



UNIVERSITY

OF
LOUISIANA
L a f a y e t t e

Master of Science in Criminal Justice
Degree Requirements, Rules, and
Regulations
Updated Fall 2015

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Graduate Coordinator

The M.S. program in Criminal Justice is a 33-hour program (Thesis option) or a 36-hour program (Comprehensive Exam option) that can be completed in four semesters. Graduate students in the CJUS department can choose one of two options in order to meet program requirements: the thesis or the comprehensive exam.

The following 15 hours of core courses are required for all students in the program:

- CJUS 505 - Seminar in Juvenile Prevention, Intervention and Rehabilitative Programs; 3 Credits
- CJUS 510 - Seminar in Juvenile Justice; 3 Credits
- CJUS 561 - Seminar in Theories of Crime and Delinquency; 3 Credits
- CJUS 590 - Research Methods; 3 Credits
- CJUS 591 - Program Assessment/Evaluation Research; 3 Credits

In addition to these 15 hours of core courses:

Thesis option student will take 6 hours of graduate CJUS electives, 6 hours of electives* to be chosen from among ANTH**, CJUS, SOCI, POLS, or PSYC graduate courses (or “G” courses), and 6 thesis hours (599) for a total of 33 hours.

- OR -

Comprehensive exam option student will take 15 hours of graduate CJUS electives and 6 hours of electives* to be chosen from among ANTH**, CJUS, SOCI, POLS, or PSYC graduate courses (or “G” courses) for a total of 36 hours.

*You must consult with your chair or the Graduate Coordinator before selecting electives. Permission to take electives outside the department must be obtained from the instructor of the outside course.

**The only ANTH courses approved are 430(G), or, with Graduate Coordinator approval, 497(G) or 498(G).

COMMITTEE SELECTION

All students, thesis option and comprehensive exam option, must choose a committee of three graduate faculty members to form the thesis/comprehensive exam committee as of the “Apply for Candidacy” deadline applicable to each student (the committee will sign the Candidacy form). All three members must be from the CJUS graduate faculty. If three CJUS faculty members are not available, contact a graduate faculty member outside the department who is familiar with the student’s work and is willing to serve on the committee. One of the three committee members must be selected as the chair of the thesis/comprehensive exam and that chair must be CJUS graduate faculty.

THESIS- The thesis is undertaken in the final two semesters of the program

Thesis Proposal

Before submitting to the Institutional Review Board or beginning data collection, the research proposal must be approved by the thesis committee in a scheduled, formal defense in the semester before graduation (typically the 3rd semester). A research proposal is submitted as a written document, consisting of the research questions, hypotheses, theories, and specific methodology. The thesis proposal should be

submitted to the thesis committee a week before the proposal defense. The thesis proposal defense is a briefing in front of the thesis committee.

The thesis committee must approve each student's research proposal in the semester before the thesis will be defended. Proposals should be held in the fall for a spring defense; proposals should be held in the spring for a fall defense. Only under extraordinary and unavoidable circumstances will a student be allowed to defend outside of fall or spring semesters and students must petition the department in these rare cases. In other words, the department will not accommodate summer thesis defenses.

Thesis Writing

Students should remain in communication with the thesis chair throughout the writing process. The thesis chair, at his or her discretion, will share thesis drafts with committee members. All thesis writers are required to consult with The Writing Center in order to assist with the writing of the thesis. Reference style must follow APA guidelines, in accordance with *Justice Quarterly* (Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences).

Oral Thesis Defense- The finished, written thesis should be submitted to all committee members one week before the scheduled oral defense of the thesis. It is best practice to bring the thesis' signature page on the required paper at the time of the defense to ensure obtaining all signatures. The purpose of the oral defense is to successfully answer any substantive questions about the thesis. Students should expect to clarify and expand on main concepts, in addition to filling any gaps in the written thesis. Students should also expect to give knowledgeable information about the area in which they have written. Thesis defenses typically last one hour.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM-The exam is undertaken in the final semester of the program

Written Exam

The comprehensive exam is presented as an alternative to writing a thesis. The comprehensive exam has both a written and oral component. The written exam is a take-home test. The written examination will consist of thoroughly answering three questions related to the field of criminal justice, based on readings completed in the student's previous courses and, when necessary to satisfactorily answer the question, based on outside readings. The student will have a total of 14 calendar days to complete the exam. Exam answers should be limited to 10-15 pages per answer, double spaced, not including reference pages. Only one reference page is required for all three answers. Completed exams should be uploaded to the CJUS Graduate Students Moodle Page by the deadline. All committee members will grade exams in the seven days before the oral defense.

Reference style must follow APA guidelines in accordance with *Justice Quarterly* (Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences).

Oral Exam Defense-The student is responsible for organizing a defense to be held before the deadline (see first page for deadlines). The purpose of the oral defense is to successfully answer any substantive questions about the completed written exam. Students should expect to clarify answers and expand on answers, in addition to bridging any substantive gaps in the written examination. Students should also

expect to demonstrate knowledgeable information about the areas in which they have written. The defense typically lasts one hour.