

M.S. in Criminal Justice

General Requirements

The graduate program in criminal justice offers three pathways to a Master of Science degree in criminal justice: Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C. All three pathways require the completion of traditional coursework as well as a culminating thesis, paper, or project.

Plan A requires students to complete a thesis. A master's thesis involves original research and is the traditional path for students seeking to pursue doctoral education in criminal justice. Plan B culminates in a policy paper. Such papers are substantial writing endeavors, but do not involve the collection and dissemination of original research. Plan C does not involve writing a paper at the conclusion of the program. Rather, the culminating project for this path is an oral presentation covering a criminal justice-related topic of interest to the student and approved by the student's adviser. This path may be especially suited for criminal justice professionals seeking an advance degree to further their career and personal development goals.

The curricular structure of M.S. degree under the different plans are presented below. Students in all three paths must complete designated foundation courses, as well as elective credits.

M.S. in Criminal Justice (Plan A)

Foundation Courses (15 credits)

CJ 703 (3)	Advanced Criminology
CJ 709 (3)	Criminal Justice Policy
CJ 702 (3)	Program Evaluation
STAT 725 (3)	Applied Statistics
CJ 734 (3)	Advanced Criminal Justice Methods

Elective Courses (9 credits)

(Students must complete one course from one area and two courses from another)

Criminology:

CJ 721 (3)	Individual Theories of Crime
CJ 722 (3)	Structural Theories of Crime
CJ 750 (3)	Violence
CJ 752 (3)	Crime and the Life Course
CJ 768 (3)	Gender and Justice

Corrections:

CJ 707 (3)	Juvenile Corrections
CJ 733 (3)	Issues in Institutional Corrections
CJ 762 (3)	Community Corrections
CJ 763 (3)	Correctional Rehabilitation

CJ 764 (3) Punishment and Society

Policing:

CJ 754 (3) Police and Society
CJ 760 (3) Police and Race Issues
CJ 761 (3) Police Effectiveness
CJ 765 (3) Classics in Policing

Other electives:

CJ 702 (3) Program Evaluation
CJ 755 (3) Criminal Justice Leadership and Administration
CJ 766 (3) Managing Liability and Risk in Criminal Justice (proposed/under review)
CJ 796 (3) Special Topics
CJ 606 (3) Crime and Delinquency
CJ 607 (3) Deviant Behavior

(Note: course substitutions may be made with the approval of the graduate coordinator)

Terminal Paper (6 credits)

CJ 798 (6) Master's Thesis

M.S. in Criminal Justice (Plan B)

Foundation Courses (15 credits)

CJ 703 (3) Advanced Criminology
CJ 709 (3) Criminal Justice Policy
CJ 702 (3) Program Evaluation
STAT 725 (3) Applied Statistics
CJ 734 (3) Advanced Criminal Justice Methods

Elective Courses (12 credits)

CJ 707 (3) Juvenile Corrections
CJ 721 (3) Individual Theories of Crime
CJ 722 (3) Structural Theories of Crime
CJ 733 (3) Issues in Institutional Corrections
CJ 750 (3) Violence
CJ 752 (3) Crime and the Life Course
CJ 754 (3) Police and Society
CJ 755 (3) Administration and Leadership in Criminal Justice
CJ 760 (3) Police and Race Issues
CJ 761 (3) Police Effectiveness
CJ 762 (3) Community Corrections

CJ 763 (3)	Correctional Rehabilitation
CJ 764 (3)	Punishment and Society
CJ 765 (3)	Classics in Policing
CJ 766 (3)	Managing Liability and Risk in Criminal Justice (proposed/under review)
CJ 768 (3)	Gender and Justice

(Note: course substitutions may be made with the approval of the graduate coordinator)

Terminal Paper (3 credits)

CJ 797 (3)	Policy-based Paper
------------	--------------------

Master of Criminal Justice (Plan C)

Foundation Courses (12 credits)

CJ 703 (3)	Advanced Criminology
CJ 709 (3)	Criminal Justice Policy
CJ 702 (3)	Program Evaluation
CJ 734 (3)	Advanced Criminal Justice Methods

Elective Courses (15 credits)

CJ 707 (3)	Juvenile Corrections
CJ 721 (3)	Individual Theories of Crime
CJ 722 (3)	Structural Theories of Crime
CJ 733 (3)	Issues in Institutional Corrections
CJ 750 (3)	Violence
CJ 752 (3)	Crime and the Life Course
CJ 754 (3)	Police and Society
CJ 755 (3)	Administration and Leadership in Criminal Justice
CJ 760 (3)	Police and Race Issues
CJ 761 (3)	Police Effectiveness
CJ 762 (3)	Community Corrections
CJ 763 (3)	Correctional Rehabilitation
CJ 764 (3)	Punishment and Society
CJ 765 (3)	Classics in Policing
CJ 766 (3)	Managing Liability and Risk in Criminal Justice (proposed/under review)
CJ 768 (3)	Gender and Justice

(Note: course substitutions may be made with the approval of the graduate coordinator)

Culminating Project (3 credits)

CJ 793 (3) Individual Study

All students are required to achieve a grade of “B” or better in all courses. Nine credits per semester are considered a full-time graduate load. Full-time graduate assistants (20 hours/week) are expected to maintain a full-time course load. Any graduate assistant wishing to register for more than 10 credits in a regular semester must secure the approval of their academic dean and the Dean of the Graduate School.

All requirements for the M.S. degree must be completed within a period of 7 consecutive years. Graduate credit for any course work that is more than 7 calendar years old at the time of graduation may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

Master’s Thesis or Policy Paper (Plan A and Plan B)

A written master’s thesis or policy paper is required for completing the M.S. degree in criminal justice under Plans A or B, respectively. The thesis or policy paper must be completed and orally presented to the student’s committee for defense.

The goal of the master’s thesis is to demonstrate the student’s ability for independent, original research productivity. In particular, the thesis must embody results of original research focusing on a significant problem or issue in criminal justice which constitutes a definitive contribution to knowledge.

The policy paper must show originality and demonstrate the student’s capacity to locate, digest and integrate relevant empirical and other information to effectively analyze a policy issue or problem and make recommendations. Specifically, the policy paper should include the following items: (1) Introduction--present and discuss the policy problem or issue featured in your paper; (2) Review of existing research/literature on the policy; (3) offer a proposal to address policy problem or issue; (4) create a research design for a prospective study that would further advance the understanding of the policy issue and/or potential solutions; and (5) Conclusion.

Thesis/Paper Requirements

General instructions on format are included in the North Dakota State University Graduate School Guidelines for the Preparation of Disquisitions, which is available at the Varsity Mart, and can be found at <http://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool>.

Thesis/Paper Committee

Each prospective candidate for the M.S. degree under Plan A or B must select a Thesis/Paper advisor who will then assist in the selection of a 3-person advisory committee. The student, with the approval of the department chair, will select a major advisor. The advisor-student

relationship must be mutually acceptable. The advisor will act as the chair of the student's advisory committee. The advisor and student shall agree upon two additional committee members. One of these members must be from the faculty. The other member may be either a faculty member or a qualified off-campus expert in the field (off-campus experts must have a PhD and be approved by the student's advisor and the Graduate Council). One committee member must be from outside the student's academic college.

NOTE: Additional qualified individuals may participate as committee members following approval by the graduate dean upon a recommendation accompanied by rationale and curriculum vitae by the appropriate department/program chair and academic dean.

The advisory committee agreed upon by the advisor and student and approved by the department chair and the academic dean shall be recommended to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval. Each committee member shall have an equal vote in committee decisions.

The plan of study should be submitted to the Graduate School for approval not later than the term immediately after the supervisory committee is formed and must be filed in the Graduate School prior to scheduling of the preliminary oral examination. Revisions in the program of study must be approved by the student, advisory committee, department/program chair (when required) and Dean of the Graduate School. The graduate dean will officially notify the student, advisory committee, department/program chair, and the academic dean of all changes.

Oral Prospectus Hearing

After the advisory committee is approved the student will prepare a proposal for the conduct of the Master's Thesis/Paper and attend an oral prospectus hearing. All committee members must be present at this hearing, which will encompass a demonstration of the interplay of student knowledge and their Paper/Thesis project and committee members will provide relevant feedback as the appropriate methods to be used and topical content for the Thesis/Paper project. This will constitute a defense of the proposal for the Thesis/Paper. After successful completion of this oral proposal defense, the student will be granted permission by the committee to begin work on the Thesis/Paper in line with the recommendations made as to the structure of this project. At least one academic semester must elapse between the oral prospectus hearing and the final oral examination of the Thesis/Paper.

Oral Defense Hearing

Students must be registered for at least one credit in the semester in which they plan to defend their Thesis/Paper and graduate. The graduate dean will formally notify the committee and the student when and where the examination has been scheduled. The examining committee shall consist of the student's advisory committee. The Thesis/Paper in a near final form must be given to the committee members at least seven (7) days prior to the final examination.

Thesis/Paper Approval

At the conclusion of each oral examination, the examining committee shall record in writing its approval or disapproval of the candidate and file its report with the graduate dean. The committee's decision filed on the Report of the Final Examination signifies that the student has been examined with respect to the knowledge required in the major area and that all course work has been satisfactorily completed. This form should be filed in the Graduate School within seven (7) days.

After the exam, the student incorporates into the Thesis/Paper corrections suggested at the oral examination. One copy of the Thesis/Paper, on regular paper, is presented to the Graduate School for editing and a format check by a disquisition editor in the Graduate School. After editorial, format, and graduate dean approval, five (5) final copies of the Paper/Thesis, on the required paper and bearing the disquisition approval form signed by the advisor, all other supervisory committee members, and the department chair, are to be presented, unbound, to the Office of Graduate Studies. With each copy, the candidate must submit an abstract not exceeding 350 words. These five (5) final copies must be accompanied by a receipt from the Business Office for the cost of the binding. Two (2) bound copies of the Paper/Thesis go to the University Library. The remaining three (3) bound copies are for the student, the student's adviser, and the student's department. Each candidate who passes the final examination must also submit a sixth copy of the Paper/Thesis, accompanied by an additional copy of the title page and an additional copy of the Abstract signed by the major adviser.

The student has one (1) year from the date of the final examination to deliver the six (6) final copies to the Office of Graduate Studies and complete all other degree requirements. Should the disquisition not be deposited as specified or all other degree requirements not be completed, the student must repeat the final examination. If a period of time two years or greater lapses before the final copies are submitted, the student must reapply to the Graduate School and must register for a minimum of two (2) credits.

Culminating Project (Plan C)

The master's degree culminating project (Plan C) option results in the awarding of the M.S. in criminal justice. This option is available to students seeking a professional graduate degree without having to complete a substantial terminal thesis/paper. Under Plan C, students will complete 27 credit hours of coursework and three hours of individual study with an appointed adviser. Then, in lieu of a thesis or policy paper and during the semester in which they intend to graduate, students will participate in a culminating experience in which the student will deliver a 45-60 minute oral presentation on a topic or issue relating to criminal justice and approved by the individual study adviser. The presentation will be of a professional quality and anyone from the campus community or the public at large may attend. For the purposes of the Graduate School, this presentation constitutes a final defense and all applicable rules and procedures leading up to and following the defense still apply.