



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Criminal Justice MS Graduate Program Handbook

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# Criminal Justice MS

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

### Master of Science in Criminal Justice

Master of Science in Criminal Justice requires 36 credit hours, including 21 credit hours of core courses, 6 credit hours of restricted electives, and 9 credit hours of general electives. An exit survey is required of all students completing the Criminal Justice Master's program. The survey requirement will be completed online in students' last semester. Residency requirements stipulate that each student must complete at least 21 credit hours in criminal justice coursework at UCF (limiting the amount of courses that can be transferred from other institutions).

Students must achieve a grade of "B" (3.0) or higher in every course listed under core requirements. Students must also maintain a plan of study and graduate status GPA of 3.0 or higher and can only graduate with a graduate status GPA of 3.0 or higher.

The Master of Science in Criminal Justice program offers students an in-depth exploration of the complex and changing world of criminal justice. The program emphasizes criminal justice research, theory, policy and organizational administration. The historical, political, economic, and philosophical forces shaping crime and punishment in the United States are examined. Students also learn valuable qualitative and quantitative research and computer skills. The program is designed to prepare future criminal justice organizational leaders to be consumers of research and to equip them to summarize and present organizational information.

### Minimum Hours Required for MS —36 Credit Hours

Students must complete 36 hours of course work with at least a 3.0 overall grade point average and in their course work of study. Internal program policies prohibit the substitution of additional course work into the plan of study due to poor academic performance. Further, university guidelines stipulate that 50 percent (or 18 hours) of their 36-hour plan of study must consist of classes taken at the 6000 level or higher. Students are encouraged to meet with a program adviser (or their graduate director) before enrolling in courses. With the approval of the graduate director, senior scholars, post-baccalaureate students, or students enrolled in a CJ graduate certificate may request to apply up to 12 credit hours of criminal justice graduate course work (taken at UCF) toward the

Master of Science degree. However, transfer work at the graduate level from other universities is limited to 9 credit hours. Only courses where the student earned a grade of “B” or above will be accepted for transfer regardless of source as long as it was earned from an accredited university or college. Courses over seven years old will not count towards the degree.

Students should also be aware that department rules prohibit the counting of more than 6 credit hours of special courses in their plan of study. This includes seminars (CCJ 5931 or CCJ 5934), Study Abroad (CCJ 5957), Criminal Justice Practicum (CCJ 6946), and Independent Study (CCJ 6908). Seminar (CCJ 5931 and CCJ 5934) topics cannot be repeated for program credit.

## Plan of Study (POS) and Course Load

At the graduate level, nine credit hours is considered full time in the spring and fall, and six is considered full time during the summer terms. Graduate courses are more rigorous and demanding than undergraduate courses. Students will be doing more reading, researching, and writing, and the quality of work is held to a higher standards. Students should not overload themselves. The Department of Criminal Justice recommends that students start slower, if possible, and then add more courses in a subsequent semester if schedules and study habits allow it.

A Plan of Study must be submitted upon admittance to the program. This form allows students to develop a tentative plan for the program and become familiar with the curriculum. It will be reviewed with the program advisor. Failure to submit this form will result in limited course enrollment and an account hold.

## Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

## Timeline for Completion

Graduate students have seven years from the original date of admission to complete a graduate program. No course older than seven years at the time of graduation may be used in the Plan of Study to fulfill degree requirements. This includes transfer work and applies to students who have been re-admitted or received a Special Leave of Absence.

Below is an example of a two-year course schedule for the MSCJ. This serves to give students a general idea of how they may progress through the program. Student's individual course schedules will be determined by the courses offered in the given semesters.

### 1st Year

#### Fall

- CCJ 5015: Nature of Crime (Core) (3)
- CCJ 5456: Administration of Justice (Core) (3)
- CXX 5/6XXX: Restricted Elective I (Restricted Elective) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

#### Spring

- CCJ 6704: Research Methods (Core) (3)
- CCJ 6106: Policy Analysis (Core) (3)
- CXX 5/6XXX: Restricted Elective II (Elective) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

## 2nd Year

### Fall

- CCJ 6118: Criminal Justice Organizations (Core) (3)
- CCJ 6706: Data Analysis in Criminal Justice I (Core) (3)
- CXX 5/6XXX: General Elective I (Elective) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

### Spring

- CJE 6718: ProSeminar in Criminal Justice (Core) (30)
- CXX 5/6XXX: General Elective II (Elective) (3)
- CXX 6XXX: General Elective III (Elective) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

*Total Credit Hours: 36*

## Thesis Option sample schedule:

### 1st Year

#### Fall

- CCJ 5015: Nature of Crime (Core) (3)
- CCJ 5456: Administration of Justice (Core) (3)
- CCJ 6704: Research Methods (Core) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

#### Spring

- CCJ 6706: Data Analysis in Criminal Justice I (Core) (3)
- CCJ 6106: Policy Analysis (Core) (3)
- CCJ 6118: Criminal Justice Organizations (Core) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

### 2nd Year

#### Fall

- CXX 5/6XXX: Restricted Elective I (Restricted Elective) (3)
- CCJ 6971: Thesis (Elective) (3)
- CXX 5/6XXX: Restricted Elective II (Elective) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

#### Spring

- CXX 5/6XXX: General Elective I (Elective) (3)
- CJE 6718: ProSeminar in Criminal Justice (Core) (3)
- CCJ 6971: Thesis (Elective) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

*Total Credit Hours: 36*

## Examination Requirements

### Comprehensive Examination

A final survey is required of all students completing the Criminal Justice Master's program. The survey requirement will be completed online in students' last semester.

## Thesis Option

Students may complete 6 credit hours of thesis towards the 9 credits of general elective requirement. All MSCJ students are automatically placed into the non-thesis option. Students electing to complete a thesis should consult the program advisor. The thesis option will consist of 6 hours of thesis credit and a successful defense of a thesis. Students should select a faculty advisor, form a thesis committee, and complete core/restricted elective requirements before enrolling in thesis hours. A thesis proposal must also be submitted to an approved committee before enrollment. Students who elect to write a thesis should become familiar with the university's requirements and deadlines for organizing and submitting the thesis.

## University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

**The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:**

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

## Culminating Experience

### Independent Learning

Independent learning is demonstrated throughout the curriculum through the process of inquiry and dialogue. Tangible projects such as research projects, scholarly papers, internships, practicum, and presentations at professional conferences also contribute to the self-development of our students.

## Graduate Research

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from

research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. Students are responsible for being informed of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

Research Policies and Ethics Information: UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: [research.ucf.edu/](http://research.ucf.edu/) > Compliance.

UCF's Patent and Invention Policy: In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the current UCF Graduate Catalog for details: [catalog.ucf.edu/index.php](http://catalog.ucf.edu/index.php) > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

## Financial Support

The Department of Criminal Justice makes every effort to support funding for graduate research assistants and graduate assistants. The department evaluates students for Fall Graduate Assistantships in early spring of every year. Those students that have applied for the spring, summer and fall of the upcoming academic year by January 15th will be considered for department Graduate Assistantship positions.

Applicants must submit the following documents to be considered: Official transcripts reflecting minimum 3.0 GPA, GRE scores (even though not required for general admission), statement of goals, resume, and letters of recommendation. These applications are evaluated by the Graduate Committee as part of this very competitive process, and offers are made in the spring.

## Graduate Student Associations

### LAE Criminal Justice Pre-Professional Fraternity

Lambda Alpha Epsilon invites all Criminal Justice undergraduate and graduate students interested in criminal justice to become members. Participate in ride-alongs, jail tours, UCF Career Fairs, criminal justice crime-scene competitions and volunteer events (such as SWAT roundup). Everyone is welcome to become a member. Learn more about exciting career opportunities in criminal justice by joining our national pre-professional criminal justice fraternity.

### APS Criminal Justice Honor Society

Students interested in the Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Society can visit the website [www.alphaphisigma.org](http://www.alphaphisigma.org) or contact [cjhonors@gmail.com](mailto:cjhonors@gmail.com) for more information. Benefits include access to job opportunities, association with other like-minded serious criminal justice students, involvement in a nationally recognized professional organization, and exposure to a wide range of criminal justice related activities outside of the academic environment. Graduate students are required to maintain a minimum of 3.4 GPA in both Criminal Justice courses and overall courses, on a 4.0 scale. Students must have completed a minimum of four courses within the criminal justice curriculum.

### Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/).

# Professional Development

The career opportunities for graduates in criminal justice are unlimited. Graduates can become intelligence analyst, research analyst, victim advocate, risk manager, law enforcement officer, federal agent, corrections probation or parole officer, or juvenile specialist.

The outlook for students entering law enforcement or the correctional fields is expected to be good. Although the level of government spending influences the employment in these areas, the recent support of more professionals in these areas is a trend that is expected to continue. The need to replace currently employed professionals who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force, coupled with rising employment demand, should generate thousands of job openings each year. With experience and additional education, qualified professionals may advance to supervisory, administrative or counseling positions.

In addition to speaking with an adviser, any of the books listed below might help students decide on a career in criminal justice:

- DeLucia, Robert C. and Thomas J. Doyle. (1998). *Career Planning in Criminal Justice*, Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
- Harr, J. S., & Hess, M. (2009). *Careers in Criminal Justice and related fields: From internship to promotion*, Wadsworth. 368 pages.
- Justice Research Association. (2000). *Your Criminal Justice Career*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Stephens, W. R. (2001). *Careers in Criminal Justice*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

For more information please see the UCF Career Services website at [career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/).

## Job Search

Many occupations today require college-educated individuals who can write and speak well, solve problems, learn new information quickly and work well with others on a team. This means that college graduates use their education in a wide variety of fields, and your future career may relate as much to your personal career interests, work values and transferable skills as your specific academic major.

Criminal Justice focus on the effective implementation of law, as well as the relationship of laws to the safety and protection of life and property. Study in law enforcement concentrates on the implementation of laws aimed at ensuring the peaceful cooperation, and the security and safety of human lives and property. Some possible career choices include:

- Border Patrol Officer
- Correction Officer
- Rehabilitation Councilor
- Community Relations Officer
- Immigration Agent
- US Customs Agent
- Case Worker
- Parole/Probation Officer
- Crime Scene Investigator
- Crime Analyst
- Criminal Investigator or Detective
- Drug Enforcement Officer
- Police Officer
- Forensic Science Specialist
- FBI Agent
- US Marshall



- Secret Service Agent
- Juvenile Probation Officer
- Private Investigator
- Risk Management Investigator or Manager

For additional information please contact the Department of Criminal Justice at 407-823-2603.

Employment searches can also be found at: <https://ccie.ucf.edu/criminaljustice/career/>

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

- [Department of Criminal Justice](#)
- [College of Community Innovation and Education](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Job Openings](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

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