

Eastern Kentucky University
MS Criminology & Criminal Justice Program
Graduate Student Guide



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Welcome !

MS Criminology & Criminal Justice Graduate Program Coordinator

Dear Graduate Student:

Welcome to the Master of Science Criminology & Criminal Justice Graduate Program in the School of Justice Studies (SJS) in the College of Justice & Safety. My colleagues and I are quite pleased with the quality of our program, and I believe that you will find graduate study in our program to be rewarding. Each year our program admits a limited number of students. In any given semester, we have about 20 graduate students engaged in classwork and another 40 who are active in the program but not taking classes.

Kentucky state statute has designated one program from each regional university as a “Program of Distinction” (POD). In 1998, the College of Justice & Safety (then the College of Law Enforcement) was named a POD. POD resources have benefited our graduate program in many ways: advanced technology, more personnel, graduate student assistantships, faculty fellowships, financial support for graduate students to travel to professional conferences, renowned invited speakers, and other opportunities to enhance our instructional and scholarship missions.

Our graduate program has earned a strong reputation for excellence in instruction. The faculty work closely with graduate students in mentorship relationships, and our graduate students often collaborate with faculty, presenting research at professional conferences and publishing in leading scholarly journals and with academic book publishers. While many of our graduates go on to Ph.D. or professional programs, others pursue careers in criminal justice or related fields.

This handbook contains important information to which you may refer often. Additional information may be found on our [web page](#). The faculty and staff in our program are here to assist you in the particular program of study that you pursue. As Graduate Program Coordinator, I am available if you ever have questions, concerns, or just want to chat. Again, welcome to our program.

Sincerely, Scott A. Hunt, Graduate Program Coordinator, MS Criminology and Criminal Justice

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Overview

MS Criminology & Criminal Justice Graduate Program Coordinator

The focus of our program is to examine the issues associated with crime critically by situating them in their cultural and socially-structured contexts. Our graduates are expected to demonstrate highly developed levels of critical and analytical thinking.

Given this focus, we offer graduate students advanced instruction in theory, quantitative and qualitative research methodology, as well as data analysis. Our graduate courses guide students in their development of a professional understanding of the breadth and depth of classical and contemporary research contributions from multiple academic disciplines.

Beyond the classroom, our students receive individualized attention at every stage of the program. Our faculty members are highly accomplished scholars who represent a broad spectrum of teaching and research interests in criminology and criminal justice. [See our web page for faculty biographies.](#)

Our program consists of 36 credit hours and has thesis and non-thesis options. [See page 92 in the 2016-2017 EKU Graduate Catalog.](#) Students must complete their degree seven years from their acceptance into the program.

All students are required to take the following 12 core hours: *Advanced Criminal Justice Studies* (CRJ 800), *Analysis of Criminal Justice Data* (CRJ 808) or *Crime and Public Policy* (CRJ 875), *Theories of Criminology and Delinquency* (CRJ 870) and *Research Methods in Criminal Justice* (CRJ 888).

Those pursuing the thesis option are also required to take *Thesis I* (CRJ 898), *Thesis II* (CRJ 899) and 18 hours of CRJ elective credit as well as write and defend a masters thesis. Those pursuing the non-thesis option are required to take 24 hours of CRJ elective credit and successfully complete a written comprehensive exam.

For a detailed description of CRJ graduate courses see [page 122 in the 2016-2017 EKU Graduate Catalog.](#)

Graduate students should realize that pursuing a graduate degree is different than undergraduate education. One major difference is workload. Graduate education entails more reading, writing, study, and commitment to the profession.

Graduate students do a lot of reading. In addition to having more material to read, graduate students read more difficult material. Graduate students are assigned readings that are intended for advanced, professional audiences. Also, graduate students are expected to read thoroughly, developing a nuanced understanding of the material. Graduate students are also

expected to read beyond what is assigned in class. Graduate students are proactive, taking the initiative for their development as a professional and scholar.

It is imperative that graduate students keep up with their reading. Professors expect graduate students to have read assigned materials prior to each class session. Classes are then discussions about the readings, not presentations of what is in the readings. Because most class sizes are small, active participation is crucial. Class members are expected to share their ideas and support them by drawing from their knowledge of existing theory and research. It is necessary for graduate students to participate fully in discussions, because graduate education is about learning to become a leader and an independent thinker.

Graduate education not only entails more writing but it also demands writing of a higher quality. Graduate students are expected to have mastered the basic writing skills of grammar, spelling, and argumentation. Beyond those fundamentals, graduate student papers are expected to be of professional quality and scholarly in nature. Also, graduate students learn quickly that the craft of writing requires the discipline of rethinking, revising, and rewriting. This is especially true in the production of a thesis. With the communication of scholarly ideas, graduate students should expect constructive, collegial criticism from professors and peers. Learning how to utilize and appropriately share constructive, critical feedback is a key to professional and scholarly development.

Graduate students share their work by presenting it in their classes, at conferences, and in professional and academic publications. Networking too is important for graduate students. At graduate school, students have the opportunity to form long-lasting friendships and professional partnerships. With the assistance of professors and peers, graduate students network in the profession by attending on-campus talks and events as well as participating in off-site conferences.

What graduate education demands of a student might seem intimidating. However, one should always remember that no one expects a polished professional or scholar at the beginning of the process. Remember too that some students are in their very first semester of graduate work, having just completed their undergraduate degree. Others are completing their second year in the program. Still others are seasoned professionals who have worked in a career for years. No one expects a finished product at the beginning. What is expected is a commitment to the never-ending process of becoming the best possible professional or scholar one can possibly be.

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Writing a Thesis

MS Criminology & Criminal Justice Graduate Program Coordinator

A master's thesis is original scholarship written under the direction of a faculty advisor who chairs the master's thesis committee. In addition to the chair, a master's committee consists of two readers—usually full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty in the School of Justice Studies. Students who chose to write masters theses are often interested in pursuing a doctoral degree program.

Like a good journal article, a master's thesis responds to some debate or question in a scholarly literature, bringing fresh evidence or arguments to bear upon the topic.

It is generally 40-80 pages in length. The length, however, can vary based on the nature of the research questions/topic, the methods employed, and the particular composition of a master's thesis committee (which is determined by the student under the direction of his/her committee, particularly the chair).

Students who write a master's thesis generally do so over two semesters. Ideally, students will have a thesis chair and a general topic by the end of their second semester in the program.

To begin and complete a master's thesis, a student must identify a faculty member who is willing to be the thesis chair. Faculty members are not obliged to chair any given thesis project, but they are generally willing to do so for students who have clear ideas and who have demonstrated the research and writing skills, as well as the commitment, necessary to complete a thesis. Students often work with a faculty member whom they have had in a class, but this is not necessary.

The thesis chair can help students assemble the other committee members. The thesis chair is the student's chief contact while he/she writes the master's thesis, but students should stay engaged with the other committee members, especially as it pertains to progress and completion.

Students should be mindful that it is usually more difficult to arrange meetings with faculty over the summer and during other breaks.

Because faculty have constant commitments and deadlines, students should give faculty ample time to read and comment on drafts. It is recommended that students allow 1 to 2 weeks for turnaround. Likewise, students should give themselves ample time to respond to faculty's comments and directions. Again, plan on 1 to 2 weeks for turnaround.

Under the direction of his or her chair, a student should develop a thesis project schedule. This is not a contract, but it should prove helpful in assisting the student and his/her chair in budgeting time for reading, developing annotated bibliographies, crafting a research strategy, designing a research instrument design, testing the research instrument, drafting a proposal, obtaining permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), collecting data, and completing other tasks as needed.

The schedule should budget time for working on the major component parts of a thesis: introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis, and conclusions. The schedule should set a target date for having a complete draft of a thesis. The student should also plan on at least one or two rounds of revisions after a complete draft is submitted.

Students should notify the graduate program administrative assistant of their thesis defense date one month prior to the defense date. In completing a thesis plan schedule, some find it useful to begin with the targeted defense date and work backwards. Students in the thesis option are required to pass an oral comprehensive examination in defense of the thesis (GRD 898c). See the [2016-2017 Graduate Catalog](#). More information regarding the requirements for the master's thesis can be found on the [Graduate School's website](#). The [Noel Studio for Academic Creativity](#) is a resource that may help to develop and improve your preparation and performance on the comprehensive exam.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to meet all deadlines and procedural requirements. As always, the graduate program coordinator and administrative assistant are available to help you through this process.

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Comprehensive Exam (Non-Thesis Option)

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Students in the non-thesis option are required to pass a written comprehensive examination (GRD 897b). See the [2016-2017 Graduate Catalog](#)

The written comprehensive examination is an integrative, independent endpoint assessment of a student's cumulative knowledge of graduate coursework in the field of criminology and criminal justice. It is not intended to test all areas of graduate education, but it allows the student to demonstrate acquired knowledge of important core theory and substantive applications of that theory in practice.

Because the comprehensive examination is intended to show the independent ability of the student, we do not "tutor" students regarding specific questions on the examination either prior to or following the exam.

We administer the comprehensive examination in a controlled setting providing equity for all students. If you have had a demonstrated disability which inhibited your ability to perform in classroom examinations on file with the University, you may make arrangements for the appropriate accommodation when registering for the comprehensive examination. See the [Center for Student Accessibility](#) for further information on ADA regulations and available services at ECU.

The comprehensive examination is divided into two distinct areas: 1) General Criminology and Criminal Justice and 2) Theory and Research.

For each area, students are given two questions. Students are required to choose and answer one question from each of the two areas. Each essay question must contain unique and unduplicated information.

The comprehensive examination is administered within a single day, which is divided into a three-hour morning (General Criminology and Criminal Justice) and a three-hour afternoon session (Theory and Research), with a one-hour lunch break between sessions.

Students are NOT allowed to use any aids or materials not specifically approved by the Graduate Studies Committee (e.g., own paper, laptop computer, dictionary, or reference books). Students are provided all the paper needed for the examination. The responses to the questions are composed on a computer.

After the completed responses are gathered, copies of each response are identified by the final four digits of the student's ECU ID only and distributed to two faculty readers. This blind scoring process insures that faculty readers cannot identify particular students' responses. Responses that are rated

marginal are read additional times.

Each section will be graded on a pass/fail basis. To pass a section, a student must receive a "pass" from two readers.

In the event of a "fail" by one reader and a "pass" by the other, the Graduate Program Coordinator becomes the "tiebreaker" to determine the pass or fail for that particular area.

Students MUST PASS BOTH AREAS in order to successfully pass the comprehensive examination.

Approximately four weeks after the date of the examination, each student will receive a letter from The Graduate School indicating the areas in which the student passed and failed. No individual reader results (scores) will be released to the student.

Readers' comments on failed sections may include, but is not limited to: insufficient interpretation of key problem areas; comprehensive knowledge not demonstrated; poorly written responses; lacking in factual information; lacking in supporting detail; did not answer question; information provided was inadequate/incorrect/incomplete; poorly organized written response; lacking depth in response; unsubstantiated assumptions; and unclear presentation of information.

If the student does not receive a pass on one section, the student will have to retake that section of the exam only. The re-take area question will not be the same question as the one failed. Re-take examinations can be taken not less than 60 days nor more than one year after the exam is failed.

Students may only take the comprehensive exam twice.

The [Noel Studio for Academic Creativity](#) is a resource that may help to develop and improve your preparation and performance on the comprehensive exam.

Example questions from past comprehensive exams can be obtained from the MS Criminology and Criminal Justice Administrative Assistant or Graduate Program Coordinator.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to meet all deadlines and procedural requirements. As always, the graduate program coordinator and administrative assistant are available to help you through this process.

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Graduate Assistantships

MS Criminology & Criminal Justice Graduate Program Coordinator

The MS Criminology and Criminal Justice program provides a limited number of graduate assistantships to qualified graduate students. Duties may include teaching, research or service related to our program of study. All available GA positions can be found, and applied to, via the [Human Resources Online Employment System](#). Students can also speak with the Graduate Program Coordinator concerning available opportunities. See the [Graduate Education and Research webpage](#) for more information on graduate assistantships.

Typically, the stipend for each academic year is \$5,600 per semester — Fall and Spring. Graduate assistantships are 16 weeks, beginning the first day of classes each semester and working through the last day of finals week. In addition, a partial tuition waiver of six semester hours of graduate credit on a full-time (20 hours per week) appointment is also funded through the Graduate School. Graduate assistantships funded through other sources might not provide a tuition waiver. Full-time graduate assistants are expected to work 20 hours each week while half-time graduate assistants work 10 hours per week. Stipends are paid on the 15th and 30th of every month. Graduate Assistants are expected to enroll only in course work directly related to the degree requirements. Students who withdraw from classes and fall below the minimum number of hours will have their assistantship revoked.

A graduate assistant's duties will vary and be determined by the faculty member to whom the assistant is assigned. It is vitally important that the graduate students stay in contact with the professor to whom they are assigned. The Graduate Program Coordinator will notify faculty and graduate assistants of their particular assignments. It is imperative that the graduate assistant contact the faculty member to whom he/she is assigned no later than the end of the first week of classes. Preferably, this initial contact would take place prior to the first day of class. While a full-time graduate assistant can expect to work on average 20 hours per week, one should realize that some weeks will have less than 20 hours of work and others will have more.

Graduate Assistants are appointed for one semester with the possibility of renewal. In our program, a GA may hold an assistantship appointment for a maximum of two academic years (four semesters) not including summer semesters. Continuing as a GA is contingent upon the following: satisfactory progress toward the degree; maintaining a 3.0 or better cumulative GPA; maintaining full-time enrollment status (minimum of 9 graduate hours); and fulfillment of duties as determined in the assistantship appointment. Students who have probationary admission status or who are on academic probation will not be approved for a Graduate Assistantship position.

Graduate Assistants are subject to the ethical precepts of our field and the academic profession. Graduate Assistants should be familiar with applicable policies, regulations, and benefits, including the academic regulations of the Graduate School (see the [Graduate Catalog](#) under Section 4). Other policies, such as [Academic Integrity](#), are available on the [Academic Affairs website](#).

An assistantship program is intended to facilitate the progress toward timely completion of the degree program. A graduate assistantship should not impede the educational objectives of the student. If the requirements of an assistantship seem to be at odds with reasonable educational objections, the student should discuss the matter with the faculty member to whom he or she is assigned. If this fails to resolve the situation, the student and/or the faculty member should consult the Graduate Program Coordinator.

If a faculty member believes that his or her assigned graduate assistant is not meeting work expectations, the faculty member should first attempt to resolve the issue by discussing the matter with his or her assigned graduate assistant. If this fails to resolve the situation, the student and/or the faculty member should consult the Graduate Program Coordinator.

The Graduate School has specified that a graduate assistantship appointment may be terminated before expiration of the specified time for the following causes: incompetence, inefficiency, or neglect of duty; misconduct that is job-related; delinquency in academic work; moral turpitude; financial exigency; discontinuance of the work in which the appointment is made; chronic physical or mental ailment or defect which interferes with the performance of required duties; voluntary mutual agreement. In the event a graduate assistant resigns, written notification, with the termination date specified, must be submitted to the Graduate School and the SJS chair. If a graduate assistant resigns an assistantship in one department to accept an assistantship in another department, the graduate assistant must obtain the written permission of the chairs of both departments.

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Contacts, Links, & Policies

MS Criminology & Criminal Justice Graduate Program Coordinator

Contact Persons:

Dr. Scott Hunt
 Graduate Program Coordinator
 Stratton Room 407
 scott.hunt@eku.edu
 (859) 622-5074

Tina Clark
 Administrative Assistant
 Stratton Room 403-A
 tina.clark@eku.edu
 (859) 622-1980

Email:

EKU has specified that “all official university business conducted internally and with outside agencies via email will be done through an appropriate university email account” ([EKU Policy 11.2.1P](#)). The University, the School of Justice Studies, and the MS Criminology and Criminal Justice Graduate Program use EKU email addresses as an official form of communication. It is the students’ responsibility to check their EKU email accounts regularly for important dates, events, and information. If you are not receiving email from the graduate program, check with Tina Clark to make sure we have your correct email address. *All university-related business must use EKU email account rather than those provided by external email sponsors.*

Online/Web Course Policy:

It is SJS policy that first semester students and probationary or provisional admission students are not allowed to take online courses. If you enroll in such a course you will be dropped from enrollment before the semester starts. Exceptions are available at the discretion of the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Degree Works:

EKU has a degree progress tracking system called [Degree Works](#). Each student has his or her academic history and plan saved in Degree Works. Monitor this regularly. [For assistance with Degree Works](#).

Registration:

Instructions and assistance with registration can be found at the [Information and Technology webpage](#).

Application for Graduation:

Must be completed online with the [Graduate School](#).

Academic Calendars:

Academic calendars can be found at the [Colonel’s Compass](#).

First Day Attendance:

Students absent the first day of class may be disenrolled. See the [Registrar’s document](#) for details of the process.

MS Criminology and Criminal Justice Student Resources:

Useful forms and links can be found at [Student Resources under the MS Criminology and Criminal Justice webpage](#).

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Criminal Justice Graduate Student Association

The Criminal Justice Graduate Student Association (CJGSA) is an organization that:

1. Provides a forum where matters of concern to graduate and professional students may be discussed, where opinions on actions and proposals of the University Administration and campus departments may be expressed, and where proposals of the Administration, departments and graduate groups may be initiated
2. Conducts programs and services of special interest to graduate students.

Activities within the CJGSA:

1. “Brown Bags”- discussions/lectures hosted by outside speakers, faculty, or graduate students
2. Movie Nights– a movie pertaining to something criminal justice/academically related is shown. A movie night is usually followed by discussion (which can take place at another time in a brown bag)
3. Workshops/Seminars– usually multi-hour long events arranged once or twice a year. Topics vary

Membership requirements:

1. No minimum GPA requirements
2. \$5 member dues required per academic year
3. Open to all students, faculty, and staff that support the goals of the organization (only Criminal Justice graduate students may vote and hold office)

[Visit the CJGSA website](#)

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Alpha Phi Sigma

The Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Phi Sigma, the National Criminal Justice Honor Society, would like to welcome you to the Graduate program for the College of Justice and Safety and Eastern Kentucky University.

As a student in this program you have the ability to become apart of our nationally recognized organization.

As an organization dedicated to academics and service, we are the only student organization allowed to be affiliated with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS).

Each year, chapters around the country come together during the ACJS conference to compete for various awards and individual scholarships.

To be eligible, graduate students need to be enrolled in a graduate program in criminal justice or related field; have completed four courses; have a minimum GPA of 3.4 on a 4.0 scale or rank in the upper 25% of their class.

If you feel you meet these requirements we would love to hear from you. We have a lot going on and are always happy to have new members involved to expand our chapter's abilities. Feel free to contact us at any time.

Current Advisor: [James Wells](#)

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