

**Master of Science in
Criminal Justice and Criminology
(MSCJC)**

Student Handbook*



Revised Fall 2017

*Students are also expected to comply with the Graduate Catalog and other University policies and procedures not included in this handbook.

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY (MSCJC)

We are very pleased that you have decided to attend the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and become a part of the Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology program. The Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology (MSCJC) is designed to provide students with competency in research, policy planning, evaluation, agency management, and preparation for continued graduate study in criminal justice and criminology. The program assists students to develop and apply research expertise toward resolution of contemporary justice practice and policy issues.

Our faculty and staff are committed to building programs that will be competitive with the most renowned programs in the field. We are glad that you have joined us in our pursuit of knowledge in criminal justice and criminology.

In addition to the policies detailed below, students are advised to review UTSA Graduate School policies (<http://copp.utsa.edu/department/graduate-program/>) and the UTSA Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.utsa.edu/graduate/>).

Program Admission Requirements

To qualify for unconditional admission, applicants must satisfy University-wide graduate admission requirements and submit all transcripts, two letters of recommendation, and a personal statement. GRE scores are optional; applicants can strengthen their application for admission by submitting their GRE test scores. An applicant admitted unconditionally as a degree-seeking student must possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university or equivalent training at a foreign institution; have a grade point average of 3.0 or better in the last 60 semester credit hours of undergraduate work as well as all previous graduate work; have 18 hours in criminal justice, criminology, or a closely-related discipline, or professional experience in the justice system; be in good standing at the last institution attended; and have the recommendation of the Criminal Justice and Criminology Graduate Program Committee. Students who do not meet these criteria may be admitted conditionally or on probation as degree-seeking depending on the nature of the deficiency. Admission as a special student may be considered by the Graduate Program Committee upon request of the applicant.

Advising

The Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) serves as the faculty advisor for all graduate students. The GAR can advise students about degree plans, electives, the nonthesis (comprehensive exam)

option vs. the thesis option, and other program-related issues. New students are required to attend the orientation that the department holds prior to the fall semester. Continuing students should schedule a meeting with the GAR during the semester in which they will complete their first 12 credit hours in the program to review their progress and finalize their degree plan.

MSCJC Degree Program Requirements

A minimum of 36 hours is required for the MSCJC degree, exclusive of coursework that may be required to remove a deficiency or satisfy prerequisites for particular free electives. This includes 5 core courses (15 semester hours), 3 prescribed elective courses (9 semester hours), and 2 free elective courses (6 semester hours). The remaining 6 semester hours are fulfilled through the nonthesis option (written comprehensive examination) **or** the thesis option.

A. Core Courses

The core courses listed below (15 semester hours), along with any undergraduate prerequisite courses, should be taken early in the program to efficiently complete the program of study. Students are encouraged to enroll in CRJ 5073, CRJ 5103, and CRJ 6373 in their first semester and CRJ 5083 and CRJ 5123 in their second semester. Students should meet with the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) to develop their Program of Study.

CRJ 5073	Research Methods
CRJ 5083	Quantitative Analysis
CRJ 5103	The Criminal Justice System
CRJ 5123	Criminal Justice Policy
CRJ 6373	Criminological Theory

B. Prescribed Electives

All students must take 3 courses (9 semester hours) of prescribed electives in the discipline. No more than six hours of independent study courses, regardless of discipline, will apply toward the degree.

Prescribed Elective Courses:

CRJ 5133	Justice Organizations and Administration
CRJ 6103	Seminar on Topics in Theory of Crime and Justice
CRJ 6123	Seminar on Topics in Research Methods
CRJ 6203	Seminar on Topics in Corrections Policy

CRJ 6213	Gender and Crime
CRJ 6233	Minorities and Crime
CRJ 6303	Seminar on Topics in Policing and Crime Prevention
CRJ 6343	Study Abroad: International Criminal Justice
CRJ 6403	Seminar on Topics in Law and Society
CRJ 6953	Independent Study

C. Free Electives

Of the required 15 semester credit hours of electives, up to 6 semester credit hours can be free elective courses (though students are not required to take free electives). These courses may be taken from outside the discipline in consultation with the GAR or from the prescribed electives listed above. Courses selected from the approved list below do not require GAR approval. However, courses not on the approved list require that the student consult with and obtain the written approval of the GAR before enrollment. Note that certain courses have prerequisites. Students should refer to specific course descriptions in the current UTSA Graduate Catalog for information regarding prerequisites. Although the Department of Criminal Justice does not currently assign plus or minus grades, classes offered by other departments may use plus and minus grades. It is a university requirement that no courses in which grades of less than “C” (below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale) were earned may be applied to a graduate degree. Therefore, C-grades will not be applied to the MSCJC degree.

Approved Free Elective Courses:

ALT 6933 Community-Based Research

BBL 5013 Multicultural Groups in the United States

BBL 5133 Latino Biculturalism in the United States

COU 5213 Counseling Theories

COU 5613 Substance Abuse and Chemical Dependency Counseling

COU 5673 Youth Mentoring Programs and Practices

EDP 5003 Psychological Learning Theories

EDP 5033 Human Development Across the Lifespan

EDP 5303 Principles and Techniques of Evaluation

EDP 6233 Mental Health Services in the Schools

EDP 6643 Child and Adolescent Psychopathology

HIS 6113 Law and Society in America
HIS 6163 Women in the U.S.
HIS 6173 Latinas/Latinos in the U.S.

MGT 5003 Conceptual Foundations of Management
MGT 5043 Management and Behavior in Organizations
MGT 5053 Advanced Organizational Communication
MGT 5093 Leadership
MGT 5133 Organizational Decision Making
MGT 5643 Management of Personnel and Human Resources
MGT 5733 Employment Law and Legislation

PAD 5003 Introduction to Public Service Leadership and Management
PAD 5013 Managerial Communication
PAD 5033 Theories of Public Organizations
PAD 5223 Urban Management
PAD 5303 Ethics in Government Administration
PAD 5343 Human Resource Management in the Public Sector
PAD 5363 Public Budgeting and Finance
PAD 5373 Social Policy
PAD 5443 Diversity Policies and Management
PAD 5953 Grant Development and Proposal Writing
PAD 6213 Social Justice
PAD 6233 Law and Policy
PAD 6243 Administrative Law

POL 5023 Political Economy
POL 5063 Political Philosophy
POL 5083 Geo-Political Context of Homeland Security and Defense
POL 5093 Politics of U.S. National Security Policy Making
POL 5133 Ethnic and Gender Politics
POL 5243 Theories of Justice and Rights
POL 5273 Contemporary Political Theory and Social Policy
POL 5373 Human Rights
POL 5413 Political Psychology
POL 5443 Polling and Survey Research Techniques
POL 5503 Constitutional Law and Judicial Decision-Making
POL 5783 International Security
POL 5913 Design and Management of Geographic Information Systems

POL 5943 Threat Environments and Homeland Security and Defense

PSY 5303 Developmental Psychology

PSY 5313 Seminar in Psychopathology

PSY 5323 Individual Differences and Personality Assessment

PSY 5333 Social Psychology

PSY 5343 Human Cognition

PSY 6113 Psychological Measurement

SOC 5003 Sociological Theory

SOC 5033 Qualitative Research Methods

SOC 5043 Evaluation Research

SOC 5103 Advanced Conceptualization and Measurement

SOC 5143 Demography and Community Trends

SOC 5203 Social Stratification

SOC 5123 Family Contexts and Social Change

SOC 5213 Race and Ethnic Relations

SOC 5223 Mexican Americans: Community, Culture and Class

SOC 5233 Sociology of Gender

SOC 5253 Border Studies

SOC 5423 Social Psychology

STA 5093 Introduction to Statistical Inference

STA 5103 Applied Statistical Methods

STA 5313 Theory of Sample Surveys with Applications

STA 5413 Non-Parametric Statistics

SWK 5013 Human Behavior and the Social Environment

SWK 5113 Generalist Practice

SWK 5233 Global issues in Social Work

SWK 5513 Cultural Competence

SWK 5633 Transformational Leadership

D. Option I – Nonthesis (Written Comprehensive Examination)

Students who select the nonthesis option are required to take the written comprehensive examination and complete two additional electives (6 hours). It is required that one of these additional electives be CRJ 6383 Capstone Course. Students must successfully complete at least 24 credit hours (5 core courses and 3 elective courses) to enroll in CRJ 6383 Capstone Course. It

is graded as Credit/Non-Credit. This course provides a *review* of the five core courses from which all exam questions will be drawn. The Graduate Catalog indicates that this course will culminate in the comprehensive exam; however, in practice, this course will operate as a stand-alone course. A student must complete this course to satisfy the requirements of the degree, but can also receive credit for this course without successfully completing the comprehensive exam.

To sit for the comprehensive exam, a student must complete the following requirements:

1. The student must have successfully completed CRJ 6383 Capstone Course or be currently enrolled in the course.
2. The student must submit the “Intent to Complete the Comprehensive Exam” form prior to the deadline (February 1st for the Spring exam; September 15th for the Fall exam). Once this form is submitted, it is expected the student will sit for the exam in that semester. A student may withdraw from completing the exam only if extenuating circumstances exist and with permission of the GAR and Department Chair.

The comprehensive exam consists of five sections, with each one reflecting the material covered in one of the five core courses. The student is given one hour to complete each section, with breaks allotted throughout. The instructor of the CRJ 6383 Capstone course determines the order of the questions. It is a closed book exam – no outside materials are allowed into the exam.¹ Once the exam is completed, the Comprehensive Exam Committee commences with the grading process. Each comprehensive exam committee member grades all sections of the exam. *To pass the comprehensive exam, a student must pass all 5 sections.* A majority of the Comprehensive Exam Committee must vote to pass the student on each section.

In the event that a student does not pass all five sections, the student needs to re-take the comprehensive exam in a subsequent semester. Importantly, the student does not need to re-enroll in CRJ 6383 to re-take the comprehensive exam. This is a slight deviation from the Graduate Catalog, but it is in the best interest of the student, as it does not require re-taking CRJ 6383. Instead, the following protocol applies to any student who does not pass the comprehensive exam on the first attempt:

¹ All questions are answered on a computer in a Word document. At the completion of the exam, answers are saved to an external drive for grading purposes (provided by the department). Alternatively, a student may hand write their response in a Blue Book (provided by the student). In this case, the Blue Book is photocopied and the student has 24 hours to convert their answer to a Word document. *No changes to student responses are allowed – the answers must be typed verbatim into the Word document without additions, changes, or deletions.* All exam materials submitted to the department office. Both the typed version and the original handwritten responses for each student are dispersed to the comprehensive exam committee for grading purposes.

- Enroll in CRJ 6961² Comprehensive Examination for one credit hour in the subsequent long semester the student wishes to re-take the comprehensive exam if not enrolled in any other courses
- Submit the “Intent to Complete the Comprehensive Exam” form by the deadline
- Apply to graduate in that semester
- Re-take the comprehensive exam during that semester
- IMPORTANT:
 - A student may only re-take the comprehensive exam twice after the initial attempt.
 - A student has one calendar year (two semesters) from their initial attempt to successfully pass the comprehensive exam. For example, if unsuccessful in the Spring, the student has the option to re-take the comprehensive exam in the subsequent Fall and Spring. If unsuccessful in both attempts, the student is dismissed from the program and must re-apply. If a student does not re-take the comprehensive exam in the Fall, there is only one opportunity in the Spring to successfully complete the comprehensive exam. Thus, while there are two opportunities to re-take the exam, these opportunities are limited to one calendar year.

Students may request a meeting with the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee to review their performance once they are informed of the results. If the student is unsatisfied with the outcome of this meeting, they may follow the University’s Academic and Grade Grievance Procedure (see <http://www.utsa.edu/InfoGuide/ch4g.html>).

E. Option II – Thesis

This option is available only with permission from an instructor and the Graduate Advisor of Record. Students electing the Thesis option must enroll in CRJ 6993 or CRJ 6996 Master’s Thesis for a total of 6 credit hours, which includes completion of an oral comprehensive exam (i.e., successful proposal defense). Students failing to complete all requirements of the thesis option within the 6 credit hours would enroll for 1 credit hour of CRJ 6991 Master’s Thesis in the semester they are to defend the thesis if no other courses are being taken that term. The Master’s thesis requires compliance with UTSA thesis requirements and a successful final thesis defense. Students electing the Thesis option must complete the Intent to Write a Thesis form and secure formal acceptance of the thesis topic prior to enrolling in Master’s Thesis credit hours. Students may begin taking Master’s Thesis (CRJ 6993,6) credit hours when they have completed

² CRJ 6961 Comprehensive Examination is not to be taken as part of the degree plan for completing the Comprehensive Exam Option. This course is reserved for students who were previously unsuccessful in completing the Comprehensive Exam.

a minimum of 24 credit hours in the program.

The first credit hours of Master's Thesis are devoted to the development and presentation of the research proposal. The proposal presentation will require that the student complete and present a comprehensive research proposal to their committee or supervising faculty, interested members of graduate faculty, and graduate students. This requires that the student demonstrate their breadth of knowledge by applying what they have learned to the investigation of a particular research question or policy problem.

All students who have elected the thesis option must present an oral defense of the thesis before the Thesis Committee. The oral defense consists of a presentation by the student followed by questioning by the Thesis Committee members. The oral defense will be conducted no later than 14 calendar days before final examinations of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded. The defense will take place before an open forum in which other faculty, students, and other interested parties may attend. Students must defend their thesis successfully in order to complete the thesis requirement.

Students should work with the Thesis Committee to identify a timeline and set deadlines that will allow the student sufficient time to conduct the necessary research, prepare written drafts, permit the Committee's review of the draft, and allow the student to make revisions based on the feedback from Committee members. Students should understand that writing a thesis is an iterative process that often includes many cycles of revision before it is completed. Students should not assume that their Committee will approve their thesis in time to meet their desire to finish in a particular semester. However, establishing and maintaining a schedule that includes time for several cycles of revision is recommended and will assist students in completing their thesis as quickly as possible.

Students must also comply with all UTSA Graduate School requirements, including all formatting requirements, final submission requirements, and deadlines for thesis submission. Please visit <http://graduateschool.utsa.edu/current-students/category/thesis-dissertation/> for current Graduate Student requirements.

The steps below are for students selecting the Thesis option:

1. Secure the approval of the supervising professor, who is also Chair of the Thesis Committee. The Thesis Committee consists of the Thesis Chair and two additional members of the Graduate Faculty. The student is expected to work closely with the Thesis Chair in selecting the thesis topic and in completing other details of their study. The student must complete the Intent to Write a Thesis form and secure formal acceptance of the thesis topic prior to enrolling in Master's Thesis credit hours.

2. Submit a preliminary draft for approval by the Thesis Chair no later than 45 calendar days before final examinations of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded. The first draft should demonstrate the student understands the preparation guidelines and it is understood the text is still being modified.
3. Secure approval of the draft by the Thesis Committee. This step is intended to ensure that the thesis meets the required standards for content, expression, format, spelling, and accuracy. Candidates are responsible for meeting the standards of those reading and approving the thesis.
4. Submit the final copy of the thesis to the supervising professor and Thesis Committee no later than 20 calendar days before final examinations of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded. This copy of the thesis must be the original and, if acceptable, must be signed by the Thesis Chair and members of the Thesis Committee.
5. The format of the thesis must follow University regulations. The detailed requirements of thesis formatting guidelines and deadlines are available on the Graduate School website at: <http://graduateschool.utsa.edu/current-students/category/thesis-dissertation/>. The original copy must conform to the most current format prescribed in the Guide for the Preparation of a Master's Thesis at time of submission to the Graduate School.
6. Students who are writing a thesis MUST submit a copy of the completed and committee signed and approved thesis to the College office in order to get a grade.

GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Completing Admission Conditions

If a student has been admitted with admission conditions, they are encouraged to complete the coursework early in the program. Once the admission conditions have been met, the student must contact the department to complete a "Removal of Admission Conditions" form and submit it to the Student Development Specialist (SDS). Proper signatures will be obtained and forwarded to the Graduate School to remove the conditions from the student's permanent file.

Academic Dishonesty

The University can best function and accomplish its objectives in an atmosphere of high ethical standards. All students are expected and encouraged to contribute to such an atmosphere in every way possible, especially by observing all accepted principles of academic honesty. It is

recognized, however, that a large university will include a few students who do not understand, appreciate, or practice these principles. Consequently, alleged cases of academic dishonesty involving UTSA students will inevitably occur.

Academic or scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student, or the attempt to commit such acts. Academic dishonesty is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and is addressed in the UTSA Information Bulletin, Appendix B, Sec. 203.

Academic Probation

A student is placed on academic probation when he/she:

- a. fails to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0
- b. receives a GPA of less than 3.0 in the current term
- c. receives a grade of “D” in any course in a term, regardless of the level of the course
- d. has been reinstated following academic dismissal
- e. when a student does not meet all requirements for unconditional or regular admission and who, by special action, is admitted on academic probation

The student remains on academic probation until none of the above conditions apply. Students on probation may continue taking courses but should be advised regarding course load, study habits, outside commitments, etc.

Academic Dismissal

A student is placed on academic dismissal if:

- a. their GPA is less than 2.0 in any term
- b. a grade of “F” in any course is received
- c. a graduate level student is admitted on probation with conditions and fails to meet the condition

The Associate Dean’s Office notifies the student, department and GAR. A dismissal letter is sent along with the course information in which they received an “F” or “D”.

Petition for Reinstatement

A student who has been dismissed academically may petition for reinstatement. Normally, such

reinstatement is requested after a student has remained out of school one long semester (summer is not considered a long semester); however, under exceptional circumstances, a petition may be considered earlier.

Students who have been academically dismissed and who desire to continue in the university should address a letter containing all explanations, recommendations, or doctors' statements in support of reinstatement to the Dean of the Graduate School on or before June 15th for Fall semester, October 15th for Spring semester, and March 15th for Summer Semester.

Timeline for Degree Completion

Students have six years to complete their degree requirements.

Students who have not completed a graduate course in two years are no longer active and MUST reapply for admission to the MSCJC program. If admitted, the student will be bound by the requirements of the current catalog.

All core courses expire after 6 years and MUST be retaken.³ All elective courses expire after 6 years; however, students may petition to have elective courses between 6 and 8 years old accepted. Students who petition to have expired elective courses accepted must submit the course syllabus with their petition. If the syllabus is not available, they must submit an argument for the continued relevance of the course for the MSCJC degree. Elective courses MUST be retaken after 8 years.

Transfer of Courses from within the University of Texas System

It is the policy that all academic institutions within the UT System may accept graduate credit from each other but specific courses must be evaluated for transfer.

Transfer of Courses from another University

Ordinarily, all work for the master's degree must be completed at UTSA. Transfer credit of usually not more than 6 semester credit hours may be allowed for graduate coursework completed at another accredited institution upon the approval of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee in which the major area is located. Upon petition by the student, recommendation of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee, and approval by the Dean of

³ Exemptions will be granted only in the most extreme situations (e.g., deployment, medical leave) and must be approved by the Graduate Advisor of Record, the Department Chair, and the Associate Dean.

the Graduate School, a maximum of one-third of the semester credit hours of coursework (exclusive of thesis) required for a degree at UTSA may be accepted as transfer credit for the degree. If the transfer credit is approved it will not show up on the student's transcript until graduation.

Below are the steps to complete this request:

1. Student must meet with their graduate advisor to determine if the course(s) is a suitable transfer. Student should bring transcript, course description(s) and/or syllabi of the requested course(s).
2. Graduate advisor writes a brief statement indicating similarities between courses and attaches that to the transfer of credit form. If graduate advisor does not teach the course, then she/he needs to ask appropriate faculty to write a brief statement indicating similarities between the courses.
3. The graduate advisor approves the course(s) to be transferred to the student's Program of Study; the student must provide a transcript to the faculty advisor.
4. The faculty advisor then fills out and signs the "Transfer of Graduate credit towards Master's Degree" and gives the transcript with the form to the GAR for approval then sends it to the SDS.
5. The SDS will forward the transcript and the form to the Dean for consideration.
6. The petition is then sent to Dean of Graduate School for final approval.
7. Once the petition is received back from the Graduate School, the form is placed in the student's permanent file.

Transfer of More than 6 Credit Hours from another University

No more than 6 graduate hours will be allowed to transfer into UTSA; however, more hours may be requested to transfer but only with an approved petition. A maximum of one-third of the semester credit hours of coursework required for a degree at UTSA may be accepted as transfer credit for the degree.

Incompletes

Incomplete work must be made up no later than the end of the final examination period one year from the semester the Incomplete was received and before the student's graduation. If the work is not completed within this time, the "IN" remains on the student's record, and credit may be earned only when the student reenrolls in the course and completes the entire course satisfactorily. The time limit does not apply to graduate-level thesis, internship, or dissertation courses, except that an "IN" cannot be removed after a degree is awarded. The time limit does apply to all other graduate courses, including special problems and independent study courses.

Independent Study Courses

Under no circumstances can Independent Studies be used for MSCJC core courses.

No more than six hours of independent study courses, regardless of discipline, will apply toward a degree. In addition the following requirements must be met:

1. Student must meet with their faculty advisor to ensure they approve of the Independent Study as part of their Program of Study.
2. If their faculty advisor approves of this request then the student must then make arrangements with a tenured or tenure-track faculty member who has expertise in the area of study.
3. This faculty member will complete the independent study form and the student must obtain proper signatures from the Graduate Advisor of Record before submitting the form to the Associate Dean's Office for final approval.
4. The final decision is placed in the student's file.

Substitutions

All course substitutions must be approved by the Graduate Advisor of Record and the Associate Dean of the College. The process requires the following steps:

1. Student must petition this request to their faculty advisor.
2. Student will then meet with their faculty advisor (GAR) to discuss this and obtain approval to allow this request. If approved, the faculty advisor will complete the substitution form along with a brief explanation supporting this request.
3. This form will then be sent to the Department Chair for proper signatures.
4. After this the form will be sent to the Associate Dean for consideration.
5. The substitution form will then be sent to the Dean of Graduate School for final approval.
6. Once the substitution form is received back from the Graduate School, the final decision is placed in the student's file

**If applicable, submit petitions, waivers and/or substitutions one semester prior to students' expected graduation to ensure processing and avoid delays.*

GRADUATION

It is the student's responsibility to apply for graduation through ASAP. They must keep the confirmation number given to them at the end of the application for their own records. If they

did not receive a confirmation number, then they did not successfully apply for graduation and will have to re-apply. Deadline to apply for graduation is on or before September 15th for Fall semester, February 15th for Spring semester, and June 15th for Summer semester.

Final Semester Checklist

Students who plan to graduate any semester must comply with the following University-wide requirements:

- The student must be admitted as a graduate degree-seeking student for the degree sought.
- If the student was admitted with admission conditions, the student must ensure conditions have been met and removed.
- Subject to the six-year limitation, the student must have satisfactorily fulfilled the degree requirements as specified in her/his Program of Study under the Graduate Catalog that they fall under.
- If applicable, submit petitions, waivers and/or substitutions. Follow-up with Faculty Advisor and/or Graduate Advisor of Record to ensure requests have been approved. Only approved petitions, waivers and/or substitutions will apply towards student's degree plan.
- The student must formally apply for graduation online through ASAP no later than the deadline for the semester that he/she intends to graduate.
- The student must successfully complete a Comprehensive Examination.
- Students who have selected the thesis option must successfully complete all the thesis requirements, including the oral defense.
- The student must be in good standing at the close of the semester in which the degree is to be received.
- The student must maintain an overall and Program of Study GPA of at least a 3.0.
- No courses in which grades of less than "C" may be applied towards a student's graduate degree.