

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Undergraduate Program Information

The Department of Criminal Justice offers courses in the traditional setting as well as online.

The criminal justice degree plan is broadly interdisciplinary in nature embracing the study of the humanities, law, natural, behavioral and social sciences. The curriculum seeks to balance theoretical inquiry with applied knowledge.

Students become prepared for careers in law enforcement, corrections, probation and parole, work with juveniles, victim services, non- and not-for profit organizations connected with criminal and social justice, and the related field of forensics. Graduates have also been successful in law school and graduate programs in the social sciences. The undergraduate major consists of at least 33 credits in the major field, 27 of which must be numbered 300 or above (excluding CJUS 393 Internship in Criminal Justice).

The department offers an interdisciplinary minor in Forensic Sciences. Students interested in the minor should consult with the department head.

Graduate Program Information

The Department of Criminal Justice offers graduate study leading to the Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) degree. Admission to the MCJ is competitive and prospective graduate students are expected to have at least a 3.0 undergraduate grade-point-average, coursework in research methods and statistics, and possess a bachelor's degree. Those not meeting these requirements may be admitted conditionally and required to make up deficiencies at the outset of their program of study. Applicants should review our graduate handbook (<https://crimjust.nmsu.edu/graduate-programs/HANDBOOK-Revised-May-2019f.pdf>) and provide a personal statement that includes a discussion of your interest in the field and reasons for wanting to pursue the degree (1-2 pages). If interested in a graduate assistantship, please complete the application form (https://crimjust.nmsu.edu/_assets/TA-Application-for-MCJ-in-CJ-.pdf) and provide three letters of recommendation. Students meeting the minimum GPA requirement (3.0 or better) do not need to submit letters of recommendation. Students not meeting the minimum GPA requirement may be asked for additional materials, including letters of recommendation. The GRE is NOT required for admission into the MCJ program. The MCJ Graduate Committee may require a student to complete additional English writing coursework. For more information, please visit the Criminal Justice Graduate Programs webpage (<https://crimjust.nmsu.edu/graduate-programs/criminal-justice-grad.html>).

Students must declare their intent to pursue one of the two degree options: the thesis option or the focused coursework option. The degree options are provided so that students may better match their education with career goals. The thesis option is often used by students interested in pursuing careers in basic and applied criminal justice research or a doctoral degree. The focused coursework option is often used by students pursuing administrative positions within criminal justice agencies. The thesis option is typically only available for Campus-Based students.

All candidates, regardless of chosen degree option, must complete a final examination. Examination requirements vary by degree option.

Please contact the director of the MCJ program or consult the Department of Criminal Justice Graduate Programs webpage (<https://crimjust.nmsu.edu/graduate-programs/criminal-justice-grad.html>).

Thesis students must submit a thesis proposal to their faculty committee at a proposal hearing for approval and subsequently complete the approved thesis project. An approved thesis proposal is one wherein the thesis committee determines the student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the nexus of theory, method, and policy as it applies to the proposed thesis project. At the discretion of the thesis committee the proposal may be considered inadequate and the student is required to revise and resubmit the thesis proposal until the committee determines the proposal is satisfactory. The final examination includes a defense of the completed thesis, but may also include a general examination based upon the candidate's program of study. The minimum coursework requirements are displayed below.

Focused coursework students must pass two written comprehensive examinations following completion of the required courses, no earlier than their third semester. Students not passing the examinations will be required to wait until the following semester to retake the examination. The minimum course requirements are displayed below.

Online M.C.J. Coursework

There is an online option for the MCJ degree. Online criminal justice courses are available only to those admitted to the MCJ program as online students, or with permission of the Director of the MCJ program. Students desiring to be admitted to the MCJ program as online students must declare that intent in writing to the MCJ director. For more information regarding the online MCJ degree option, consult the Department of Criminal Justice web page, <http://crimjust.nmsu.edu>, or contact the Director of the MCJ program.

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching assistantships are typically available for some traditional (on-campus) MCJ students on a competitive basis. The Director of the MCJ Program will contact admitted students to determine their interest, and the Graduate Committee will make recommendations to the Department Head for a final decision.