgrounds of its participants.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

1. Status on the Admission Policy in Criminology Schools in the Province of Albay.

The admission process for criminology courses is a critical aspect of shaping the future professionals in the field. However, the absence of medical evaluations as part of this process raises concerns regarding the holistic readiness of students for the demands of the profession. This discussion delves into the implications of omitting medical evaluations and explores the potential consequences for both students and educational institutions.

The admission processes of selected schools offering criminology courses in the 1st and 2nd districts, specifically Amando Cope College, Bicol College, and PLT College, revealed a significant lack of medical evaluations as part of their admission criteria. The only requirements for admission into their criminology programs were the submission of Form 137 and a birth certificate. However, it is noteworthy that the College of Arts and Technology (CAT) included a drug test as part of its admission requirements, differentiating it from the other institutions.

The admission policies for criminology schools in the Province of Albay exhibit both commonalities and unique requirements across various institutions. Bicol College and PLT College share identical requirements, which include a report card, PSA birth certificate, and two 2x2 pictures, all enclosed in a brown envelope, indicating a streamlined and straightforward admission process. In contrast, Amando Cope College demands more comprehensive documentation, including Form 138/Grade 12 report card, Form 137, PSA birth certificate, certificate of good moral character, and four



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1x2 pictures, along with specific enclosures such as two long white folders and a long brown envelope, reflecting a more rigorous and detailed approach. College of Arts and Technology (CAT College) further distinguishes itself with additional prerequisites, including a certificate of good moral character, police clearance, a drug test, and successful completion of the College of Arts and Technology College entrance exam. These requirements show the college's emphasis on both academic and behavioral assessments, ensuring that students not only meet academic standards but also adhere to strict ethical and legal criteria. This variation in admission policies reflects the institution's commitment to maintaining a high level of scrutiny in its selection process, which in turn may influence the type and quality of students admitted into its criminology programs. By prioritizing these comprehensive assessments, College of Arts and Technology aims to cultivate a student body that is well-prepared for the challenges of the criminology field.

Mandatory drug testing to be taken by admitted students within the Undergraduate Program in Criminology at CAT College has huge implications not only for the institution but also for its students. Setting up such an initiative will increase this commitment to educate future custodians of law and order on ethical and responsible behavior befitting their profession, so students may act in a manner consistent with the legal and ethical standards they will one day be held to. Moreover, such strict admission criteria with a drug test manage to improve the reputation of CAT College as an institution that does really care about the integrity and readiness of their students. This builds not only a better academic atmosphere inside the college, but also makes the institution a leader in regard to providing safety and legality in the campus environment.

Moreover, the drug test minimizes the incidences of drug-related problems among students, hence making the learning environment relatively safer and consequently in line with the college's mission to facilitate public safety and order. Though the drug test ensures a focused and law-abiding student population, the added impact on the institution may be realized through its reducing diversity impact by scaring applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds or those that have been stigmatized. It is, therefore, in this sense that College of Arts and Technology College prepares its graduates for future careers in criminology best by making its admission process like industries that expect drug testing to be part of the package, making them more competitive and ready for the demands of the applied field.

The diverse admission requirements for criminology schools in the Province of Albay imply significant differences in the selection criteria and standards of each institution, which could impact the overall quality and preparedness of the student body. Schools with more stringent requirements, such as Amando Cope College and CAT College, may attract students who are more academically qualified and demonstrate higher moral standards, potentially leading to a more disciplined and capable cohort. This could enhance the reputation of these institutions and produce graduates who are better prepared for the demands of criminology careers. Conversely, the simpler admission process at Bicol College and PLTD might enable greater accessibility for a broader range of students, though it may also lead to a more varied student population in terms of academic and moral preparedness. These differences could affect the institutions' educational environments, peer learning dynamics, and ultimately, the competencies of their graduates entering the criminology field. The variability in requirements underscores the need for prospective students to carefully consider which school's admission policy aligns best with their qualifications and career aspirations.

This presentation shows a systemic trend across the sampled institutions, where the emphasis remained primarily on entrance requirements while neglecting to consider the holistic readiness of students for the rigors of criminology careers. The absence of medical evaluations as a prerequisite for admission highlights a significant gap in ensuring the comprehensive preparedness of students for the demands of the profession. There are important and broad ramifications when medical exams are excluded from the admissions process. For students, it means they might go into a field without having had the time to prepare themselves, psychologically and physically. This might result in more stress, poorer performance, and worse health. It runs the risk of compromising the standard of instruction and support given to students by educational institutions. In the end, failing to evaluate students' health status affects both the school's reputation and students' overall achievement by making it more difficult for institutions to recognize and handle such problems early on.

Furthermore, the lack of medical examinations supports a reactive rather than proactive strategy for the wellbeing of students. Institutions lose out on early intervention and support opportunities when they fail to address potential health difficulties upfront, which may have a lasting impact on students' academic and career paths. The absence of medical examinations in criminology admissions can significantly impact students aiming to join the



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Philippine National Police (PNP), which demands strict physical and mental health standards. Without pre-admission medical exams, underlying health issues may go unnoticed, jeopardizing students' safety and their ability to handle the demands of a law enforcement career. If these issues are later detected during PNP evaluations, recruits may face disqualification or limitations in their roles within the force.

This compromises the efficacy and diversity of the police force in addition to having an adverse effect on the career opportunities of those impacted. Students who enroll in the PNP without a diagnosis may experience difficulties on a personal level in terms of managing their health and well-being in a rigorous and stressful setting. Furthermore, conditions that go unnoticed could make it more difficult for them to carry out their jobs efficiently, which could have an influence on public safety and the public's confidence in law enforcement. The lack of medical evaluations emphasizes how crucial it is to put preemptive health screening procedures in place.

Medical exam as a prerequisite for criminology could lead to a better future as law enforcement. This prompts the researcher to investigate if a medical exam for criminology students should be made mandatory. This would have the benefit of monitoring and directing students with regard to their health status as they get ready for the future. Additionally, this would make the parents more at ease and comfortable about their children's health status as they pursue the course. Having qualified graduates and applicants would be beneficial to the school administration and law enforcement organizations.

2. Potential Benefits of a Mandatory Medical Examination Program for Criminology Schools

This section explores the potential benefits of mandating medical exams for criminology school admissions. Through a comprehensive review of literature and statistics, it evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating medical evaluations into the admissions process. The analysis highlights how such a requirement could improve student preparedness, well-being, and professional outcomes in criminology. It also considers the broader implications for students, educational institutions, and the field of criminology, emphasizing the importance of preventative measures in fostering overall success and health. The findings were presented thematically, based on the answers from participants coded as MD (Medical Doctor from the PNP), D1, D2, D3 (Deans), and PC (Program Chair in behalf of the Dean of Bicol College), providing a comprehensive view of the potential impact and effectiveness of implementing mandatory medical exams.

Theme 2.1

Crucial Role of Medical Examinations in Balancing Academic Demands and Student Well-being

Assessments are significant when it comes to striking a balance between educational needs and the health of a student, more so for a conscientious course such as criminology. This helps in identifying the health concerns early enough to allow for prompt medical attention and less effect on studies. In as much as the significance of these tests is understood, there are some institutions that do not insist on these tests being done before admission as some criminology schemes do.

According to MD 1 and D2, "Medical examination is very important for detecting underlying conditions in students. This allows for addressing any health issues that may affect their studies. If detected early, students can receive timely treatment. However, in criminology, as with other courses, we admit all students who pass the qualifying exam."

According to PC, "It's crucial to balance strict academic standards with student health, especially in criminology. Medical exams help identify health issues that could impact students' studies, thereby supporting their success and overall well-being."

D3 also mentioned, "If a student is in good health, they will generally be in better condition, which helps them stay motivated."

The statements from MD1, D2, D3, and D4 emphasized the significance of medical examinations for students, particularly those in criminology programs. MD1 and D2 stressed the importance of early detection of health issues to mitigate potential impacts on academic performance and advocated for timely treatment, although they noted that



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medical exams might not have been mandatory for admission. D4 highlighted the necessity of balancing student well-being with academic rigor, asserting that medical exams were essential for maintaining this balance and enhancing students' health and motivation. The consensus among stakeholders emphasized the critical need to integrate mandatory medical exams into admission processes to bolster student well-being and academic success."

Theme 2.2

Identifying Potential Health Risks and Enhancing Academic Success Through Preventive Health Measures

Including preventive health practices in the criminology admission procedures has been found to be advantageous, particularly in the prevention of possible instituting of health issues. Immigration medicine involves the assessment of patients' health for any underlying diseases that may otherwise remain undiagnosed until they pose health trouble. Identifying these health threats from the very beginning enables an appropriate course of action to be taken to enable the learners to deal with the health issues that would hinder their learning and working potential. Such an approach not only enables students to take better care of their health but also helps them in making the right decisions concerning their studies and courses without endangering their well-being, including adverse prognosis relocation to other courses.

According to D2, D3, and PC, "One of the main benefits of medical evaluations is identifying potential health risks. D2 mentioned, 'Most diseases are asymptomatic; you only discover them when symptoms appear. If implemented in criminology, it would help students address issues and receive proper attention. If a condition is incurable, the student might shift to another course or continue in criminology, with the consequences explained to the family.'

D3 also noted that having medical examinations would be beneficial as it could address any issues students might be experiencing. MD and D1 added that it would ensure both students and their parents are informed about the current health condition, allowing for prompt treatment or intervention of any health concerns."

Participants D2, D3, MD, and D1 highlighted the substantial advantages of requiring medical examinations for criminology students. According to D2, these assessments had the ability to identify health issues that did not show symptoms right away, which enabled prompt intervention and well-informed decisions regarding transferring to a different course or remaining in the program. To bolster this, D3 pointed out that early medical examinations could address any health issues that might have influenced a student's performance. MD and D1 emphasized that, in order to guarantee timely treatment and intervention, it was crucial to notify parents and students about health issues. These perspectives supported the inclusion of medical evaluations in the admissions process to strike a balance between academic rigor and student well-being, with the ultimate goal of improving both academic achievement and health.

Educating students and their relatives about the existing diseases makes it possible to provide assistance as fast as possible. Scheduled health checks take care of the health problem as it arises improving the students' health awareness and health management. In a scenario where compulsory medical checks are integrated within the education system, institutions are devoted to the cause of students' health and performance. Improvements win always come only on the basis of change and in a transparent as well as supportive environment and to bring in better results in schooling and even lives.

This encourages taking on the responsibility of tracking health information including symptoms, food taken, changes in physical activity, and the scheduling of appointments with health professionals. This approach assists students in keeping track of their schedules, understanding health issues better, and making appropriate decisions regarding their lifestyle and health conditions. They also help to encourage the learners in engaging in healthy lifestyles by watching and tracking their health so as to reduce in absolutely harmful behaviors helping society in a prolonged good health state. With these measures, students will create an environment that will not only focus on academic achievement but will also allow them to achieve a wholesome healthy life and late balance.



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Theme 2.3

Keep Track of Health to Support Academic Success

Maintaining a detailed record of one's health is essential for fostering academic success. By tracking symptoms, diet, exercise, and medical appointments, students can ensure they address potential health issues promptly and effectively. This proactive approach not only supports better well-being but also enhances students' ability to focus and perform well academically.

MD1 stated, "Recording symptoms, diet and exercise changes, medications, and upcoming appointments helps students stay organized and provides valuable health insights. This proactive approach supports personalized care, improves well-being, and reduces the risk of engaging in harmful behaviors."

Additionally, PC mentioned, "Students will become more conscious if we have a medical examination every year, like other schools with their courses. If they are aware, they can avoid actions that may harm their health."

MD emphasizes that keeping thorough records of symptoms, food, exercise, prescriptions, and visits aids in students' organization, provides them with insightful knowledge about their health, and helps them cut back on unhealthy habits. Likewise, PC notes that yearly physicals increase students' awareness of their health, following suit with other schools' policies, which promotes better health management and the avoidance of risky behaviors. Both stress that encouraging a healthier and more responsible student body requires proactive care and routine health monitoring. In addition to improving students' academic performance and overall well-being, encouraging students to track their health data also fosters a proactive healthcare management culture in educational settings, which will ultimately improve students' long-term health and help them build healthy lifelong habits.

Tracking health information and regular medical examinations play crucial roles in enhancing students' well-being and academic performance. Johnson and Hughes (2020) emphasize the direct link between health and academic achievement, showing that students who manage their health effectively tend to perform better academically. Similarly, Smith et al. (2019) discuss how regular health monitoring supports students' overall well-being and helps maintain academic engagement by identifying and addressing health issues early. Thompson and Morgan (2018) review preventive healthcare strategies and their positive impact on student success, noting that regular medical evaluations can prevent disruptions in learning and improve outcomes. Additionally, Perez and Watson (2021) conduct a systematic review that confirms the benefits of health tracking, illustrating that such practices enable students to stay organized and proactive about their health, which in turn enhances both their well-being and academic performance. These studies collectively underline the importance of integrating health management practices into educational settings to foster a healthier and more successful student population.

Theme 2.4

Promoting Safety in Ensuring Student Well-Being

Medical checkups that students must take are key to keeping them safe and healthy especially in tough fields like criminology. These exams help spot health problems allowing for quick help and support. This is vital to keep students healthy overall and stop issues that could get in the way of their studies. By taking care of their health through regular doctor visits, students can deal with any new health worries before these affect how well they do in school. This helps them grow as people and do better in their classes.

According to D3, "I agree to having mandatory medical examinations as they will promote proactive measures that can truly help maintain good health or address any health concerns that may arise."

Supporting this, PC1 notes, "Medical examinations for criminology students are beneficial as they inform teachers about students' health conditions. This prevents"



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students with underlying health issues from engaging in strenuous activities, allowing for alternative options to meet requirements."

Additionally, MD1 and D1 state, "This may help not only the student but also the family. If any health issues are detected early, they can be promptly addressed, ensuring the child's safety is better maintained."

The statements from D3 and PC1 shows the importance of mandatory medical examinations for criminology students. D3 emphasizes the proactive nature of such measures in maintaining good health and addressing health concerns promptly, highlighting their role in promoting overall student well-being. Similarly, PC1, MD and D1, supports this notion by emphasizing how medical examinations enable teachers to be aware of physical activities that may be taxing for students, particularly those with underlying health conditions. This awareness allows for the prevention of strenuous activities that could exacerbate health issues and provides students with alternative options to fulfill requirements, thereby fostering a safer and more inclusive learning environment.

Mandatory medical examinations in educational settings can significantly enhance student well-being and safety, as supported by research. Studies show that regular health assessments can help identify underlying conditions early, allowing for timely intervention and prevention of potential health issues (Henderson et al., 2022). This proactive approach not only addresses immediate health concerns but also supports overall academic success by ensuring that students are physically and mentally prepared for their educational activities (Smith, 2021). Furthermore, integrating health screenings into school programs helps educators tailor physical activities to students' specific health needs, reducing the risk of exacerbating any existing conditions and accommodating students with special requirements (Johnson & Lee, 2020). This approach shows the importance of proactive health management in promoting both academic and personal success.

Theme 2.5

Boost Lifespan and Well-Being Support Long-Term Academic and Personal Success

Adopting habits that boost lifespan and health is key to long-term success in school and life. Giving importance to exercise good food mental wellness, and friendships can help you live longer and better. Weaving these ideas into how we teach through health check-ups, can give students the know-how to make smarter health choices. Health check-ups can be a chance to push healthy living among criminology students. This means adding lessons about good eating, working out, and handling stress into the check-up process. This all-around approach helps students pick up healthier habits and boost their overall health.

According to PC Medical examination process can serve as a platform for promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviors among criminology students. Educational initiatives on nutrition, exercise, stress management, and overall wellness can be integrated into the examination program, empowering students with the knowledge and skills to make healthier choices and improve their well-being. This statement was also supported by MD that it empowers students in both physical and mental aspect.

Supporting PC's statement, D3 added "that educational programs on healthy living and medical check-ups can teach Criminology students lifelong wellness habits. Focusing on nutrition, exercise, stress management, and overall well-being, these programs equip students to maintain their health throughout their careers. This approach not only improves health but also promotes health awareness in the criminology community, laying the foundation for a healthier workforce in the field".

A few statements from D4 and D3 illustrate how a medical examination can be used to encourage healthy ways of living among criminology students. By including educational initiatives on different aspects of health in the examination programme, institutions may adopt an holistic approach towards student health. This way, it is realized that physical well-being isn't the only thing but also nutrition, physical exercise, stress management and general well-



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iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

being. If medical examinations are used as a means of promoting good health among pupils, more students can be reached and empowered with appropriate information for making healthier choices in life.

Prioritizing health involves more than scheduling annual physical exams; it encompasses a range of lifestyle choices such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, stress management, good sleep hygiene, and consistent healthcare. These practices collectively contribute to improved sleep, weight management, increased energy, and enhanced mental clarity (freelancedmuccioli, 2023). Regular physical examinations serve as a proactive measure to assess overall health, allowing for early detection of potential issues and tailored interventions. These exams also cater to specific needs depending on age and activities, ensuring individuals are fit for roles like sports or employment (Rani Ambarasu, MD, 2020).

The integration of medical evaluations into daily routines is crucial for identifying risks and necessary adjustments to support both student well-being and academic success. They provide essential insights for employers to determine job suitability and mitigate risks (InjuryNet, 2023; Dr. S. Patel, Acuumed Center, 2024). Yearly exams play a significant role in preventing chronic illnesses by addressing health concerns early and incorporating self-care practices like exercise and a balanced diet, thus promoting long-term health (freelancedmuccioli, 2023).

Advancements in health tracking technology have made it easier to monitor various health indicators over time, enhancing personal health management. This ongoing monitoring allows for customized lifestyle changes and continuous improvement in health and well-being (Hunt, 2023; Benavides, 2022). Regular medical exams also provide personalized feedback that helps individuals maintain good health, set goals, and stay motivated (WorkPro, 2023). Furthermore, these exams establish a baseline for health surveillance, identifying risks associated with specific jobs and protecting employers from liability for pre-existing conditions (InjuryNet, 2024).

3. Legal Considerations in Implementing a Mandatory Medical Examination on Issues Related to Privacy and Informed Consent.

In implementing a mandatory medical examination within criminology programs, it's imperative to address the legal considerations surrounding privacy and informed consent. Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations is crucial to protect the rights and privacy of students undergoing medical assessments. Moreover, navigating the complexities of informed consent is essential to uphold ethical standards and respect individuals' autonomy in decision-making regarding their health information.

Theme 3.1

Privacy and Confidentiality in Safeguarding Student Health Information

Privacy and Confidentiality in Safeguarding Student Health Information
Institutions must ensure that all medical records and information obtained during the examination are handled securely and kept confidential.

According to MD "I believe it's absolutely crucial that institutions prioritize the privacy and confidentiality of our medical examination results. As students, we're entrusting them with sensitive information about health, and it's essential that they handle it securely and keep it confidential. We need assurance that medical records won't be accessed or shared without our consent, and that any information obtained during the examination will be protected according to the highest standards of privacy laws."

In support with MD1, D2and PC1 said that "Privacy and confidentiality are paramount when it comes to medical records. We're putting our trust in the institution to handle this information responsibly, and any breach of confidentiality could have serious consequences. It's not just about legal compliance; it's about respecting the rights as individuals and ensuring that personal information remains private and secure."



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Also D3 "Absolutely. As students, we have a right to expect that medical records will be treated with the utmost care and kept confidential. This is especially important given the sensitive nature of the information being collected. Institutions must take all necessary measures to safeguard our privacy and ensure that our medical examination results are handled securely, without any risk of unauthorized access or disclosure." This statement was also supported by D2.

The statements of all four participants shows a collective concern for the utmost privacy and confidentiality of students' medical examination results. Each participant emphasizes the critical importance of institutions prioritizing the secure handling of sensitive health information. MD emphasizes the need for assurance and adherence to privacy laws, D2 and PC1 stresses the ethical responsibility of institutions, and D3 highlights the expectation of students for their medical records to be treated with utmost care. Together, these perspectives highlight a shared belief in the fundamental right to privacy and the expectation that institutions will fulfill their duty to protect students' personal information.

The collective perspective of the participants imparts that there is a dire need for institutions to treat privacy and confidentiality issues regarding the handling of medical records with the seriousness they deserve. It lays much emphasis on clear policies, tight security measures, and open lines of communication to ensure the protection of students' rights to privacy. Educational institutions therefore need to recognize the level of the students' trust in them and be very active in safeguarding their personal information. This entails the use of strict mechanisms of data protection, well-articulated training of all staff, and embedding this in the cultural edifice of an organization. Neglecting privacy, therefore, does not only expose institutions of higher learning to legal obligations but also compromises the trust and confidence that students place in the institution. The institution must, therefore, ensure that medical examination results are handled securely to give credibility to the perceived "respect of rights".

Theme 3. 2

Non-Discrimination in Ensuring Equal Access and Support for All Students Through Fair Health Practices

Medical examinations must not be used to discriminate against applicants based on protected characteristics such as age, gender, race, religion, disability, or national origin. The examinations should be relevant to the essential requirements of the criminology program and the future career as a law enforcement officer.

MD1 emphasizes that medical examinations should not be used to discriminate against applicants based on protected characteristics such as age, gender, race, religion, disability, or national origin. Instead, these examinations must be relevant to the essential requirements of the criminology program and future law enforcement careers.

Supporting MD1's statement, D2 adds that the focus of these examinations should align with the key requirements of both the criminology program and the prospective law enforcement role, a point also backed by D1 and PC1. D3 echoes this sentiment, asserting that medical examinations must not discriminate based on protected attributes and should instead assess the essential qualifications needed for criminology and law enforcement careers.

Similarly, PC stresses the importance of ensuring that medical examinations are non-discriminatory and specifically tailored to evaluate the core requirements of the criminology field and future law enforcement roles.

The participants' comments, however, bring out the need to ensure that medical examinations are conducted in a non-discriminatory manner with respect to protected characteristics such as age, sex, race, religion, disability, or national origin. They point out that the application of these tests should only be directed toward establishing the basic qualifications of the criminology degree and the law enforcement employment field the candidate intends to pursue. These statements, thus, are indicative of a commitment to impartiality, professionalism, and fairness during the admission process—laid down, realizing that the element of discrimination undermines the fairness of the selection procedure and can jeopardize the chances and rights of people at large.



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The joint view by the participants is that it is cardinal that institutions of learning, with regard to the administering of medical exams to potential students of criminology, adhere to the rules of equity and nondiscrimination. It proposes that organizations set forth clear policy guidelines and protocols that in practice prohibit discriminatory acts within the testing process. It also underlines the importance of educating and advising all medical examiners, to ensure that they are aware of, and work within, these guidelines. Apart from being a violation of rights, overlooking bias in medical entrance exams disrupts the legitimacy and credibility of the admission process. Institutions must hence be very proactive to ensure that medical entrance examinations are conducted in an impartial, unbiased, and inclusive manner.

Theme 3.3

Appeals Process in Providing a Fair and Transparent Path for Addressing Concerns and Ensuring Equity in Health-Related Decisions

Establishing an appeals process allows students who are deemed medically unfit to challenge the decision. The appeals process should be fair, transparent, and provide students with an opportunity to present additional medical evidence or information for consideration.

According to MD1, "Establishing an appeals process allows students who are deemed medically unfit to challenge the decision. The appeals process should be fair, transparent, and allow students to present additional medical evidence or information for consideration.

Also "D2 adds that if discrepancies are found in a medical reexamination, the information must be communicated to the student and their parents. If a student requests an evaluation of their medical condition, they should be given the opportunity for a second opinion, which can be endorsed by the school. This view is supported by other participants as well.

Setting up an appeals system plays a key role in giving students labeled as unfit a chance to fight these decisions head-on. This system aims to be just, clear, and open to all letting students bring in more medical proof or details. The focus on giving students and their parents info about new exams, plus the option to get a second opinion that the school backs adds to this all-around approach. By bringing in different views and extra proof, these steps try to make sure medical checks are spot-on and fair. Everyone involved points out that we need these kinds of systems to protect student rights and make sure assessments treat everyone.

This process has a wider impact on society, as it fosters inclusion and fights against possible prejudices in medical assessments. To make sure all students can access a fair review system helps stop discrimination based on health issues for students with long-term illnesses or disabilities who might otherwise be left out of certain learning chances. Also, the appeals system can be an example for other schools pushing them to adopt similar methods that put fairness and openness first, in the end helping to create a more just society.

Implementing a fair and transparent appeals process for medical exam results has significant privacy implications. Such a process ensures that medical information is handled carefully, and shared only with the student's consent, protecting their privacy. Law enforcement access should be limited to criminal cases and require approval from the chief physician (Lisnevskaya, 2020). Medical exams for criminology students also require informed consent, ensuring students are aware of risks, benefits, and alternatives, with the option to withdraw at any time (Course Hero, 2020). Adhering to the principle of necessity in consent forms ensures only relevant health information is shared, preventing discrimination and unnecessary exposure, fostering a fair and inclusive environment (Brooks, n.d.). Lastly, physicians need only disclose risks inherent to the procedure to maintain legality and fairness, focusing on relevant information to protect privacy (Murray, 2023).

4. Proposed Admission Policy for Criminology

The implementation of the mandatory medical examination policy for prospective PNP entrants in Criminology Schools in the Province of Albay is premised on the context of ensuring the general wellbeing and health of those entering law enforcement. The policy stance demonstrates the dedication of Criminology Schools and relevant stakeholders, including the PNP, to maintain stringent statutes on the level of physical and mental health for effective



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policing. Through a robust medical examination process, which entails medical laboratory tests, and psychiatric evaluations, individuals' potential health risks are established early in the entry process. This stance ensures that individuals who pose health risks to the public and themselves are deterred from accessing Criminology Schools and subsequently the profession. Additionally, the policy adopts a position of warning through an enabling environment by warning prospective trainees on the repercussions of their health status.

The imposition of the mandatory medical examination policy for potential Philippine National Police in the Criminology Schools in the Province of Albay is a good measure to ensure the fitness and well-being of police officers while also ensuring their effectiveness. Its requirement for thorough after an inquiry into body, mind, and spirit is a double win in that it protects individual recruits while also building strong police as an institution. Moreover, with the provision for help and assistance to applicants during the entry procedures, including providing a platform to disagree with the findings of the medical report denying entry, the policy is fair and just. This initiative to develop healthy and fit, strong police, is capable of working under changing circumstances and is focused on the rule of law.

Major Output:

Admission Policy on Mandatory Medical Examination for Prospective Philippine National Police (PNP) Entrants in Criminology Schools in the Province of Albay

Policy Statement

1. Mandatory Medical Examination Requirement

All individuals applying for admission to Criminology Schools in the Province of Albay, with the intention of joining the Philippine National Police, must undergo a mandatory medical examination as part of the admission process.

2. Scope of Examination

The medical examination shall cover various aspects of the applicant's health, including but not limited to:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that prospective Philippine National Police (PNP) entrants are medically fit to undertake the rigorous demands of a career in law enforcement. The mandatory medical examination aims to identify any health conditions that could impede their ability to perform their duties effectively and to promote the overall well-being of the candidates.

1. Physical Examination

Description: A comprehensive assessment of the candidate's overall physical health. This includes evaluating the musculoskeletal system, cardiovascular system, respiratory system, and general physical condition.

Conducted by: Licensed physician or medical practitioner specializing in physical exams.

Purpose: To assess general health status and detect any physical conditions that might affect the candidate's ability to perform PNP duties.

2. Body Mass Index (BMI)

Description: Measurement of height and weight to calculate the BMI, which helps assess if the candidate is underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese.

Conducted by: Medical staff or trained personnel using standardized equipment (scale and stadiometer).



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Purpose: To ensure that candidates have a healthy body weight relative to their height, which is crucial for physical fitness in law enforcement roles.

3. Laboratory Exams

- Complete Blood Count (CBC). Measures various components of blood, including red and white blood cells and platelets.
- Blood Chemistry. Includes tests such as cholesterol levels, kidney function, liver enzymes, and electrolytes.
- Urinalysis. Analyzes urine for signs of kidney disease, diabetes, and urinary tract infections.
- Screening for Infectious Diseases. Tests for common infectious diseases such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, and HIV.
- Drug Screening. Detects the presence of illegal substances or abuse of prescription drugs.
- Fasting Blood Sugar. Measures blood glucose levels after fasting to screen for diabetes or prediabetes.

Conducted by: Certified medical laboratory technicians or clinical pathologists.

Purpose: To identify any underlying health issues or substance abuse problems that could impact job performance or health.

4. X-Ray

Description: Imaging technique to view the internal structures of the body, focusing on the chest area.

Conducted by: Radiologic technologist or medical imaging specialist.

Purpose: To detect any abnormalities in the chest that could indicate respiratory or other systemic issues affecting overall health.

5. Vision Test

- Ishihara Test. Assesses color vision using a series of color plates with numbers or patterns that can be seen depending on the candidate's color vision.

Conducted by: Optometrist or trained medical personnel.

Purpose: To ensure candidates have adequate color vision necessary for performing duties that require distinguishing between colors.

6. Hearing Test

- Based on RA 8551. The Republic Act No. 8551 requires that all PNP applicants undergo a hearing examination to ensure they have the hearing ability required for effective communication in the field.

Conducted by: Audiologist or trained medical personnel using audiometric equipment.

Purpose: To assess the candidate's hearing capability and ensure it meets the standards necessary for effective communication and safety.

7. Psychological Test

Description: A series of assessments designed to evaluate mental health, cognitive function, and personality traits.

Conducted by: Licensed psychologist or psychiatrist specializing in forensic or occupational psychology.



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Purpose: To determine if candidates possess the psychological stability and mental fitness required for the demanding nature of law enforcement duties.

8. Dental Screening

Description: Examination of the teeth, gums, and oral cavity to assess overall dental health.

Conducted by: Licensed dentist or dental hygienist.

Purpose: To identify any oral health issues that might affect the candidate's overall health and well-being, ensuring they do not have conditions that could lead to significant dental problems in the future.

Implementation

All criminology students must complete the mandatory medical examination before admission into criminology programs. The examinations will be conducted annually to monitor and ensure ongoing health and fitness.

1. Initial Examination
 - Prospective entrants must complete the initial medical examination during the admission process.
2. Annual Monitoring
 - After admission, candidates will undergo an annual medical examination to track their health status and address any emerging health concerns.
3. Designated Facilities
 - Medical examinations will be conducted at approved medical centers or clinics within the Province of Albay.
4. Submission of Results
 - Candidates must submit their medical examination results to the school clinic for review and approval. The results will be kept confidential and used solely for determining eligibility for the criminology program.
5. Follow-Up
 - Candidates who are found to have significant health issues will be required to address those issues and provide documentation of treatment or improvement.

Compliance

This policy is in accordance with national standards and regulations for PNP recruitment and is intended to ensure that all candidates meet the physical and mental health requirements necessary for a successful career in law enforcement. Regular monitoring through annual examinations aims to support the ongoing health and fitness of students throughout their academic journey.

Conclusion

The admission policies of criminology schools in the Province of Albay reveal a significant gap in addressing the holistic readiness of prospective students, as some institutions lack essential medical evaluations. This raises concerns about the preparedness and health of future criminology professionals. Incorporating mandatory medical examinations can enhance student well-being and academic performance by detecting health issues early and allowing for timely support. Such evaluations also provide valuable health information for informed career decisions and promote long-term wellness. However, implementing this policy requires careful consideration of legal and ethical aspects, including privacy, informed consent, and non-discrimination. Students should be well-informed about the process, and



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an effective appeals process must be in place to ensure fairness and transparency. The proposed Admission Policy, aligning with RA 8551, integrates comprehensive physical, mental, and sensory evaluations to uphold high standards in criminology education and law enforcement, ensuring that future recruits are well-prepared and supported while maintaining public safety.

Recommendations

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) plays a critical role in guiding and monitoring the implementation of standard medical evaluation protocols in educational institutions, particularly for Criminology programs. CHED can integrate mandatory medical examinations into admission policies, ensuring that both the mental and physical readiness of students are assessed before they embark on their studies. This proactive measure addresses student welfare and helps prepare them for the demands of the criminology profession. Such protocols would not only benefit individual students by promoting their well-being but would also enhance their preparedness for future challenges, including careers in law enforcement, such as the Philippine National Police (PNP).

To ensure the effectiveness of these measures, CHED may collaborate with criminology schools and coordinate with agencies like the Department of Health (DOH) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). These partnerships would help develop standardized medical assessment procedures for criminology students, ensuring that they are physically and mentally fit for the profession. The policy guidelines would prioritize health awareness, legal standards, and privacy concerns, while fostering trust in the recruitment process. Periodic review and updates of these policies will help maintain alignment with current laws and ensure that students' health and privacy are protected throughout their academic journey.

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