



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Criminal Justice PhD Program Handbook

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Criminal Justice PhD

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](#)
- [Plagiarism](#)

Curriculum

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

The Criminal Justice PhD program is comprised of a substantive core focused on criminal justice theory and institutions; a methodological core that prepares researchers in the scientific method and statistics; and a selection of disciplinary concentrations (policing, corrections or juvenile justice). The program focuses on criminal justice and takes advantage of the setting of the University of Central Florida to examine criminal justice issues at metropolitan, local (city and county) and neighborhood levels. As such, the program has a community-based focus with an emphasis on collaborative relationships across public, private and nonprofit entities.

Students must complete 57 credit hours beyond the master's degree, including 15 courses above the master's level distributed in the following manner:

- a five-course, 15-credit hour required Criminal Justice substantive core
- a four-course, 12-credit hour required Criminal Justice methodological and statistical core
- a three-course, 9-credit hour concentration area
- a two course, 6-credit hour elective curriculum selected with the assistance and approval of the graduate director (may be taken outside the student's discipline or concentration area)
- 15 credit hours (minimum) of dissertation

Students are highly encouraged to talk to the graduate director and provide him/her with an honest assessment of their background, training and comfort level with advanced statistical and methodological techniques. Some students may be encouraged to take a primer in statistics and/or methods before entering the program statistics and methods sequence. Primer courses selected in consultation with the graduate director may be used and substituted in place of the 6 hours of general electives.

A grade of B (3.0) or better is required in all courses. Students receiving a grade of "B-" or lower will be required to repeat the course and receive a grade of B or better prior to taking Proficiency/Comprehensive Exams. Any student who receives more than one "C" in their doctoral course work may be dismissed from the program.

A minimum of 3.0 graduate status GPA and program of study GPA is required to maintain graduate student status and for graduation. Students with a GPA less than 3.0 may be placed on academic probation or dismissed from the program. Academic probation will result in a loss of teaching or research funding.

Any student who receives an "F" grade in their doctoral course work will be dismissed from the program.

All students in the doctoral program must complete a minimum of 9 hours of credits in one of the department's disciplinary areas of concentration.

Policing Theory and Research

- CJE 6456 Seminar in Policing Urban Communities (3 credit hours)
- CJE 6706 Seminar in Police Socialization and Culture (3 credit hours)
- CJE 6320 Seminar in Police Administration (3 credit hours)

Correctional Theory and Research

- CJC 6135 Seminar in Institutional Corrections (3 credit hours)
- CJC 6165 Seminar in Community Corrections (3 credit hours)
- CJC 6486 Seminar in Correctional Effectiveness (3 credit hours)

Juvenile Justice Theory and Research

- CJJ 6546 Seminar in Policing and Prevention in the Juvenile Justice System (3 credit hours)
- CJJ 6124 Seminar in Prosecuting Juvenile Offenders (3 credit hours)
- CJJ 6126 Seminar in Juvenile Corrections (3 credit hours)

Timeline for Completion

Students entering the PhD program in criminal justice must be enrolled in full time status. That is, they must take nine hours in both the first fall and spring semesters and a minimum of 6 hours in the summer. Dissertation hours is three credits for full time status.

The planned program of study for students completing the criminal justice PhD program in three years of full time study will resemble the following plan.

First Year of Full Time Study

Fall Semester

1. CCJ-7096 Seminar in Criminal Justice Systems – 3 credit hours
2. CCJ-7019 Seminar in Nature of Crime – 3 credit hours
3. CCJ-7727 Advanced Research Methods in Criminal Justice – 3 credit hours

Spring Semester

1. CCJ-7457 Seminar in Criminal Justice Theory – 3 credit hours
2. CCJ-7775 Criminal Justice Research in the Community – 3 credit hours
3. CCJ-7708 Advanced Quantitative Methods in Criminal Justice – 3 credit hours

Summer Semester

1. CCJ-77785 Teaching in Criminal Justice – 3 credit hours
2. Disciplinary Concentration Courses (Choose one of the following)
 - CJE-6456 Policing Urban Communities – 3 credit hours
 - CJJ 6456 Policing and Prevention in the Juvenile Justice System – 3 credit hours
 - CJC 6135 Institutional Corrections – 3 credit hours

Second Year of Full Time Study

Fall Semester

1. CCJ-6/7XXX– Methodological course with consent of graduate director- 3 credit hours
2. CCJ-6/7XXX General Elective selected with consent of graduate director – 3 credit hours
3. Disciplinary Concentration Courses (Choose one of the following)
 - CJE-6706 Police Socialization and Culture – 3 credit hours
 - CJC-6165 Community Corrections – 3 credit hours
 - CJJ-6126 Juvenile Corrections – 3 credit hours

Spring Semester

1. CCJ-6/7XXX– Methodological course with consent of graduate director- 3 credit hours
2. CCJ-XXX General Elective selected with consent of graduate director – 3 credit hours
3. Disciplinary Concentration Courses (Choose one of the following)
 - CJE-6320 Police Administration – 3 credit hours
 - CLC-6135 Correctional Effectiveness – 3 credit hours
 - CJJ-6124 Prosecuting Juvenile Offenders- 3 credit hours

Summer Semester

1. CCJ-7919 Doctoral Research or CCJ-7980 Dissertation Research (if in candidacy) – 3 credit hours

Third Year of Study

Fall Semester

1. CCJ-7919 Doctoral Research or CCJ-7980 Dissertation Research (if in candidacy) – 3/9 credit hours

Spring Semester

1. CCJ-7919 Doctoral Research or CCJ-7980 Dissertation Research (if in candidacy) – 3/9 credit hours

*The program reserves the right to change course offering or schedules as needed - refer to myUCF for up to date course schedules.

Students may not register beyond nine credit hours of dissertation (CCJ7980) per semester.

Task	Deadline	Notes
Before Fall 1	Complete all GTA (9184) online modules	https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-teaching/
Fall 1	FERPA training	
Fall 1/Spring 1	Complete online and face-to-face GTA (9183) training	https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-teaching/
Fall 1	Begin Academic Integrity workshops	Complete before candidacy https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-guide/academic-integrity
Spring 1	Stat/Methods PE exam	About 2 weeks following end of spring
Spring 1	Determine concentration area	By March enrollment date
Summer 1	Core Comprehensive exam	About 2 weeks following end of summer
Fall 2	Begin to develop dissertation topic	
End of fall 2	Determine dissertation chair	File with graduate Advisor
Spring 2	Concentration Comprehensive exam	About 2 weeks following end of spring
Spring 2	Work with dissertation chair to form committee	File with graduate Advisor-Dissertation committee form. Must have updated CV for outside member
Spring 2	Complete all Academic Integrity workshops	https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-guide/academic-integrity
Summer 2	Enroll in doctoral research (CCJ 7919) or dissertation credits if in candidacy (CCJ 7980)	Work with graduate advisor to enroll in course

Assignment of Faculty Advisers and Mentors

All CJ Ph.D. students will be assigned a faculty advisor and faculty mentor. The Graduate Director will be the advisor. The Graduate Director will meet with incoming students to create a program of study and will meet with each student no less than once per academic year to evaluate the student's success.

Faculty mentors are responsible for meeting with students at least twice per semester and advising them on matters pertaining to research projects, conferences, manuscripts, and other information pertaining to doctoral education and preparation for an academic, professional, or research career. It is recommended that no faculty member have more than three active mentorships at a time.

When possible, the mentor will be matched to the student according to common research and/or teaching interests. Faculty can be mentors for the students assigned to them as teaching or research assistants. When a student selects a dissertation chair, the chair assumes the mentorship role and all associated responsibilities.

Examination Requirements

Within the Criminal Justice PhD program there are three exams that students must pass. These include the Core Comprehensive exam, the Concentration Comprehensive Exam, and the Statistic and Methods Proficiency Exam. The comprehensive and proficiency examinations are intended to assess students' subject-matter mastery. The examinations covering the substantive core and the concentration areas (policing, corrections, and juvenile justice) which will be comprehensive, meaning they require students to master their courses as well as complete substantial additional reading and studying. The examination for research methods and statistics will be a proficiency format, meaning the topics will be derived from the required methods and statistics courses and generally require minimal additional reading and review. Students are given two opportunities to pass all of the exams. Students who fail any exam twice will be dismissed from the program.

In extenuating circumstances, the program reserves the right to amend procedures in which case students will be notified.

Exam Scheduling

An exam date will be set three times a year approximately 1-2 weeks after the end each semester but before the following semester begins. Students choosing to delay an exam from the recommended schedule may do so with the understanding that the delay may have an effect on length of time in the program. All examinations must be taken and passed in order for students to enroll in dissertation credits.

The methods/stats proficiency examination (PE) is recommended as the first exam following completion of CCJ 7727 and CCJ 7708 at the end of the students' first academic year. The core comprehensive examination is recommended as the second exam following completion of core coursework. The concentration area comprehensive examination is recommended as the final exam following completion of the student's concentration courses in year two.

Students absent on the day of the scheduled comprehensive or PE examination without advance approval for such absence will automatically fail the exam. If the student wishes to petition for a retake on the grounds of serious emergency, the student will speak with the graduate director, who will review the student's case and decide if the situation was truly an emergency that warrants allowing a retake. Generally, students must approach the graduate director within 24 hours of the missed exam to be eligible to have their cases heard.

Administration Procedures and Timing

Comps and PEs will be administered on campus. Each examination will take place during one 8-hour, proctored session. Students will be allocated a quiet room with internet-disabled computers. They will begin the exam in the morning and will be allotted a one-hour break for lunch (that is, there will be a four-hour morning session and a four-hour afternoon session). Barring clear need for a student to leave the room mid-session, students will remain in the room except during lunch. Students will save and submit their completed work on department-provided thumb drives. Students are prohibited from using technological devices (including those not connected to the internet) during the exam.

The proctor(s) may be the graduate advisor and/or a faculty member who is not a member of the area committee responsible for creating or grading the examination being administered that day. The proctor(s) will remain in the room with the students all day and will collect the thumb drives at the end of the day to give to the office staff. The staff will blind them (including deleting the author name in Word Properties), then forward them to the graduate advisor for distribution to two graders from the contact area.

Grading

i. Faculty Eligibility

All members of the area committees (T/TE Graduate Faculty) are eligible to grade the exams for that area. The department Chair and graduate director are eligible to participate in grading for their respective areas.

ii. Grading Rubrics and Decision Options

Grading will be done pursuant to the area's predetermined grading rubric. Rubrics shall reflect identified goals and objectives, and clearly indicate the breadth and depth of content needed for a passing grade. They will be available to students prior to taking the exams. Rubrics and relevant accompanying notes will become part of the record and will be accessible in the event of an oral exam or grade appeal.

Exam graders will render a final decision of “pass,” “conditional,” or “fail.” The “pass” option represents a grader’s determination that the exam was well done and the student demonstrated satisfactory competency in the area. The “conditional” option reflects a measure of concern about the student’s performance and will require an oral defense. The “fail” decision represents a grader’s belief that the student’s exam response is far below standard.

iii. Grading Procedures

Two graders will read each exam. If both graders provide the same decision (pass, conditional, or fail), that grade becomes final. In the event of conflict in the graders’ recommendations, the exam will be distributed to a third reader (also a member of the area committee). The final decision will reflect the recommendation made by two of the three graders. In the event of disagreement across all three graders the graduate director in consult with the graders and all relevant materials, will render the final decision.

The graduate director will disseminate grades to students in writing four weeks after exams occur. The four-week rule is required to protect the confidentiality of students whose exams initially resulted in a split vote and had to be sent to third readers. All students—irrespective of the results of their first round of grading—will wait four weeks and will receive notice of their final grade simultaneously. Written documentation will be filed with the graduate advisor. Students may be notified early, before the semester add/drop period, if the 2nd attempt will result in dismissal.

If both (or two of three) readers return a decision of “conditional,” the student will be required to complete an oral examination, which will occur, generally, within one week of the student being notified that s/he must complete the oral exam. Oral examination sessions are open only to the members of the relevant area committee and the graduate director. Prior to the exam, all members of the area committee will be provided with and will read copies of the written exam. The area committee will lead the examination questions. The faculty conducting the examination will consult with the graduate director, and will make the final pass/fail decision. This decision shall be made within one week of the oral examination. The graduate director will provide written documentation of the decision to the student, and this document will go on file with the graduate advisor.

Students failing their first exam in a given area have one chance to retake that area exam. They may opt to retake the exam at the next scheduled exam date. They may continue to take classes (but not dissertation credits) in the interim. No student may proceed to dissertation credits until the failed exam is retaken and passed.

Students who fail any exam twice will be dismissed from the program. This rule applies irrespective of how well the student might be performing in other areas of her/his coursework. A presumption exists that students who are dismissed will lose their funding at the end of the current semester. No student who is dismissed will be funded for more than the remainder of the semester in which that student is currently enrolled.

Section VI. Appeals

Students who fail the first or second exam may file an appeal. (Decisions of “conditional” cannot be appealed.) An appeal is appropriate only when the awarding of a grade to the student may have involved prejudice or capriciousness. Appeals will not be considered to resolve disputes about the student’s knowledge of the subject matter, the format or substance of the question(s), or the graders’ subject-area mastery or assessment of the student’s knowledge.

The student must notify the graduate director in writing within 2 weeks of receiving the written notification of failure that s/he intends to appeal, and must submit the full written documentation of appeal to the graduate director within two weeks of notification. Failure to meet either deadline (and/or to provide proper, written notice and all required paperwork) will result in automatic rejection of the appeal. The appeal paperwork will be maintained by the graduate director or graduate advisor and will be provided to the student immediately upon request. The graduate director will coordinate the appeal process unless s/he was one of the original graders on the exam.

It is the student's responsibility to make a clear, convincing case for why his/her exam grade should be overturned. The original graders' decision is presumed to be the correct one, and the student bears the burden of showing good cause for believing that s/he was treated prejudicially or capriciously. The graduate director retains discretion to speak with the graders and/or the student as deemed necessary and will decide whether to reject the appeal (original decision of "fail" stands) or to grant it (original decision is overturned; student passes exam).

Students appealing dismissals from the program due to failed exams will do so according to the procedures promulgated by UCF-5.017.

Dissertation Requirements

Candidacy Status

Students officially enter candidacy when the following has been accomplished:

- Completion of all course work, except for dissertation hours.
- Successful completion of the statistics/research proficiency, core and concentration comprehensive examinations.
- The dissertation advisory committee is formed and has been reviewed and accepted by the graduate director and College of Graduate Studies.
- Complete all required academic integrity/RCR trainings and workshops
- All approved documentation has been received by the Criminal Justice and Graduate offices.

The student's dissertation committee must be formed, approved and sign off on passing all candidacy exams no later than the week before the start of the semester in which dissertation hours will be enrolled (University deadline). Internal department deadlines will be sooner than that date; generally three weeks sooner. The graduate advisor will arrange internal deadlines. This paperwork will be turned into the graduate advisor. There is no exception to this deadline. If the deadline is missed students have to wait until the next semester to enroll in dissertation credits. Students should work closely with their committee chair and members to ensure timely completion.

Committee Composition

Dissertation committees will include four faculty members. Three of them will be from the Department of Criminal Justice. All will be T/TE Graduate Faculty (not Graduate Faculty Scholars) as per the [Graduate School's definition](#). The fourth member will be from outside the Department of Criminal Justice, and may be a Graduate Faculty Scholar. The outside member may be within a Criminal Justice department at another institution.

Students are encouraged to select their dissertation chair by the end of the fall semester of the student's second year and complete the Doctoral Committee/Candidacy form with the graduate director or advisor.

Once selected, the student, in conjunction with the dissertation chair, will assemble the dissertation committee. Committee members should be chosen to maximize the ability to provide a meaningful contribution on substantive and/or methodological areas related to the proposed study. Committee members are expected to know program requirements and to be able to facilitate planning of the proposed study and dissertation requirements. If the chosen committee chair is not eligible a vice-chair must be put in place. Student may also elect to have co-chairs which would share the chair responsibility.

The dissertation chair is the person who will provide the primary intellectual leadership on the committee as well as being responsible for overseeing the prospectus as it is processed through the student's dissertation committee (e.g., circulating the draft prospectus to committee members, ensuring their quick and responsive feedback, communicating the feedback to the students, recirculating the prospectus once revised, etc.).

It is important for the student to realize that as their study evolves or faculty staffing changes, it may be appropriate to add or drop members from the dissertation committee including, at times, the dissertation chair. In these circumstances, the student should discuss the matter with the graduate director before pursuing an alternative appointment. If there is any change in the committee membership, a formal request has to be submitted to the graduate director for approval.

Completing the Prospectus

When coursework is complete and exams passed, students may begin working on the dissertation prospectus. The prospectus will consist, at a minimum, of the chapters containing the introduction, literature review and/or theoretical framework, and methods. Students will work with their individual dissertation committee chair for specifics on what will be required in the prospectus. Students should not conduct data analysis prior to the prospectus being defended and the committee approving it.

While a student is working on the prospectus, they must be registered for no less than 3 credit hours through UCF. If on funding, students must enroll full time (9 credits fall/spring and 6 credit summer). At this time, students can choose to register for doctoral research credits, CCJ 7919. If the student has passed all exams and entered candidacy they may enroll in dissertation hours while working on prospectus, full time enrollment is 3 credits each semester. Students will work with the graduate advisor to enroll in these credits prior to the start of the semester.

All scheduling, notifications, and paperwork will be done in accordance with Department of Criminal Justice, CCIE, and Graduate Studies procedures. The full dissertation committee should be formed and approved within the last semester of coursework but at the latest must be formally selected prior to the start of the prospectus and submitted to the graduate director via the Doctoral Committee form.

While writing the prospectus, the student should work closely with their dissertation Chair. When the dissertation Chair determines that the prospectus is ready, they will send it out to the committee members for their feedback. Once the feedback has been returned, the dissertation Chair will review the comments with the student and/or ask that the student speak directly with the committee member(s). This process of review and revision will continue until the dissertation chair and members decide that the draft prospectus is ready to defend. *This exact process may vary by committee.*

Prospectus Defense

To schedule a prospectus defense date, the student, in consultation with their dissertation chair, will submit the department Prospectus Defense Scheduling request form to the graduate director and submit a final copy, electronically, of the prospectus no later than three weeks before the requested date. The graduate director (if not done by the dissertation chair) will run the prospectus through turnitin.com and reserve the defense room. The prospectus defense is usually held when classes are in session on campus. Please keep in mind that the prospectus copy that is handed into the graduate director is the copy that is to be defended. If there are substantive changes to this copy, the process must begin again and the defense will be delayed. Significant changes after the defense will be accepted at the discretion of the committee. Additionally, students will not be eligible to defend their prospectus until they are course complete and all qualifying/comprehensive exams have been passed. Course complete requires that the student complete all 42 hours of substantive, disciplinary core classes and the research and statistical sequence.

All committee members should be physically present at the prospectus defense unless extenuating circumstances prohibit attendance. When this occurs, the member can call in or video conference. However, no more than one member may be absent at the time of the defense. The chair of the committee and student must always be present at the defense. Virtual defenses, while allowed by the university, are prohibited in the Criminal Justice doctoral program. The prospectus defense is closed to all non-committee members with the exception of the Department Chair and Graduate Director, unless the dissertation chair decides to allow others to attend.

A defense is typically 60 minutes, the student will have approximately 15-30 minutes to present their work with an additional 45 minutes for questions and comments by the committee members and others who may be invited to attend. At the close of the question and answer period, the student and guests will leave the room allowing for discussion and evaluation of the presentation by the committee. At that point, the committee will make a determination whether the presentation is a Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. Where a student is judged to pass, committee members can sign off on the forms at the time of the defense. Where there are minor revisions needed, the committee will give a Conditional Pass, indicating the conditions that must be met for the prospectus to pass and a timeline. Where a Fail is given, the committee members must indicate what the student must do to bring the prospectus to a passing quality. Students should be notified immediately of the determination of the committee.

Once all committee members have signed the prospectus approval for, and the graduate director has approved, the student may continue with dissertation to include data collection, analysis, etc.

Prospectus Deadlines

Task	Deadline	Notes	Responsible Person
Select dissertation committee Chair	No later than the final day of classes in student's 2 nd spring term	Strongly preferred end of 2 nd fall semester	Student
Enroll in Doctoral Research OR Enroll in Dissertation hours	After coursework complete After enter candidacy	9 credits full time fall/spring; 6 credits summer 3 credits each semester	Advisor and Student
Select committee members	End of coursework complete semester but no later than 1 st semester working on prospectus.	3 members from CJ Department, 1 outside of UCF CJ department	Student and committee Chair
Submit Prospectus Defense Scheduling form	3 weeks prior to requested defense date	Form available from graduate advisor. Submit to graduate director or advisor	Student
Submit final prospectus to graduate director-electronic	3 weeks prior to requested defense date with scheduling form	Graduate director will run it through turnitin.com	Student
Prospectus defense	No later than 2 weeks prior to end of term		Student and committee
Prospectus Defense approval form signed by committee	Immediately following defense	Form available from graduate advisor. Submit to graduate director or advisor	Student and committee

Exact dates will vary by term. See academic calendar and/or graduate advisor for more details.

University Dissertation Requirements

Students wishing to take dissertation credit hours must have successfully entered candidacy. That is they have completed all course work, taken and passed all qualifying exams, completed all university mandated workshops, and have all associated documents submitted and approved prior to the first day of classes. Students will work with the graduate advisor and CCIE graduate office to enroll in CCJ 7980 Dissertation. Doctoral candidates must be enrolled continuously (including summers). Exceptions to the continuous enrollment policy may be appealed to Graduate Studies. Students may not enroll in more than nine credits in any given semester and must enroll in at least three credits; full time is three credits each semester. Candidates that have met the 15 required dissertation hours but not yet defended must remain continuously enrolled. Graduate policy states students have seven years from beginning the program to complete the degree.

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](#). Consult with graduate director or advisor for potential earlier 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.

Use of Human Subjects

All dissertations that use research involving human subjects, including surveys, interviews, and such must obtain approval from the university's [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) prior to starting the research. Students should consult their dissertation chair about when IRB approval should be obtained.

Dissertation Deadlines

Task	Deadline	Notes	Responsible Person
Enroll in Dissertation hours CCJ 7980	By Friday before classes begin	Enrolling after the deadline will incur late registration fee	Advisor and Student
File intent to graduate	End of add/drop week in the semester of defense		Student
Obtain IRB approval	Before data collection	Work with committee chair	Student
Dissertation format review due	See academic calendar	Upload to ETD website. No exceptions to deadline	Student
Submit Dissertation Defense Scheduling form	4 weeks prior to requested defense date	Form available from graduate advisor. Submit to graduate director or advisor	Student
Submit final dissertation to graduate director-electronic	4 weeks prior to requested defense date with scheduling form	Graduate director will run it through turnitin.com	Student
Defense Announcement	Prior to defense		Graduate director or advisor
Defense	See academic calendar	No exceptions to deadline	Student
Dissertation final submission	See academic calendar	No exceptions to deadline	Student

Program Guidelines for Review of Doctoral Dissertation

These guidelines are designed to assist doctoral candidates and faculty members serving on dissertation committees. As guidelines, they can be used in a number of ways. For example, doctoral candidates can use them as a self-guide in their development of their dissertation proposals and completion of their dissertations. Dissertation chairs can use these guidelines to help prepare candidates for beginning work on their dissertation and as tools to evaluate the quality of a candidate's dissertation drafts. The dissertation committee as a whole can use these guidelines to help evaluate the candidate's dissertation proposal as well as completed dissertation.

Please note that these guidelines are not intended to result in the computation of a numerical score. Rather, this is merely a list providing an overview of what should be checked as the candidate proceeds with their study and, later, writes their dissertation. Faculty can also use this list to identify areas of particular strength and weakness as the candidate completes their dissertation.

1. ABSTRACT
 - a. Clearly summarizes the topic area and objective of the study.
 - b. Does not include abbreviations without first explaining their meaning.

- c. Clearly states the research question(s), methodology, sample size, and findings.
- d. Ends with a brief statement regarding how the research fits into the larger research study area.

2. INTRODUCTION

- a. Significance of Research
 - i. Topic is related to a body of knowledge recognized as broadly relevant to public affairs (practice, policy or research).
- b. Originality
 - ii. Contribution is different from work previously done, is clearly stated, and is the product of the candidate's own thinking.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

- a. Literature Review
 - i. Demonstrates a mastery of the literature in the field.
 - ii. Clearly defines all terms and, where controversial, justifies the particular way in which they are being defined.
 - iii. Reviews all pertinent literature, conceptual and research, with the most important studies included.
 - 1. Provides a clear summary of each study, highlighting the similarities and differences as it relates to the focus of this research.
 - 2. If there is no literature on the problem, the candidate has reviewed research close to the problem and provides a logical bridge to this literature.
 - iv. Clearly outlines the statement of the problem and then uses the literature to provide a clear and convincing need for the focus of their particular study.
 - 1. Provides recent statistics (where applicable) justifying the need for this study.
 - 2. Includes scope and background of the problem and previous and/or current efforts to address it.
 - v. Literature relates and makes a clear connection to the research question(s) and/or hypotheses.
- b. Theoretical Foundation
 - i. Outlines existing theoretical/conceptual perspective closely related to the research question(s) and/or hypotheses, providing a convincing rationale for the choice of the theory(ies) being selected.
 - 1. Clearly links the theoretical framework to the research question(s) and/or hypotheses.
 - 2. Provides the strengths and weaknesses of this theoretical perspective overall as well as its fit to the study underway.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

- a. Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

- i. The research question(s) and hypotheses are clearly stated and any sub-question(s) just as clearly articulated.
 - 1. All concepts included in the research question(s) and hypotheses are defined and, where controversial, these definitions are justified.
 - ii. Research question(s) and hypotheses flow clearly from the problem statement.
 - iii. Research question(s) build on the review of the research and practice literature.
 - v. The rationale and assumptions that underlie the research question(s) and hypotheses are made explicit.
- b. Design, Concepts and Measures
- i. Design of the study answers to the research questions(s) asked.
 - ii. Provides justification for the chosen design.
 - 1. All issues relevant to the adequate implementation of the design are fully addressed (Remember - Transparency is the obligation of a good researcher).
 - iii. Clearly specifies and justifies all indicators of concepts being investigated.
 - iv. Justifies all measures used including their fit to the research question(s) as well as their validity and reliability.
- c. Population and Sample
- i. Provides justification for the sample size drawn (power analysis) and ensures that the sample selected will answer the research question(s) asked.
 - ii. Clearly specifies the method of sampling and the rationale for the sampling methods chosen.
 - 1. Adequately describes the who, what, where, when, and the recruitment process.
 - 2. Include problems, if any, with the way in which the sample was eventually obtained (e.g., difficulty in gaining necessary subjects meeting sample criteria, difficulty in using the methods originally specified in recruiting sample, etc.).
 - iii. Provides sample size obtained as well as the rate of attrition and, where unexpected, all reasons for difficulties in retention.
 - iv. Provides an assessment of whether the sample obtained (either in terms of numbers or characteristics) was adequate to address research question(s).
- d. Procedures and Data Collection
- i. All variables are clearly described and relate logically to the research question(s).
 - ii. Provides justification for choice of instruments including their fit in assessing variables under study (including reliability and validity issues).
 - iii. Methods of data collection are appropriate for the population (including relevance to gender, ethnicity, educational level, and such).
 - iv. Procedures of data collection are described with sufficient detail to understand relevance for practice and allow future replication.
 - v. Procedures (if any) to enhance access to and cooperation of subjects are specified.

- vi. If appropriate, a pretest or a pilot test was conducted.
- e. Data Analysis
 - i. Analyses are consistent with the objectives, design, sampling, methods and assumption of the statistical models employed.
 - ii. The analysis is clear, complete and meaningful.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

- a. Findings are provided such that they clearly answer to the research question(s) originally proposed.
- b. All findings are discussed including those which run counter to expectations.
- c. Findings are tied to the theoretical perspective(s) provided.
- d. Findings are tied to the larger literature and implications for future research are noted.
- e. The limitations of the findings (i.e., generalizability, validity, etc.) are fully discussed along with their implications.
- f. The strengths and weaknesses of the study's methods are identified.
- g. Ways to address the research's methodological weaknesses are included.

6. ETHICS

- a. The research is free from obvious error and bias.
- b. IRB approval, where needed, was obtained and all consent forms are included.
- c. The research was approved by all organizations involved in the study.
- d. The researcher made adequate provisions to ensure continued confidentiality of data.
- e. The researcher made adequate provisions to ensure collected data is stored in compliance with IRB rules, including noting how long the data will be kept and how it will be safely destroyed.

7. DISSERTATION PRESENTATION

- a. The dissertation has been carefully proofread and is free from typographical and spelling errors.
- b. The study is well edited with adequate attention to grammar, sentence structure, logic, and non-sexist language.
- c. The dissertation is written in APA style.
- d. All citations noted in the dissertation are included in the reference section.
- e. The reference section does not include any references not included in the text.
- f. Major topics are separated under appropriately devised subheadings.
- g. Format is tailored to meet demands of the topic.
- h. Copies of relevant materials such as test instruments, interview schedules, consent forms, directions to subjects, criteria for selection of experts, and pilot test data are appended.
 - i. Letters of cooperation or permission are appended.
 - i. For datasets not in the public domain, permission to use is documented.

- ii. For instruments not in the public domain, permission to use is documented.
- iii. Letters of cooperation from agency(ies) used for the study are included.

8. ORAL PRESENTATION

- a. Candidate is able to demonstrate that the study has a logical, easily understandable sequence from initial statement of the problem to findings and conclusions.
- b. Candidate understands all aspects of their research and its findings.
- c. Candidate demonstrates mastery over their subject area and is able to comfortably answer questions.

Completing the Dissertation and Scheduling a Defense

Only after being admitted to candidacy can the study be completed and the dissertation written. The dissertation demonstrates the candidate's ability to select and masterfully approach an issue in the field by conducting independent research, analyzing and interpreting results, and placing the study and its findings into a larger context. Alternately, the defense establishes the candidate's capability to skillfully communicate this process and its results.

As with the prospectus, candidates will continue to work with their dissertation chair and committee members to complete the dissertation. When finished, it should include: 1) An introduction with a statement of the problem; 2) A thorough review of the literature, once again indicating the specific contribution that the study makes as well as providing a theoretical framework for interpreting the results; 3) A thorough discussion of the research methodology including research design, sample specification and selection, data collection, measurement instruments, and such; 4) Discussion of the collected results and their implications in terms of both their theoretical context as well as its fit in the larger research literature; and 5) A conclusion discussing the major findings and their importance, including the study's limitations and prospects for future research.

Submission of a Final Copy of the Dissertation to the Graduate Director

Once the student's dissertation chair and committee thinks that the dissertation can be successfully defended, the final version will be sent to graduate director. In their finished form, ETDs will be uploaded to a server and electronically archived, where they will be searchable by scholars' world-wide.

A defense cannot be scheduled until a final copy has been turned into the graduate director by the candidate, along with the Dissertation Defense Scheduling form. All documents must be submitted to the graduate director no later than four weeks prior to the defense. The graduate director will submit the dissertation to turnitin.com (if not done by the dissertation chair) for evaluation while disseminating a copy of the dissertation to criminal justice faculty. Notice of the defense will be distributed to all academic departments at least two weeks prior to the date of the defense. It is imperative students pay close attention to university deadlines and construct a timeline in advance working with their committee chair and graduate advisor. Failure to meet a deadline will result in a delay of graduation. University deadlines can be found in the [academic calendar](#).

Defending the Dissertation

Candidates cannot defend their dissertation until all program requirements have been met, including the minimum requirement of 15 credit hours of dissertation research CCJ 7980.

All committee members should be physically present at the prospectus defense unless extenuating circumstances prohibit attendance. When this occurs, the member can call in or video conference. However, no more than one

member may be absent at the time of the defense. The chair of the committee and student must always be present at the defense. Virtual defenses, while allowed by the university, are prohibited in the Criminal Justice doctoral program. The defense is open to students, faculty, staff and other interested parties though discussion will be exclusively among members of the dissertation committee and the graduate director. Students must submit a Dissertation Defense Scheduling form to the graduate director no later than four weeks before the requested defense date.

Dissertations must be approved by the majority of the committee members. Where a determination is made that revisions are necessary before passing on the defense, members can withhold signing the dissertation until additional modifications have been completed. The graduate director and Associate Dean will not be able to sign off on the dissertation until a final version of the dissertation (both hard and electronic copies), along with a copy of the Dissertation Approval form signed by the chair and all committee members, and has been turned into the graduate director. Once this has been completed and the Dean of CCIE has approved the dissertation, it will then need to be approved by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies before the dissertation can be accepted as fulfilling degree requirements.

Financial Support

When funds available, highly qualified, full-time doctoral students admitted into the Criminal Justice PhD program at the University of Central Florida are offered a tuition waiver, stipend, and health insurance. These positions are Graduate Research or Teaching Assistants working in the department with faculty members.

The College of Graduate Studies offer a number of opportunities to receive fellowships and other means of support for full-time students. For complete list of fellowships and more information on the UCF guidelines, see Funding for Graduate School in the Graduate Students website. Visit the Scholarship Opportunities in CCIE for support opportunities for students in the discipline.

For additional information about funding for graduate school, please visit the Student Finances section of the College of Graduate Studies student website at <https://graduate.ucf.edu/students/>.

If you are interested in applying for loans or externally funded need-based awards, visit the Office of Student Financial Assistance website at <http://finaid.ucf.edu> and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available January 1 each year.

Graduate Student Associations

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 www.gsa.ucf.edu.

Criminal Justice Graduate Student Association

The Criminal Justice Graduate Student Association (CJGSA) is an organization run by PhD students in CJ, along with faculty advisors. The goal is to encourage unity and pride within the Criminal Justice department by collaborating on a variety of efforts. The association sponsors events like fundraising to help with conference travel, puts on a variety of workshops which target different skills within academia (i.e. statistical workshops, CV workshop, dissertation workshop). Additionally, the group throws occasional events to bring graduate students together with faculty in a more informal setting. Meetings are held few times a semester formally.

Professional Development

Graduate Research Forum

Sponsored by the College of Graduate Studies, the [Research Forum](#) features poster displays and oral presentations representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines. The Research Forum is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster and best oral presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition. The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum.

Graduate Awards of Excellence

Award for the Outstanding Dissertation

UCF sponsors the Award for the Outstanding Dissertation in order to recognize doctoral students for excellence in the dissertation. The focus of this annual award is on the quality and contribution of the student's dissertation. Excellence of the dissertation may be demonstrated by evidences such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field. Each academic college and each independent school not housed within a college may nominate one student for consideration for the university-level Award for the Outstanding Dissertation.

Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching

This award recognizes excellence in teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates (GTAs) who have independent teaching responsibilities. It focuses on the quality of the student's teaching activities and the academic contributions to those activities. Each academic college may nominate one student for consideration for the university-level Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching.

Forms

Departmental forms can be obtained through the program advisor or on the CJ Graduate Program webcourse page.

- [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](#)
- [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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