

Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice (MSCCJ)

Student Handbook



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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (MSCCJ)

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 Criminology and Criminal Justice program. The Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice (MSCCJ) 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 Student Policies (<https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/>) and the UTSA Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.utsa.edu/graduate/>).

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.

MSCCJ Degree Program Requirements

A minimum of 36 hours is required for the MSCCJ 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. 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 Criminology and 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 MSCCJ degree.

Pre-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 6613 Addicted Families, Violence and Life-threatening Behaviors

DEM 5093 GIS for Population Science

DEM 5113 Social Demography and Community Trends

EDP 5003 Psychological Learning Theories

EDP 5033 Human Development Across the Lifespan

EDP 5073 Basic Behavior Analysis

EDP 5303 Principles and Techniques of Evaluation

EDP 5603 Psychology of Human Motivation

EDP 6233 Mental Health Services in the Schools

EDP 6643 Child and Adolescent Psychopathology

GLA 5873 Global Security

GLA 5973 Terrorism

HIS 6113 Law and Society in America

MGT 5003 Conceptual Foundations of Management

MGT 5043 Management and Behavior in Organizations

MGT 5093 Leadership

MGT 5643 Management of Personnel and Human Resources

NS 6003 Role of US Intelligence in National Security

NS 6233 Analytical Writing, Reporting, and Briefing for the Intelligence Community

PAD 5003 Introduction to Public Service Leadership and Management
PAD 5011 Leadership and Communication Skills Development
PAD 5033 Theories of Public Organizations
PAD 5223 Urban Management
PAD 5303 Ethics in Government Administration
PAD 5313 Public Policy Analysis
PAD 5323 Public Policy Process
PAD 5333 Policy Evaluation
PAD 5363 Public Budgeting and Finance
PAD 5373 Social Policy
PAD 5443 Diversity Policies and Management
PAD 5953 Grant Development and Proposal Writing
PAD 6243 Administrative Law

POL 5023 Political Economy
POL 5063 Political Philosophy
POL 5093 Politics of U.S. National Security Policy Making
POL 5273 Contemporary Political Theory and Social Policy
POL 5413 Political Psychology
POL 5563 Seminar in Jurisprudence
POL 5503 Constitutional Law and Judicial Decision-Making
POL 5783 International Security
POL 5953 Terrorism

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 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

SWK 5013 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
SWK 5113 Generalist Practice
SWK 5303 Foundations of Social Work
SWK 5513 Cultural Competent Practices with Diverse Populations
SWK 5633 Transformational Leadership in Social Work

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. 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. [CRJ 6383](#) Capstone 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. In the event that a student does not pass all five sections, the student must re-take the comprehensive exam in a subsequent semester. Students may only re-take the comprehensive exam once after the initial attempt; students have one calendar year (two semesters) from their initial attempt to successfully pass the comprehensive exam. Students will be dismissed from the program after two unsuccessful attempts to pass the comprehensive exam. Students do not need to re-enroll in [CRJ 6383](#) to re-take the comprehensive exam. Students not enrolled in any other courses are required to enroll in 1 credit hour of [CRJ 6961](#) Comprehensive Examination in the subsequent long semester in which the student wishes to re-take the comprehensive exam.

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 are required to 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 be required to enroll for 1 credit hour of [CRJ 6991](#) Master's 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 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.

GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

University-wide Requirements

In order to receive a master's degree from UTSA, the following minimum requirements must be met:

1. The student must be admitted as a graduate degree-seeking student for the degree sought.
2. The student must complete the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree. All master's degrees require a minimum of 30 semester credit hours.
3. The student must remove all conditions of admission, if any were assigned at the time of admission.
4. Subject to the six-year time limitation, the student must satisfactorily complete all coursework as specified in his or her discipline's program of study, and, if Option I is

selected, must satisfactorily complete the thesis as outlined in the Options for Master's Degrees section of this chapter.

5. The student must formally apply for the degree in the Office of the Registrar no later than the deadline for the semester in which he or she intends to graduate (for deadlines, see the online registration calendar).
6. The student must satisfactorily complete the comprehensive examination, except as provided by the M.B.A. degree and Master of Accountancy, M.S. Business, M.S. Data Analytics, M.S. Information Technology and Master of Social Work.
7. The student must meet the grade point average requirement of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) in all work counted as part of the degree program.
8. 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, nor may courses for which the grade of "CR" was earned by examination be applied to minimum degree requirements. Credit for selected internships and practica in which a grade of "CR" was earned may be applied to minimum degree requirements upon approval of the Graduate Program Committee.
9. To graduate, all graduate students must have an overall grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).
10. The majority of graduate coursework for a master's program must be completed at UTSA.

Detailed descriptions of each of the above requirements are included in UTSA Student Policies (<https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/>).

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 Honesty

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.

Students are not at liberty to disregard previous college work attempted. All students transferring to UTSA must list all colleges and universities attended on their UTSA application for admission. While enrolled at UTSA, students who attend other colleges or universities are required to submit official academic transcripts to Graduate Admissions from every college or university attended at the end of the semester during which coursework was undertaken, even if coursework has been withdrawn. This includes concurrent enrollment while attending UTSA. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the admission application, withdrawal of any offer of acceptance, cancellation of enrollment, permanent dismissal from UTSA, or other appropriate disciplinary action.

Academic Standing

A student's academic standing, whether the student is a doctoral student, a graduate degree-seeking student, a special graduate student, or a non-degree-seeking graduate student, is defined as good standing, academic probation, or academic dismissal.

Good standing is the absence of any contingency that would result in the student's being on academic probation or academic dismissal.

Academic probation describes the standing of a student at the graduate level who is in one of the following categories:

1. A student who fails to achieve a grade point average in any term at UTSA of 3.0 or higher, irrespective of level of courses taken.
2. A student who received a grade of "D+," "D," or "D-" in any course in a term and a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
3. A student who does not meet all requirements for unconditional or regular admission and who, by special action, is admitted on academic probation.
4. A student who has been reinstated following academic dismissal.
5. To graduate, all graduate students must have an overall grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

Academic probation is cleared only when none of the above criteria apply and when the student achieves an overall grade point average of 3.0 as a graduate student at UTSA. Students on academic probation are encouraged to discuss their status with their academic advisors.

Academic dismissal occurs:

1. When a student at the graduate level earns a grade point average of less than 2.0 in any term.
2. When a student at the graduate level earns a grade of “F” in any course.
3. When a student at the graduate level is admitted on probation with conditions and fails to meet a condition.
4. When a student at the graduate level who is on academic probation during a term would again be placed on academic probation under the provisions of academic probation set forth above. If, however, the student’s UTSA grade point average for the term is at least 3.0, he or she will continue on academic probation.
5. When a student at the graduate level is unable to pass an oral or written exam (such as the Comprehensive Examination or Qualifying Examination) required for the degree after the maximum of two attempts. Some programs may have more stringent requirements.
6. When a student at the graduate level fails to make satisfactory progress toward the degree, as defined by University regulations and the regulations of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.

A student who has been dismissed academically may petition for reinstatement after one long semester (Fall or Spring) has elapsed from the date of dismissal. Under exceptional circumstances, a petition may be considered earlier. Students are required to complete a reinstatement packet along with a letter containing all explanations, recommendations, or doctors’ statements in support of the student’s request for reinstatement and submit them to the Dean of the Graduate School on or before June 15 for Fall Semesters, October 15 for Spring Semesters, or March 15 for Summer Semesters.

The Graduate School prepares the petition for reinstatement and submits it to the Department’s Graduate Program Committee. The Graduate Program Committee will review the petitioner’s letter and academic record and make a recommendation concerning reinstatement to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the Petition for Reinstatement is disapproved, the student may not file another petition until the following semester. A student who has been dismissed may not graduate without first being reinstated.

Transfer of Credit

Students are expected to complete the majority of all coursework at UTSA. UTSA awards credit for college-level transfer coursework of no more than 6 semester credit hours, earned with a grade of “B” or higher, from regionally-accredited colleges and universities. Admitted students may submit a petition for credits to the related Graduate Program Committee and academic College to receive credit earned from foreign institutions and non-regionally accredited colleges or universities. Based on course level, rigor, quality, comparability, and degree program

relevance, credits may be awarded on an individual basis at the discretion of the Graduate Program Committee, academic College and the Graduate School.

UTSA reserves the right to refuse recognition of credit from a college or university if it is determined the course does not meet the department's standards of level, rigor, quality, comparability, and degree program relevance. Applicability of such coursework toward the UTSA degree plan is at the discretion of the major academic department. Work counted toward a degree at another institution cannot be transferred.

Conditions for transfer of credit:

1. Students must complete the form "Transfer of Graduate Credit towards Master's Degree."
2. Student must be in a current master's degree program.
3. Student must be in good academic standing.
4. The courses must have been completed with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better.
5. Coursework cannot be used in another degree program.
6. An official transcript from the institution where the coursework was completed must be submitted.
7. All coursework must have been completed no more than six years before the degree was awarded.
8. Coursework is subject to approval of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee and academic College in which the program is administered.
9. Courses must be defined as graduate-level work at the institution where the credit was earned.
10. International transcripts must be evaluated by a UTSA approved foreign credential evaluation service agency.

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period. Work over six years old may be reinstated only with the permission of the Dean of the Graduate School, upon recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee.

Independent Study 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 contact the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) to ensure they approve of the Independent Study as part of their Program of Study.
2. The student must 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 student submits the completed independent study form to One Stop Enrollment Services.

Substitutions

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

1. The student must petition this request to the GAR.
2. If approved, the GAR will complete the substitution form along with a brief explanation supporting this request.
3. This form is then sent to the Department Chair and Associate Dean for review.
4. The substitution form is then sent to the Dean of Graduate School for final approval.
5. 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

Apply For Graduation

All UTSA students must officially apply for his or her degree by submitting an Application for Graduation online through ASAP (asap.utsa.edu). In addition to applying for graduation, use the Graduation Checklist (<https://onestop.utsa.edu/graduation/graduation-checklist/>) to ensure all other university requirements are met.

- Log into ASAP:
 - Click on Student Services
 - Click on Student Records
 - Click on Graduation
 - Click on Graduation Application/Survey
 - Read all instructions very carefully. Your application will not be processed unless you complete the application in its entirety and receive a confirmation number on the last page. Print the confirmation page and keep it for your records.

For more information about Commencement ceremonies and Grad Fest, visit the Commencement Website (<https://www.utsa.edu/commencement/index.html>). Students who are unable to graduate in the semester he or she applied for, due to academic or non-academic circumstances, must reapply for graduation.