

CRIMINAL JUSTICE, M.S.

Program Description

The Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice provides students with advanced theoretical, legal, and methodological training for research, teaching, and management careers in criminal justice. The program serves to educate criminal justice professionals and prepare students for further advanced graduate work, legal studies, and scholarship. The Criminal Justice and Criminology program is committed to:

- providing students with the conceptual and research skills needed to undertake advanced analyses of the criminal justice system;
- serving criminal justice professionals and others who are interested in pursuing professional careers in management and administration;
- furnishing law enforcement, corrections and court practitioners with knowledge of justice administration, theoretical perspectives of human behavior, policy analysis and criminal justice theory; and
- preparing social scientists to pursue careers in university and research settings.

Admission Requirements

Deadlines: Applications to the program are due by July 1 for the fall semester and by November 1 for the spring semester. However, students are strongly encouraged to apply early. Applications submitted after the due dates will be considered, but no later than three weeks from the start of classes for the fall semester and four weeks for the spring semester. Application for admission does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Applicants should follow the admissions process described in the Graduate Catalog, or at the Graduate Admissions website at www.marshall.edu/graduate/admissions/how-to-apply-for-admission (<http://www.marshall.edu/graduate/admissions/how-to-apply-for-admission/>). (Submit all materials to the Graduate Admissions Office.)

Applicants must also have:

- a baccalaureate degree from an accepted, accredited college or university (preference will be given to applicants with undergraduate majors in criminal justice or closely related social science discipline);
- an undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale as documented on an official, final degree transcript from the applicant's baccalaureate degree-awarding institution;
- GRE scores (will be evaluated in combination with the undergraduate GPA);
- for international students, a score on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) of 80;
- a C or better in an undergraduate research methods course or equivalent (documentation of course content may be required);
- two letters of recommendation (college instructors strongly preferred); and
- a personal statement (1-2 page essay regarding the student's interest in criminal justice and how the M.S. in Criminal Justice degree will benefit him or her).

Waivers: Applicants may qualify for a waiver of the GRE requirement if the student

1. possesses an overall GPA of 3.30 or higher as evidenced by his/her official, final degree transcript from the applicant's baccalaureate degree-awarding institution, or
2. by completion of a master's degree in a related field.

Applicants who have completed a previous master's degree must submit an official, final transcript from the applicant's master's degree-awarding institution as evidence of qualifying for the waiver.

Students may be considered for provisional admission or conditional enrollment. All prospective students are strongly encouraged to contact the Criminal Justice Graduate Director before applying to the Master of Science in Criminal Justice program to discuss the application process and requirements.

Assistantships and Financial Support

The Criminal Justice and Criminology department has funds available in the form of assistantships to provide financial support for graduate students. For complete information on graduate assistantships, please see www.marshall.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships-2/graduate-assistantship-overview (<http://www.marshall.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships-2/graduate-assistantship-overview/>). For complete information on other financial support opportunities, please see www.marshall.edu/graduate (<http://www.marshall.edu/graduate/>) and click on "Prospective Students" and then "Costs and Aid."

Program Requirements

General Requirements

The Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice requires the completion of 30 credits of coursework. In total, students take 15 credits of core courses, 12 credits of electives, and can choose the thesis (3 credits) or non-thesis (3 credits) option. The curriculum is structured around a set of core requirements that provide a broad foundation in criminological theory, research and statistics, criminal law as well as aspects of criminal justice policy and practice.

Plan of Study

Before registration for the 12th graduate credit hour, all graduate students must complete an official Plan of Study form to be approved by the graduate director and/or department chair and submitted for approval to the college office.

Two-C Rule

A student who earns more than two grades of C or lower in any graduate courses will be withdrawn from the program (even if the course is repeated and a higher grade is earned).

Plan of Study

Core Requirements

All students are required to complete 15 credits of core courses:

| Code | Title | Credit Hours |
|--------|----------------------------|--------------|
| CJ 601 | Seminar Criminal Justice | 3 |
| CJ 604 | Adv Theory Criminal Just | 3 |
| CJ 621 | Contemporary Law & Society | 3 |
| CJ 655 | Research Methods in CJ | 3 |

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| CJ 656 | Applied Statistics in CJ | 3 |
| Total Credit Hours | | 15 |

The research methods and statistics sequence must be completed by all students during the first academic year in the graduate program (within the first 12 graduate credits for part-time students). Exceptions are made for students who must take prerequisite courses before enrolling in this sequence.

Electives

Students can choose from a variety of electives. A total of 12 hours of electives are required. Courses outside of the discipline in related fields may be taken with approval from the Graduate Director.

Non-Thesis Option

(3 credits)

For students who work in the field or anticipate a career in the criminal justice system. The requirements are:

- Complete the core courses and register for CJ 699 Capstone Experience (3 credits).
- Demonstrate written, research, and statistical abilities, which are part of the student's comprehensive assessment.
- Pass the capstone assessment with a *B* or higher.

Thesis Option

(3 credits)

This option is for students planning to continue graduate studies in a doctoral program. The requirements are:

- Complete the core courses and register for CJ 679 Problem Report (3 credits), which can count as an elective.
- Form a thesis committee and determine the graduate faculty member of the department who will serve as chair of the committee. The thesis committee assists in selecting and developing the research problem and evaluates the student's work.
- Create the prospectus and have it approved by the thesis committee prior to enrolling for CJ 681 Thesis.
- Enroll in CJ 681 Thesis for a minimum of 3 credits.
- Pass an oral defense of the thesis.