

**Observatory on Academic Criminology Programs  
Memorandum of Understanding  
September 2009**

**I. NAME**

The name is hereby formally established as 'the Observatory on Academic Criminology Programs' (hereinafter 'the Observatory').

**II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The general purpose of the Observatory shall be to promote the exchange of information on academic criminology programs, in particular by setting up an interactive platform where all the information on criminology programs will be collected and made available for consultation. The Observatory offers these services in English, French and Spanish, addressed to entities, professionals and individuals from all over the world involved and interested in the subject. The Observatory seeks to be rigorous and independent in its work.

**III. STRUCTURE**

The Observatory on Academic Criminology Programs will

- be hosted by the Leuven Institute of Criminology, K.U. Leuven (hereinafter LINC), which will function as the Observatory secretariat
  
- be coordinated by an expert group
  
- operate under the auspices of the International Society for Criminology (hereinafter ISC)
  
- receive advice by supporting institutions (such as the European Society of Criminology (hereinafter ESC), the Fondation Internationale Pénale et Pénitentiaire (hereinafter FIPP) and other umbrella criminological associations that will be invited to join, representatives of which will compose the Observatory advisory committee and
  
- involve a number of participating institutions (that is, universities and other institutions that have an academic criminology program listed on the website of the Observatory).

#### **IV. HOSTING INSTITUTION AND SECRETARIAT**

LINC will be the hosting institution of the Observatory and will serve as the Observatory secretariat.

In such a capacity, it will set up, maintain and regularly update the Observatory website as well as a database on academic criminology programs, which it will make available via the website for consultation. The database will be arranged in two categories:

- Information on academic criminology programs on the bases of the information provided by the participating institutions

- Contact points of the participating institutions and mailing lists.

The secretariat will receive information on the academic criminology programs to be listed from the contact points of the participating institutions. It will also send reminders to these contact points in order to give them a chance to update the information on their programs publicized by the Observatory. The secretariat will put these information updates on the Observatory website.

While the expert group and advisory committee have their own responsibilities as outlined below, the secretariat will be in charge of the Observatory daily management.

## **V. EXPERT GROUP**

The expert group—consisting of individual members—will set out the overall policy of the Observatory.

The expert group will have the responsibility to take substantive decisions for the Observatory. The primary task of the expert group will be to ensure the quality of the information, by deciding what type of information should be published in the grids on the Observatory website. This implies that the expert group will develop quality control criteria in interaction with the participating institutions and advisory committee, according to which it will select the academic criminology programs to be accepted in the database.

In order to make a selection of relevant programs for the Observatory, the expert group will also be instrumental in finding the first contacts within many institutions currently offering an academic criminology program.

## **VI. ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The advisory committee will be composed of representatives of the ISC, ESC, FIPP and other supporting criminological associations that will be invited to join. The committee is chaired by a representative of the ISC.

The advisory committee will support and publicize the Observatory and it will give advice on the quality control criteria and procedures developed by the expert group. More generally, the advisory committee will provide general guidance and have advisory power.

## **VII. PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS**

Universities and other institutions that offer an academic criminology program can become a participating institution, if their academic criminology program is accepted for publication on the website of the Observatory.

The participating institutions—and specifically the departments offering academic criminology programs—will make a commitment to provide accurate and updated information to the Observatory secretariat. If different departments within one participating institution offer academic criminology programs, all these departments will have to make the commitment for their own programs vis-à-vis the Observatory.

All participating institutions should appoint per academic program:

- a representative of the academic staff (e.g., professor or lecturer)

- a representative of the administrative staff.

They shall also commit themselves to inform the Observatory secretariat promptly of any change affecting their academic criminology programs or their contact points so that the secretariat can keep the Observatory database updated.

Universities and other institutions that offer an academic criminology program can become a participating university if their academic criminology program is accepted for publication on the website of the Observatory.

## **VIII. CRITERIA**

The expert group will develop and use—in consultation with the participating institutions and the advisory committee—quality criteria. On the basis of these criteria the expert group will select the academic criminology programs to be accepted in the database of the Observatory

According to the core criteria, the program should

- focus on issues related to criminology and criminal justice
- be academic
- last at least one full year
- be interdisciplinary

## **IX. FINANCING**

Within LINC financing is made available to sponsor the set-up of the Observatory for the next two academic years (from September 2009 until September 2011). The participating institutions and supporting institutions are not expected to contribute to the financing of the Observatory.

## **X. STRATEGY**

The expert group will develop a working plan for the first two years of the Observatory.

With the consultation of the advisory committee the expert group will set up a long-term strategy for the continuation of the Observatory after the two years of the currently set funding within LINC.

This long term strategy determines the future structure and financing of the Observatory.

## **XI. DURATION**

This memorandum of understanding for the Observatory shall remain in force for a period of two academic years valid from September 2009 until September 2011. This memorandum and his annexes may only be amended by the hosting institution upon instructions of the expert group.