

TO PROFESSIONALISE OR NOT?¹Christiaan Bezuidenhout² & Anthony Minnaar³**ABSTRACT**

The focus of this article is on the professionalisation process of Criminology in South Africa. Background to the start of this initiative by the Criminological and Victimological Society of Southern Africa (CRIMSA) is given to provide the context and the slow progress and obstacles encountered. The article then moves on to outline the possible benefits and limitations of the professionalisation process. Furthermore, the professional four-year degree initiative is examined against the backdrop of the existing three-year BA Criminology programmes at institutions. A further issue raised, is the decreasing numbers of Masters and Doctoral Criminology students. Overall, the need for the establishment of a Professional Board for Criminology is postulated to push forward the growth of the broad discipline and the further professionalisation of this discipline as a profession via a process of registration and a Code of Ethics/Conduct.

INTRODUCTION¹

Since the mid-1990s one of the key objectives of the Criminological and Victimological Society of Southern Africa (CRIMSA) has been to obtain registration for criminologists with one of the existing regulatory professional councils.

This matter was pursued particularly on the request, at the time, of the judiciary and the Department of Justice. A survey undertaken by CRIMSA in the mid-90s – the results of which were published in the CRIMSA Newsletter – indicated that a total of 247 criminologists, postgraduate and final year students in criminology supported the idea of an ethical code for criminologists with mandatory registration based on a minimum qualification requirement (CRIMSA, 1995: 2).

A workshop, also held at that time, reported that criminology qualifications were not practical enough with overspecialisation and fragmentation. It was resolved that too much emphasis had in the past been placed on American and European theories in the teaching of criminology at South African universities, without more relevant African theories being developed, based on South Africa's and Africa's social and cultural conditions. It was evident that a need for the 'Africanisation' of criminology was an urgent requirement. In other words to customise criminological offerings to fit and take into account local conditions and needs.

Various attempts were made to pursue the objective of establishing or affiliating to a regulatory professional board. But some of the councils that were approached merely retorted that criminology degrees lacked a specific 'career focus' or 'clear career path'. The question continually being raised was: 'Other than studying the dynamics and impact/effects of crime, what do criminologists do in practice (practical sense)?'

¹ This article is an amalgamation of two presentations to the CRIMSA 2009 Conference titled: *Background to CRIMSA application for a professional board* (A. Minnaar) and *To Professionalise or not to Professionalise – That is the question?* (C. Bezuidenhout).

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Eventually in 2004 the CRIMSA EXCO mandated a task team made up of Proff. Linda Davis, Anna van der Hoven and Beaty Naudé to explore the viability of pursuing further the challenge of establishing a professional board for Criminologists. This Task Team inter alia obtained literally hundreds of letters of support from various individuals and other organisations/agencies operating in the criminal justice system.

Furthermore, the changes made by the Criminology and Criminal Justice SGB (Standards Generating Body) when developing the new Bachelor of Arts Criminology qualification, making it a four-year career focussed Bachelor of Criminology, set the stage for exploring this matter further.

Subsequent to the finalisation and registration of this degree, the CRIMSA task Team of Proffs. Naudé, Van der Hoven and Davis made an appointment with Berto Lombaard, Registrar of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to discuss the possibility of registering a professional board for criminologists. During these discussions it became clear that there certainly existed the possibility for Criminologists as a body to affiliate with the new proposed Professional Board for Probation Officers.

Although it was indicated in this meeting, that the process of establishing a professional board for criminologists (or affiliating with another professional board such as the Board for Probation Officers) can take up to two years, CRIMSA continued to be in consultation with various experts working in the field of Criminology. These include post graduate students, other professional boards and councils as well as institutions such as the Restorative Justice Centre. This was done in order to prepare their own application to SACSSP. In addition, to obtain the written support from various organisations and individuals to submit with the final application (in pursuit of the establishment of a professional board for criminologists).

This represented a significant move forward towards the establishment of such a professional board. However, this process proved to be painstakingly time-consuming (ongoing since 2004 when the CRIMSA Council decision to formally enter the process of applying to the SACSSP) and the motivations accompanying the application to the SACSSP added up to several reams of paper.

APPLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL BODY STATUS

The application for the establishment of a regulatory/professional board for criminologists (based on the four-year Bachelor of Criminology which was registered by SAQA as a professional (i.e. career-focused) qualification (see Annexure B for some detail of exit outcomes and required skills for this degree) was eventually submitted to the SACSSP on 14 March 2006 (Pillay, 2005; Minnaar, 2006; CRIMSA, 2004).

However, the March 2006 application for the establishment of a regulatory board for criminologists to the SACSSP became 'indefinitely delayed' due to some objections from certain quarters being made. CRIMSA was advised that they might have to reconsider the applicability of professional status to the broad discipline of criminology and rather review the possibilities of putting criminologists forward more as supporting professional specialists to other practitioners throughout the criminal justice system or tag on to other professional councils such as the one envisioned for probationers (Minnaar, 2007).

Further discussions were held with Mr Coenie du Toit, then representing the Profession: Probation Officers. However, he indicated that since the Probation Officers Board had not as yet been constituted, no decisions could at that stage be made regarding criminologists affiliating ('piggybacking on') until this council had been formally established. But the possibility of a joint board was not excluded. An agreement was reached, that as soon as the Professional Board for Probation Officers was established, further consultation with CRIMSA members would follow.

But what emerged from these discussions raised a number of 'red lights'. A copy of the application to the SACSSP for the establishment of the Professional Board for Probation Officers was provided to the representatives from CRIMSA and it was interesting to note that their proposed career-focused qualification on which the application was based included various aspects that were directly related to the field of Criminology and the BA Criminology Qualification (almost 80% of the curriculum content was criminology/penology related). It was then resolved by the CRIMSA EXCO to push forward with the application for a separate Professional Board for Criminologists.

At a SACSSP Council meeting on 31 July 2007 a resolution was taken by the Council that, firstly: CRIMSA were requested to make a presentation to the SACSSP Council at their next meeting (scheduled for 6 November 2007). At this meeting there was a CRIMSA presentation to "focus on the application submitted, in order for the Council to have a better understanding of the occupational group: Criminologists". Secondly, it was decided that since the activities of Criminologists "are allegedly closely linked to that of probation services and forensic social work" that a workshop would be arranged by the SACSSP, to which CRIMSA would be "invited to participate with other role-players" (e.g. probation officers and forensic social workers) (Smith, 2007).

In the meantime the SACSSP had set up a Task Team to undertake research to look at the demarcations between various occupations and professionals. At the 6 November 2007 Council meeting the SACSSP Council had approved the 'Research on Demarcation Report' wherein Probation Services were regarded as a speciality/specialisation with Social Work. This recommendation had been endorsed by the National Department of Social Development. This decision was taken on the view of the SACSSP of the "fine line between the works of probation services, forensic work and the work of the criminologist". Accordingly, these groups were regarded by the SACSSP Council as 'related occupations' and the SACSSP then further resolved that these groups would "therefore be consulted together in one forum" (Smith, 2008a)

Subsequent to this decision CRIMSA were informed that the SACSSP were busy with a process whereby they were trying to delimit for a number of different disciplines/professions (that had indicated an intention or applied for the establishment of a separate professional board, e.g. probation officers, social workers, penologists etc.) in their operational area of activities. SACSSP had commissioned a researcher to investigate this matter further and to come up with a report on the results of the findings. This research report was tabled to the SACSSP in October 2007 and it was then decided to hold a SACSSP organised workshop for each of the relevant disciplines in order to discuss the matter. However, the SACSSP indicated that such discussions to take place only after 28 March 2008 when the SACSSP's new financial year would start (i.e. they indicated that they would invite CRIMSA to such workshop as soon as the 2008 funding became available.) At the time the only decision the SACSSP made was that probation services would remain a speciality for social workers (and

not as a separate professional body) and therefore no professional council would be established for them (Naudé, 2008).

In April 2008 the SACSSP informed CRIMSA that they required additional information regarding their application, specifically relating to the FET qualification: Certificate in Criminology (NQF Level 4) and clarity of the role and difference between the fields of practice of a 'criminologist' and the person practising with the lower qualification, i.e. the relationship between the 'professional criminologists' and the 'assistant' (person with lower qualification) (Pruis, 2008). Prof. Naudé (as chair of the CRIMSA sub-committee for the Professional Board) prepared an addendum to the application and submitted it to the SACSSP. This addendum (see Annexure A) dealt inter alia with the following: scope and practice of a criminologist; scope and practice of a victimologist; and in particular the 'scope and practice' of a new category termed 'an auxiliary criminologist'.

This additional information, together with the full application, served before the SACSSP Council on 31 July 2008 for consideration. However, the SACSSP Council did not make a decision on the matter but merely referred it to a SACSSP Task Team for further investigation and a recommendation (the Task Team would submit their findings in October 2008 to the Council). This decision was based on the SACSSP view that there was only a small number of practitioners on the membership database of CRIMSA. The SACSSP was at the time moving towards opening registers for some of the other social science occupations under its auspices as proposed in the new Social Service Professions Bill² that was then currently under review. In addition, the SACSSP requested the opinion of CRIMSA with regard to the opening of a register for criminologists first as apposed to a professional board for criminologists, i.e. no decision had therefore been made regarding the establishment of a Professional Board for Criminologists (Smith, 2008b).

In response to these decisions the CRIMSA EXCO, at a meeting held on 10 October 2008, discussed the issue of the application for a Professional Board for Criminologists, in particular the SACSSP request for an 'Emerging Professions' Register (within the context of SACSSP opening registers for occupations under its auspices). A number of other allied issues were also discussed inter alia: the small pool of 'professional' working criminologists other than academics; exclusivity of the criteria for registering on the proposed professional board; the need to train future criminologists to be able to apply criminological and allied skills in the workplace; the lack of job opportunities; for criminology to be more inclusive and look at sub-disciplines and allied vocational skills qualifications; the costs of running a Criminology Professional Board outside of CRIMSA; the problem of sanctions to be applied to transgressions by any registered criminology professional; and the allied problem of non-registered transgressors; finally what benefits/value would a SACSSP register/professional board bring to CRIMSA.

In order to address these above listed issues the CRIMSA EXCO resolved:

- [t]hat CRIMSA should be more hands on in promoting and developing a better public profile for the whole profession and allied sub-disciplines;
- [i]n line with this it was further decided that CRIMSA would make a start on opening their own Register (to be administered, managed and organized under the auspices of CRIMSA and not SACSSP);

- [a]nd that this register would be more inclusive than the proposed Professional Board for Criminologists.
- [f]or this purpose a start would also be made on defining register criteria for criminology and allied disciplines (victimology; policing; correctional services/penology; restorative justice; probation services; crime prevention & private security services etc.); as well as recognition of the vocational qualifications relevant to these allied disciplines (via a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.
- [a] start also to be made in expanding CRIMSA's own Code of Ethics.
- [i]t was further resolved that a request be made to the SACSSP to obtain the Task Team Report of the investigation done by SACSSP on the profession (occupation) of criminology so that CRIMSA could better formulate the criteria needed for the register.
- [a] final resolution of the CRIMSA EXCO being that an enquiry be made about what happened to the proposed SACSSP consultative workshop/forum (Minnaar, 2008).

Eventually, at the SACSSP Council meeting held on 30 October 2008 (where the researcher's report investigating various occupations was tabled and the CRIMSA application for establishment of a professional board was considered) a decision was taken to "register criminologists with the [SACSSP] Council" but in a so-called "emerging professions register". However, the implications of this decision being that the SACSSP had in fact decided that criminologists "would not have a separate Board, but be accommodated within the professional board for emerging occupations". The SACSSP rationale for this decision being that "Criminology is registered with Department of Education and SAQA but not as a professional degree." (Smith 2008c). (This was an incorrect assumption since the new four-year BA in Criminology registered with SAQA in 2006 was in fact just that – a professional degree. CRIMSA immediately informed SACSSP of this fact on receipt of the SACSSP letter of 4 November 2008) (Naudé, 2008b).³ The second point put forward in support of the above decision being that the "number of criminologists is small and would not be able to sustain an independent Board financially as is a condition for each Board" (Smith, 2008b). This was a valid point since CRIMSA and/or any other supporting sponsoring agency would be immediately liable for the deposit of operational funds for the first year of operations of a Professional Board for Criminologists to the tune of a sum in excess of R300 000 – which sum represented start up and operational costs.

In line with this decision the CRIMSA application would only become operational once the new Social Service Professions Bill was enacted in 2010. However, the SACSSP office undertook to start working with CRIMSA to set up a board, inter alia by "opening a register for criminologists". However, the formation of a separate board to be dependent on the number of criminologists registering with the Council and with the requisite funding being forthcoming – such funds to be deposited into the SACSSP' bank account "before the actual establishment of the board" (Smith, 2008b), which again would be dependent upon, firstly: the demonstration that there existed an up-to-date register of all persons active in the specific occupation; and secondly: the ability to fulfil the regulatory process (i.e. sufficient funding to maintain a professional board, etc.).

On receipt of this letter and after discussions it was decided to have a meeting with the Registrar of the SACSSP, Mrs Iveda Smith. However, due to work commitments and the

CRIMSA President being out of the country, such meeting was rescheduled for early in 2009. At the first CRIMSA EXCO meeting in 2009, the task of continuing the negotiations with the SACSSP, particularly in terms of the opening of a register was delegated to the CRIMSA vice-president, Prof. Christiaan Bezuidenhout and Prof. Beaty Naudé.

The process of further negotiations included a workshop style meeting with the Registrar of the SACSSP, Mrs Iveda Smith and her team on 14 April 2009. After this date further negotiations and discussions with relevant role-players, correspondence and fact-finding talks with interested parties also took place. In the mean time Prof. Naudé resigned from the professionalisation steering committee because of personal reasons.

CURRENT OUTLOOK WITH REGARD TO THE PROFESSIONALISATION PROCESS OF CRIMINOLOGY

As a result of the further discussions and negotiations with the SACSSP 'Criminology/Criminologists' were formally accepted onto the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in order for the process of the registration of an independent Professional Criminology Board (PCB) to be implemented. However, SACSSP indicated that CRIMSA had to deal with the following before 'Criminology' could be registered as a professional discipline on this envisaged PCB:

1. A professional 4-year degree must be re-registered with The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to ensure an acceptable formal qualification and to set a national standard for qualification.
2. Current academics, researchers, alumni and old pupils must in some way be considered for registration as members of the PCB based on the recognition of prior learning and/or their practical experience in a working environment. Furthermore, that the criteria for consideration of post-graduate alumni who have not completed the "new" professional degree should be stipulated by CRIMSA and the relevant role-players.
3. Thus an updated register (list) of all the "practitioners" of Criminology should be compiled.
4. CRIMSA or any other interested role-player (e.g. Department of Safety and Security; Business Against Crime; private sponsor etc.) that wish to fund the eventual launching of the PCB will need in the region of R350 000 to R400 000 as start up capital for a specific PCB to be established within SACSSP. These funds are therefore needed to establish an office for the Professional Criminology Board in the SACSSP offices.
5. Regulations, a code of conduct and guidelines stipulating disciplinary measures for unethical behaviour should be formulated.
6. An initial annual fee should be determined in order to enable a person that meets the criteria to register as a member of the Criminology Board and to ensure the sustainability of the Criminology Board.

The current Registrar of the SACSSP, Mrs Iveda Smith also indicated that they would assist CRIMSA throughout the development stages, the initiation of an office and any other related matters. One of the new challenges for the professionalisation process is the envisaged

changes in policy governing the recognition of a Professional Board (SACSSP) and its registered disciplines (e.g. Social Work). Currently the *status quo* is still relevant, in other words, Criminology is still seen as a new potential science that is accommodated by the existing policy to register with SACSSP. However, if the new policy is promulgated this position can change and halt the progress achieved thus far. (Other factors that are also hampering the professionalisation process will be highlighted in the next section.)

CONTEXTUALISING THE OBSTACLES IN THE PROFESSIONALISING PROCESS

The professionalisation process is currently being hampered by several factors such as uninformed perceptions/opinions, academic exclusivity, the standing of CRIMSA and waning CRIMSA membership numbers.

CRIMSA

It might well serve the purpose of this article to reflect on the aims and objectives of this society. In brief the Criminological & Victimological Society of Southern Africa (CRIMSA) was established in 1987⁴ to serve the professional and academic interests of academics and practitioners in the broad criminological sciences (criminology, penology, police practice, criminal justice, restorative justice and crime prevention). Its establishment is based on a Constitution. The legal status of the Society being that it was set up as a non-profit corporate body which may perform any legal act unassisted and which has the power to institute and defend law-suits, while the liability of a member for the debts of or claims against the Society is restricted to his/her membership fee for the current year.

The aims of the Society being:

1. to promote, coordinate and apply the criminological sciences (Criminology, Victimology and criminal justice in particular, but also any academic discipline focusing on phenomena related to crime and victimisation) through study and academic interaction, research and community service;
2. to co-operate with interested local, regional and international institutions;
3. to create mediums for the publishing of, among other things, research results;
4. to promote and stimulate the academic interests of its members;
5. to inform the community about crime-related phenomena, criminal victimisation and reaction to crime;
6. to contribute to the broader transformation of society through equity and to endorse those values enshrined in the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights (CRIMSA Constitution as amended in 2007).

The current membership to CRIMSA⁵ is voluntary and CRIMSA is a society with no legal mandate to regulate members who are guilty of unethical behaviour. As a society CRIMSA does not monitor the curricula of the different institutions nor does it have a monitoring mechanism/hub in place to compare the content of readers, study guides/teaching modules and the skills of graduated learners. Moreover, the different South African universities do not

recognise (e.g. for credit exemption if a student transfers from one institution to another) all (or only some) of the modules presented at the different institutions. This makes it very difficult for some students to get recognition at certain universities. The wide differences in curricula can be blamed for this.

In addition, CRIMSA rely on the workings of SAQA and accept that every institution has the same aims and level of training of existing Criminology learners. In other words it is hoped that every department that presents criminology will do so in accordance with the registered SAQA standards (for criminology/victimology). In reality this is not happening. This problem can to a certain extent be solved with the institution of professionalisation.

The harshest disciplinary measure/sanction that CRIMSA (as a society) can mete out for unethical behaviour or unethical research by a member, is the cancellation of voluntary membership. However, if Criminology is professionalised with a register and PCB the latter will be able to exercise a statutory regulatory function over academics, researchers, practitioners and learners within the broad scope of the Criminology domain and its ancillary sub-disciplines of specialization. Registration of members to practice as Criminologists or Practitioners (e.g. consultation, forensic court work) would become compulsory once a professional board is established and the regulations, as well as the Code of Conduct, are in place. The PCB can also ensure that the same academic standards (as registered with SAQA) are achieved in all the institutions teaching criminology (and its allied disciplines).

However, it should be noted here that a professional board does not take over the role or function of a society (CRIMSA) but provides the opportunity for a discipline (like Criminology) to gain a substantial level of professional quality. This in itself will open many doors for the science (of Criminology) and the scholars operating within this knowledge field. CRIMSA would therefore still have its important function to host conferences, colloquiums and to ensure that the only recognised scientific criminology accredited journal in South Africa continues to be published regularly.

Approval of the professionalisation route by all relevant universities and universities of technology (former Technikons)

The professionalisation process is not going to be successful if all the role-players do not accept and align their planning in the context of the professional four-year degree (already registered with SAQA). CRIMSA can therefore only request buy-in from all the departments at the universities/universities of technology (technikons) but certainly cannot prescribe or force them to join in the professionalisation process. As was indicated at the 2nd CRIMSA Bi-annual Conference (held at UNISA from 28-30 September 2009) currently there are a few institutions that are sceptical about proceeding with the professionalisation process. It is imperative that full acceptance (buy-in) and co-operation is obtained from every role-player.

In addition, at this CRIMSA conference representatives from different institutions raised certain questions about the government subsidy that a department might lose if they only offer the professional degree and desist from presenting the existing three-year BA qualification and the Honours degree that follows. To contextualise the subsidies with regard to the different options the following:

TABLE 1: Government subsidy for a criminology student that completes a degree in 2009

DEGREE	SUBSIDY
Three-year BA	R55 630,00
Honours	R34 456,00
MA (research dissertation) ⁶	R142 000,00
DLitt et Phil/Phd (research thesis)	R414 000,00

It is clear from the above table that the highest subsidies from government are generated by MA and DPhil graduates. These subsidy figures are based on the 2009 figures from the Department of Education. The subsidy amounts are recalculated on an annual basis. It is envisaged that the throughput of post graduate students in criminology would increase with the professionalisation of Criminology. This implies that department's will receive substantially increased subsidy amounts for their post graduate students who complete dissertations/theses successfully.

The four-year professional degree

The idea of a new curricula and the development of a new degree are probably some of the biggest fears (and objections to professionalisation) that many academics have when they think about the "four-year professional degree". However, the "new" degree can either be implemented as an add-on/extra degree to current existing degree programmes. This implies that student numbers will remain high (or even increase) in the existing degree programs. Once the four-year degree is implemented as an extra degree path it is postulated that only a few (i.e. limited number choosing to make criminology their chosen profession or career path). Students will in fact be selected from the existing BA programs available at the relevant institution to enrol for the "professional" career path. It will, however, largely be these graduates who will be able to register at the PCB and become "professional criminologists".

The current programs will therefore still be offered as is and the new "four-year degree" that was re-registered with SAQA should be added to the available programmes at the relevant tertiary institutions. The four-year degree should also be contextualised as a broad outline of what is expected, once a learner has finished the four-year professional degree. The professional degree does not prescribe specific instructions on what is expected on each year level. However, the research component in the standards guideline should only be considered on a 4th-year level after sufficient theoretical knowledge has been gained. Furthermore, the existing qualification contains certain benchmarks that should be used to gauge the standards in the development of a professional program. The proposed unit standards in the four-year degree are merely the minimum standards that are expected from institutions. If different institutions and departments believe they want to add some aspects to certain areas of the minimum standards they may do so. The four-year professional degree can, but does not have to, eventually replace the current three-year BA and Honours (4th year of study) degrees. However, this is not a prerequisite. An institution can therefore run their existing programmes and can add the four-year professional degree as an additional option to learners. The relevant department can decide on the number of students that they will select (e.g. on the 2nd year) that will continue with the professional degree path. An individual department's capacity will probably guide this selection process and the number of candidates selected. It should also be noted that SAQA can eventually force institutions to only present registered programmes (this debate in itself can be put on ice until the professionalisation dilemma has been cleared up).

In view of the 2009 government subsidies that were highlighted in Table 1 the question might arise on the subsidy amount a four-year degree generates. Currently the same subsidy amount is paid for a four-year degree as for the three-year BA and Honours degrees combined (R55 630,00 + R34 456,00). In other words a four-year degree graduate would generate R90 086,00 in subsidy as soon as they complete their degree. Because a “professional” four-year degree is registered with SAQA the PCB will be able to negotiate for higher subsidy amounts from government for a professional four-year degree compared to a ordinary four-year degree. (The Department of Education annually determines the subsidy amounts payable to universities). In other words a “professional” four-year degree carries more weight compared to a standard four-year degree. The technicalities of this process are not important to the discussion in this article.)

In addition, the benchmarks in the four-year degree take into consideration the four mainstream sub-disciplines of Criminology, namely Criminology, Policing, Penology and Victimology. In line with this, the Society’s name was changed to incorporate the term ‘Victimology’ (see changes in Constitution - 2004). In addition, with the Constitutional amendments of 2007 CRIMSA established specific separate portfolios, namely: Criminology; Victimology; Penology; Police Studies and Criminal Justice, in order to cater for discipline specific interests. Thus Criminology is the overarching umbrella concept to include many sub-disciplines and fields of interest.

Many individuals are not familiar with the proposed benchmarks in the SAQA approved and registered “four-year professional degree”. The benchmarks have been formulated in such a way so as to address all these discipline specific interests and to ensure specific exit level outcomes. Additional curricula can be added by a department if such a need arises.

The inclusive nature of the process

If the professionalisation route is sought it is envisioned as an inclusive process. CRIMSA has already showed its inclusiveness and flexibility – the broadening of the CRIMSA portfolios as well as the “four-year professional degree benchmark criteria” – but many contemporaries have shown apprehension and feel that the professionalisation endeavour will exclude them from the process. The opposite is true. This process is very inclusive. The fact that prior learning and practical experience of current colleagues and alumni will be taken into consideration when the criteria for the criminology register are determined is confirmation of this. In addition, as soon as all the institutions accept (and offer as an additional study programme) the four-year professional degree, students that enrol or who are selected for the new four-year degree will also be able to register at the envisaged Professional Criminology Board (e.g. from their 2nd year) as student members. Obviously different criteria and registration fees will apply to them. The reason for this is to regulate students who are involved in community engagement and research projects during the four-year time span of the degree. The student specific criteria for registration should also be developed by the CRIMSA steering committee in consultation with ALL the role-players and with the guidance of SACSSP.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The way forward

Only nine university-linked departments of criminology are currently offering undergraduate qualifications in criminology. The “buy-in” process of the four-year qualification should therefore not be seen as a challenge and an obstacle but as an opportunity to professionalise the discipline in South Africa – a feat which has not really been achieved elsewhere in the world. However, different countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom are investigating the professionalisation option of the science of criminology. The CRIMSA Professionalisation initiative also offers a great opportunity for institutions to take hands and to bury current and historical differences and conflicts.

Criminology in South Africa has been through troubled waters before because of regionalism, academic exclusivity and lack of knowledge (of the activities and teachings of others). The criminology discipline in South Africa is at a crossroad. Particular institutions do not appear to be interested in the development or existence of Criminology on an undergraduate level. Others insist that Criminology is not worthy to be deemed an independent science. Some groupings are even contemplating breaking away from the mother discipline “Criminology” in order to focus their efforts on sub-disciplines of the mother discipline and to develop a type of uniqueness, an elitist group if you will. Others are forced by their institutions to amalgamate and to make sure that budgets are decreased and cut. In other instances a “wait-and-see” attitude is evident whilst others maintain a “go-with-the-flow” attitude. In addition, some departments are splintering their current programs into further very distinct sub-disciplines (specialisations) and academic paths. Sadly this will hamper the process of professionalisation and recognition of the science as an authority in the explanation of: crime and criminal behaviour; the functioning of the whole criminal justice cluster; the impact of crime on the victim and society as a whole; policy change; and risk assessment in all spheres of society. Criminology is the only science that focuses on the crime phenomenon in its relativity and this is our only ground to stand on to be recognised as an independent social science. We cannot afford the current fragmentation and academic exclusivity. To make the professionalisation process work and to manage to successfully steer the process enough persons in the criminology broad field/discipline are needed to register at the PCB, create a criminology register, develop a code of conduct and to successfully launch the PCB office with SACSSP. High membership numbers will ensure affordable annual fees and sustainability of the PCB.

The CRIMSA Steering Committee for Professionalisation has become increasingly aware of the fact that many role-players still experience doubt and ambiguity regarding the professionalisation process. It is not clear why there still exists such demonstrated levels of lack of knowledge (uninformed) and clarity and understanding of the four-year professional degree and of the process, since role-players have repeatedly been informed about the four-year degree (via CRIMSA communications and SGB correspondence to all universities) and the professionalisation process. Since 2004 CRIMSA have invited all role-players to take part or to air an opinion about their take on a professional four-year degree and the process via letters, e-mails, meetings and newsletters. In spite of this CRIMSA will still have to ensure current “buy-in” from all the relevant parties who deem the process important for the broader discipline of the criminological sciences.

National consultative workshop

To ensure transparency with regard to the process it is planned for CRIMSA to host a National Workshop in the near future in order to address any matters and concerns still causing uncertainty with regard to:

- the professionalisation process;
- the four-year professional degree;
- the compilation of a criminology register and a list of individuals that could be considered for registration;
- the compilation of a code of conduct and disciplinary measures;
- the initial set-up costs;
- the Board members to serve on the PCB;
- the regulations to guide the PCB; and
- the registration criteria (full members and student members).

It is envisaged that the initial recognition to register should include all lecturers, academics, practitioners, researchers, alumni and post-graduates in the broad field of Criminology (Criminology, Policing, Penology, Victimology and Criminal Justice). From this interim register a proper register could be developed for reference purposes by the Professional Criminology Board.

A clear indication of whether Criminologists in South Africa are ready to enter an era of professionalisation will emanate from the proposed workshop. Currently CRIMSA or no regulatory body can discipline any person who present themselves as a Criminologist, Victimologist, Risk Assessor, Policing Expert, Penologist, Criminal Justice practitioner (e.g. in the realm of Restorative Justice for instance) in any sphere of society who act unethically, who damage (cause harm to the image and reputation) of the broad Criminological Sciences or CRIMSA in any way. It is here put forward that a professional status will therefore go a long way in enhancing the science and its scholars professional reputations and activities immensely.

This article has attempted to provide some background to the professionalisation initiative of CRIMSA, outlined some of the delays that were experienced, provided clarity on the implications of a register and professional board for the discipline, as well as the allied envisaged four-year professional degree. It is also an attempt to inform⁷ all South African criminologists of this process in preparation for the holding of the CRIMSA hosted National Consultative Workshop.

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ANNEXURE A: Addendum - Application for the establishment of a Professional Board for Criminologists in terms of Section 14A of the Social Service Professions Act

CRIMINOLOGY QUALIFICATIONS REGISTERED WITH SAQA

- Further Education and Training Certificate in Criminology (level 4) (ID 61451). Registration period 11-06-2008 till 11-06-2011;
- National Certificate in Criminology (level 5) (ID 49709) registration period 02-10-2005 till 12-10-2008 (reviewed and will be re-registered as is);
- Bachelor of Criminology (level 7) (ID 61449) registration period 11-06-2008 till 11-06-2011;
- Master of Criminology (level 8 and above) (ID 49065) registration period 01-04-2008 till 01-04-2011;
- Master of Victimology (level 8 and above) (ID 49599) registration period 02-10-2005 till 12-10-2008 (reviewed and will be re-registered as is);
- Doctor of Criminology (level 8 and above) (ID 49064) registration period 01-04-2008 till 01-04-2011.

SCOPE AND PRACTICE OF A CRIMINOLOGIST

A criminologist must be in possession of at least a Bachelor of Criminology (level 7).

The following tasks can be performed:

- Assess conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation risk and vulnerability at the individual social, political, economical, physical environment and ecological level;
- Analyse the impact of the risk on the individual and the organisational and social environment;
- Develop strategies/programmes to deal with identified risks and vulnerability;
- Analyse and develop deviance, conflict, crime and victimisation policies;
- Assess the appropriateness/effectiveness of existing crime and victimisation strategies/programmes in terms of an identified problem;
- Develop strategies/programmes to deal with a specific conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation problem;
- Develop evidence-based research criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies/programmes;
- Assess international, national, regional and local crime and victimisation policies and formulate recommendations based on the analysed data;
- Develop crime and victimisation policies in terms of the recommendations;
- Compile victim and offender profiles based on criminological theories/perspectives, approaches and risk factors;
- Construct victim and offender profiles to provide expert opinion in various contexts (police, courts, correctional services and business);
- Provide expert opinion in various contexts (police, courts, correctional services and business);
- Provide expert services to crime victims in terms of their assessed needs and in collaboration with all stakeholders (eg reducing victimisation vulnerability, crime (victim) impact statements, restorative justice processes);

- Identify and assess available resources to assist crime victims in terms of the identified needs;
- Identify role-players and resources to manage strategies/programmes;
- Design programmes to train all role-players as well as a code of conduct to maintain professional and crimino-ethical working relationships with all role-players;
- Assess various justice systems (police, courts, correctional services, informal) and make appropriate recommendations to promote best practice;
- Conduct research dealing with a specific conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation problem and disseminate the research findings and recommendations in an appropriate form to the relevant stakeholders.

SCOPE AND PRACTICE OF A VICTIMOLOGIST

Victimology is a specialised field of criminology and victimologists must be in possession of a Master of Victimology Qualification (level 8 or above).

The following expert tasks can be performed:

- Evaluate international, national, regional and local victimisation trends and patterns;
- Assess the impact of criminal victimisation on individuals, society, the economy, the environment and the ecology;
- Apply appropriate techniques to guide crime victimisation policy;
- Develop and assess specific crime victimisation risk and vulnerability profiles;
- Determine risk factors contributing to criminal victimisation;
- Develop appropriate strategies/programmes to deal with specific crime victimisation risk factors;
- Apply evidence-based research criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of crime victimisation policies, strategies/programmes;
- Implement and assess victim services based on victims' rights and their specific needs;
- Train all role-players to provide services to crime victims, to implement strategies/programmes, to prevent/reduce crime victimisation and to maintain crimino-ethical relationships;
- Develop and present strategies/programmes to prevent/reduce crime victimisation.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF AN AUXILIARY CRIMINOLOGIST

An Auxiliary Criminologist must be in possession of a National Certificate in Criminology (level 5) or a Further Education and Training Certificate in Criminology (level 4) and must work under the guidance of a Criminologist with at least two years' experience at all times.

The following tasks can be performed:

- Assess risk factors at the individual, social and corporate level contributing to conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation;
- Indicate risk factors and vulnerability relating to specific lifestyle patterns and identify appropriate and ethical strategies to change inappropriate lifestyle patterns;

- Assess the impact of conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation at the individual, social and environmental/ecological levels;
- Implement specific strategies/programmes to reduce the impact of conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation at the individual, social and environmental/ecological level.
- Apply appropriate techniques to measure specific types of conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation within a micro environment;
- Select and implement an appropriate strategy/programme to deal with the identified conflict, deviance, crime and victimisation;
- Identify role-players and resources to manage the strategy/programme;
- Design a programme to train all role-players as well as a code of conduct;
- Implement the programme or strategy using appropriate crimino-ethical protocols and guidelines;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategy/programme using evidence-based research techniques.

ANNEXURE B: BA Criminology registered with SAQA

This four-year BA Criminology degree is a specialised (career focused) qualification with a substantial general formative component aimed at enabling qualifying learners the possibility of registration with a Professional Board for Criminology (PBC) affiliated with the SA Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). The motivation for such a degree is based on the increasing demand for criminological input in the criminal justice process. For example: to assist in the identification of criminological profiles for investigating and rehabilitation purposes; to provide expert evidence in court concerning all aspects of the criminal event: to ensure a just and humane sentence; the development of diversion programmes relating to crime and victimisation.

Criminologists are also increasingly involved in the development of programmes/strategies dealing with crime and victimisation in the social and corporate sphere.

Qualifying learners will be able to: conduct research in the field of crime and victimisation; inform crime and victimisation policy; disseminate crime and victimisation information; assess crime and victimisation risk; assess the impact of crime and victimisation; identify victim and offender vulnerability profiles; plan and develop programmes relating to crime and victimisation; evaluate such programmes.

Provide support services to crime victims; implement restorative justice processes with victims, offenders and the community; provide expert evidence in court relating to victims and offenders; identify criminological victim and offender profiles.

Core exit level 1: Demonstrate an ability to assess risk and determine the impact of crime and victimisation.

Associated assessment criteria: Risk factors and the impact of crime and victimisation on individuals, organisations and communities are determined; the risk and impact of crime and victimisation on individuals, organisations and communities are analysed; appropriate strategies are developed.

Core exit level 2: Plan, develop and evaluate programmes relating to crime and victimisation.

Associated assessment criteria: Programme objectives, strategies and techniques to address crime and victimisation are identified; the appropriateness of existing programmes is assessed; programmes to address the identified needs are developed; criteria for the evaluation of the programmes are developed.

Core exit level 3: Demonstrate an ability to compile victim and offender profiles and provide expert evidence in court.

Associated assessment criteria: Knowledge of and a capacity to engage in court procedures, protocol and relevant legislation are demonstrated; relevant victim and offender perspectives/approaches are analysed and applied; victim and offender profiles are constructed; expert evidence in court relating to victims and offenders is prepared.

Fundamental exit level 1: Plan and conduct a research project aimed at a well-defined crime and victimisation problem.

Associated assessment criteria: A comprehensive review of the literature is conducted; a clear understanding of current approaches/perspectives and contentious issues is demonstrated; an ability to synthesise ideas and information in a critical and creative manner is demonstrated; the problem is clearly identified and the research question concisely formulated; an appropriate research method relevant to the problem is applied; sensitivity towards cultural diversity and crimino-ethical standards are adhered to.

Fundamental exit level 2: Demonstrate a capacity to engage with crime and victimisation policy and disseminate information using various communication skills.

Associated assessment criteria: Relevant data is collected, collated and analysed; the analysed data is presented in an appropriate and logical manner; recommendations based on the data analysis are formulated; policies are developed relating to the needs identified; information on crime and victimisation is disseminated effectively (Shortened extract from Naude, 2005).

ENDNOTES

¹ Unless otherwise stated this and the following section are based on discussions, e-mails and correspondence between A. Minnaar with various role players involved over the period 2006-2008.

² At the time (still) only a draft Bill having been gazetted for public comment on 25 January 2008 (see Government Gazette, 25 January 2008)

³ When this qualification served before SAQA for registration it was pointed out to them by the Chair of the Criminology SGB, Prof. Naude, that an application for the registration of a regulatory board with the SACSSP was pending. This was also stated in the process report, which accompanied the qualification. SAQA had then recommended that it be registered as is as a four-year qualification and that the Standards Generating Body should only apply for the qualification to be registered as a professional degree once the application to the SACSSP had been finalised, which certainly made sense. Accordingly, once the regulatory board has been finalised it would therefore merely be a technical procedure to request that the qualification be registered as a professional degree (Naude, 2008b).

⁴ This was the date of the formal founding meeting although planning and discussions were launched among academics at various universities in 1986.

⁵ 2009 individual and student memberships currently stand at 104 with 32 institutional members.

⁶ The subsidy amount is far less for a courseware masters

⁷ One of the requests emanating from the Plenary Session on professionalisation of criminology at the CRIMSA conference (28-30 September 2009).