

CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE, MS

This program helps highly-motivated people gain the skills and expertise they need to reach their goals, whether that's launching or advancing their career, or preparing for a PhD program or law school. Students can expect rigorous training in the theories, methodologies, and empirical findings that help explain social deviance, criminal behavior, criminal justice, and social organizations. Students also have the opportunity to publish cutting-edge articles with faculty, travel to national conferences to present their research findings, and more.

Admissions

For applicants, an undergraduate major in the social sciences is desirable, but students with strong undergraduate records in other fields are encouraged to apply.

It is the policy of the Criminology and Criminal Justice faculty to admit those students who demonstrate potential for successfully completing the master's degree program.

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

- A resume/CV
- 3 letters of recommendation.

The Department does not admit non-degree students into its graduate program.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

The graduate program in Criminology & Criminal Justice includes a thesis or a non-thesis option. Under both options, the student has considerable latitude to design a program to fit particular needs. All entering students must specify one of the two options during the second semester of academic work. Both options have core courses, including criminological theory, research in the criminal justice process, and applications of statistics in criminal justice.

MS in Criminology & Criminal Justice, Thesis Option

This option requires a total of 30 credit hours including 9 of core requirements, 6 for thesis research, and 15 for elective courses. CJ 599 Thesis Research should be taken after core requirements have been completed.

Students must pass public oral defense of the thesis. Thesis students must also pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination (ordinarily done during the thesis defense).

Thesis Option Degree Requirements Summary		Hours
Core Course Requirements		
CJ 581	Applic Statistics In CJ	3
CJ 584	Criminological Theory	3
CJ 586	Research In Cj Process	3
CJ 599	Thesis Research	6
Electives		15
CJ 505	Gender & Crime	
CJ 506	Terrorism	
CJ 520	Seminar Law Enforcement	
CJ 540	Sem Juvenile Delinquency	
CJ 570	Sem Correction Policy	

CJ 590	Special Topics	
CJ 592	Independent Study	
Comprehensive Exam		
Total Hours		30

MS in Criminology & Criminal Justice, Practicum

This option requires a total of 30 credit hours including 9 hours of core course requirements, 15 hours of elective courses, and 6 hours for the practicum. CJ 595 Practicum should be taken after core requirements have been completed. Students must pass The Criminology and Criminal Justice Graduate Committee's review of their practicum paper and public presentation.

MS in Criminology & Criminal Justice, Practicum		Hours
Core Course Requirements		
CJ 581	Applic Statistics In CJ	3
CJ 584	Criminological Theory	3
CJ 586	Research In Cj Process	3
CJ 595	Practicum	6
Electives		15
CJ 505	Gender & Crime	
CJ 506	Terrorism	
CJ 520	Seminar Law Enforcement	
CJ 540	Sem Juvenile Delinquency	
CJ 570	Sem Correction Policy	
CJ 590	Special Topics	
CJ 592	Independent Study	
Total Hours		30

MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice, Policy and Practice Paper

MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice, Policy and Practice Paper		Hours
Core course requirements		
CJ 581	Applic Statistics In CJ	3
CJ 584	Criminological Theory	3
CJ 586	Research In Cj Process	3
CJ 598	CJ Policy And Practice	3
Electives		21
CJ 505	Gender & Crime	
CJ 506	Terrorism	
CJ 520	Seminar Law Enforcement	
CJ 540	Sem Juvenile Delinquency	
CJ 570	Sem Correction Policy	
CJ 590	Special Topics	
CJ 592	Independent Study	
CJ Policy and Practice (Required)		
Total Hours		45

Transfer Credit

Up to 6 hours of approved coursework may be transferred from other universities. Up to 6 hours of approved coursework may be taken in other departments at The University of Alabama and may be applied to the

degree when it is consistent with the student's degree plan and approved by the department. The department does not accept 400-level courses toward degree requirements for the Master of Science in Criminology & Criminal Justice.

Graduate School policies on transfer credit.

Accelerated Master's Program

Please refer to the Graduate School's website for further information on the Accelerated Master's Program.

Plan I: Thesis Process Requirements

1. Thesis Committee

Each student who wishes to complete a thesis will form a master's thesis committee. This committee will be established by the thesis chairperson and the student. The Graduate Director or Department Chair must sign an Appointment of Master's Thesis Committee Form prior to enrollment for thesis hours.

The form will be signed on the understanding that the student has convened a thesis committee consisting of a Chairperson plus two committee members (one member will be from the department and one member will be from outside the department), presented a short prospectus that is acceptable to the committee, and has completed 18 hours of approved graduate coursework.

2. Thesis Submission

After the thesis has been completed, the student must submit an electronic copy of it to the graduate school using Committee Acceptance Form for Electronic Thesis or Dissertation.

An Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD) is simply the digital (electronic) representation of your thesis or dissertation, and must meet the formatting requirements described in "A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations".

3. Beginning Work on a Thesis

Registration for six hours of CJ 599 Thesis generally follows completion of all coursework. A student may register for 1 to 6 thesis hours in an academic semester only after 18 hours of coursework have been completed. The academic policy of the university requires that when a student serves as a Graduate Assistant, he or she must enroll as a full-time student (9 hours). A student taking approved classes for their program plan may register for as many additional thesis hours as needed to maintain full time status. Discuss your plans for registration with the Director of Graduate Studies in Criminal Justice and the faculty member directing your thesis.

Students are encouraged to select a thesis topic in their first semester. It is acceptable to identify a chair by the end of the first semester of study.

The chair will work with the student to develop a committee and a plan for accomplishment of the project. The astute student will develop a tentative draft of his or her prospectus as the final paper in the methods course. He or she will also develop a theoretical basis for the project during a theory class. When possible, other papers will be designed to focus on specific aspects of the proposed project. The organization of the thesis follows the most current edition of the APA Manual by the American Psychological Association.

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their topic early and discuss their ideas with faculty. The significant steps in writing a thesis include the oral defense of a student's prospectus which should occur in

the semester before the degree is to be completed, data collection and writing the paper, and the oral defense of the student's product.

All thesis students must notify the Graduate Director of their thesis topic and committee membership prior to taking their hours. Thesis hours should not commence until 18 hours of coursework have been completed. A passing grade for thesis coursework indicates that sufficient written work has been completed toward one thesis.

4. The Thesis

A thesis is based on the collection and analysis of appropriate data to investigate an empirical question, describe a phenomenon of scholarly interest, test a hypothesis or theory, or examine a generalization or theoretical proposition. Methods should be appropriate to the nature of the scholarly inquiry, whether those methods are experimental, naturalistic, phenomenological, laboratory-based, field-based, or some other approach including a combination of methods.

Students select one criminal justice faculty member as the Chair of the Thesis Committee. The student and Thesis Committee Chair discuss the identification of two additional committee members, one from criminal justice and one from either another department on the UA campus or from an off-campus accredited university. The outside member must be recommended for a courtesy adjunct faculty status appointment by the department to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to the Dean of the Graduate School. A copy of the person's academic resume should be requested by the department chair and submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Each semester the Graduate School publishes a schedule of deadlines for students who are writing a thesis. Students must consult the schedule and submit their thesis in accordance with the schedule. A completed copy of the thesis must be electronically submitted to the Department at least eight weeks before the date the candidate expects to receive the degree. Theses must comply with the regulations set out in the Graduate School's "A Student Guide to Preparing Theses and Dissertations."

While these deadlines are firm, the graduate school will continue to accept theses for review up to the end of the term. While you will not formally graduate until the following semester, a letter of completion will be issued by the Graduate School on completion of all degree requirements so that you can demonstrate degree completion to potential employers.

5. Thesis Outline

The production of an outstanding thesis is the highest level of demonstrated excellence for a master's candidate. In most cases, the thesis is empirical; however, a thesis may be theoretical. While the truly outstanding thesis will make a contribution to the literature or to practice, a well executed empirical project that does not substantiate the hypotheses advanced will still be considered to have demonstrated competence. The following is a suggested outline that can be modified by the candidate's committee to reflect the needs of the specific line of inquiry.

Outline for the Thesis Prospectus

See the Graduate School "A Student Guide to Preparing Theses and Dissertations" for front pages and format.

- Introduction—General statement of the problem and its importance
- Literature Review
 - General Overview
 - Background of the Problem
 - Recent Research Related to the Problem

- Theoretical Perspectives
- Discussion of Specific Research Questions
- Methodology
 - Variables
 - Hypotheses
 - Instrument
 - Setting
 - Population
 - Sample
 - Plan for Collection of Data
 - Plan for Analysis of Data

For the final thesis, expand the literature review and add:

- Findings
- Discussion
- Summary and Recommendations

Plan II: Non-Thesis Process Requirements

Practicum Requirements

Selecting a faculty supervisor

Each student who wishes to complete a practicum will ask a graduate faculty member with expertise in the student's area of interest to serve as their supervisor. The faculty supervisor will meet regularly with the student to receive progress reports on the student's practicum work. The faculty supervisor will assist the student with designing the project and selecting the agency or community partner. Once this selection has been made, the faculty member will assist with completing a memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed by the graduate student, faculty supervisor, and agency or community partner, along with any relevant background checks required by the agency or community partner and UA liability waiver. Students are not guaranteed placement with an agency or community partner; this is dependent on what opportunities are available and whether the faculty supervisor and agency or community partner consider the student a good fit for placement. If a student cannot find a suitable placement that is approved by their faculty supervisor and meets all other requirements, they cannot proceed with the practicum.

Completing the practicum

Each student who wishes to complete a practicum will register for CJ 595 Practicum in the semester they will spend working at an agency or community partner. Each student will spend between 8 hours (for 3 credits) and 16 hours (for 6 credits) per week working directly with an agency or a community partner, over the course of an entire semester, with the division of those hours determined in consultation with agency or community partner and the faculty supervisor.

Writing the practicum paper

Each student who wishes to complete a practicum will write a technical report for the agency or community partner, with length and content determined in consultation with an agency or community partner and the faculty supervisor. This technical report will synthesize their coursework with their practicum experience and will include data analysis.

Presentation and evaluation of the practicum paper

Each student will present the results of their technical report to the CCJ faculty and invited agencies and community partners at a research showcase following the completion of the project. The technical report and presentation will be graded by Criminology and Criminal Justice's Graduate Committee. If the student's supervisor is a member of the Graduate Committee, another faculty member will be asked to substitute as a grader.

Policy and Practice Paper Requirements

Selecting a faculty supervisor

Each student who wishes to complete a policy and practice paper will ask a graduate faculty member with expertise in the student's area of interest to serve as their supervisor. The faculty supervisor will meet regularly with the student to receive regular progress reports on the student's work toward completing the policy and practice paper.

Beginning the policy and practice paper

Each student who wishes to complete a policy and practice paper will register for CJ 598 Policy and Practice in the semester they will spend working on the paper with their faculty supervisor. Each student will spend 8-10 hours per week working toward goals developed in consultation with a faculty supervisor.

Writing the policy and practice paper

Each student who wishes to complete a policy and practice paper will write a critical assessment of an existing or potential policy in a paper of at least 40 double-spaced pages in length, exclusive of notes and references. This paper must include an extensive overview of the literature pertaining to a specific criminological or criminal justice-related policy or practice. This paper is not required to include original data analysis.

Presentation and evaluation of the policy and practice paper

Each student will present the results of their policy and practice to the CCJ faculty and invited parties at a research showcase following the completion of the project. The paper will be graded by Criminology and Criminal Justice's Graduate Committee. If the student's supervisor is a member of the Graduate Committee, another faculty member will be asked to substitute as a grader.

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. However, students generally can complete degree requirements in 18-24 months. Additional information is in the Degree Requirements section of this catalog.

Student Progress Requirement

1. Suspension

Any conditionally admitted graduate student who fails to maintain a GPA of "B" or better in his/her first 12 credit hours of graduate-level work will automatically be subject to Suspension (dismissal) from the program and the Graduate School. However, a student who satisfies the condition automatically gains the status of a regularly admitted graduate

student. If the 12 hours are completed in a term in which the total credits exceed 12, the evaluation is made on the basis of all graduate-level work completed at the end of that term of enrollment.

Any student who receives two graduate course grades of “C” or lower will automatically be subject to Suspension (dismissal) from the program and the Graduate School.

Students who are suspended may not attend class or enroll in any form of distance learning courses.

2. Reinstatement

A person seeking reinstatement to the same degree program after being academically suspended from the Graduate School can initiate consideration for reinstatement by communicating with the academic department or program from which the person was dismissed. The graduate faculty of the academic unit will consider the request for reinstatement and, if the faculty request reinstatement, they will identify in a written request to the dean of the Graduate School the compelling reasons for reinstatement and the conditions required of the student if reinstatement is granted by the dean of the Graduate School.

3. Incompletes

A grade of “I” (Incomplete) is evaluated as an “F” and must be removed within two weeks during the next term of enrollment if the student’s overall grade point average drops below a “B” as a result of the incomplete grade. Also, a student who fails to remove an incomplete grade by the end of the following semester in which it was received will not be allowed to register for additional courses toward the degree.

Academic Misconduct Information

Please see the Graduate School's website for Academic Misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Withdrawal from a Course

A student who desires to withdraw from a course may do so, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies in Criminal Justice, during the period allowed for dropping a class. It is the student’s responsibility to consult the semester’s schedule for the specific date by which one may drop a course. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies in Criminal Justice for additional information about withdrawing from a course.

Information on Graduate School policies regarding course withdrawal and leave of absence.

Academic Grievances Information

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

Application for Graduation Information

Information on the Application for Graduation.