CRIMINAL JUSTICE, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.)

Program goal

The M.S. degree program in criminal justice assists in broadening and refining the understanding of criminal justice and criminological issues to facilitate career success and advancement. The goal of the program is to develop critical-thinking skills among the students through the use of current criminal justice and criminological topics, reports and research findings.

Student learning outcomes

1. Apply the principles of criminal justice — landmark laws, principles of justice, structured decision-making and review of policies, procedures and decisions — to dilemmas in the field of criminal justice.
2. Apply the principles of ethical thought to dilemmas in the field, involving law, police, courts and corrections, taken from past court cases and classic literature.
3. Review and analyze the theories of criminology to develop approaches to crime prevention programs.
4. Use research methodology to construct, design and evaluate policies and programs in criminal justice.
5. Assess current implementation of criminal justice policies, laws and procedures in the creation of laws, their enforcement and application by the courts as race, class and gender affect them.
6. Integrate knowledge of criminological theory, law and methodology to pose and solve questions of crime and justice.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.grad.vcu.edu) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regps)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regps/grad/candidacy)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regps/grad/graduation-info)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.grauate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.S.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Apr 1 (Mar 1 for financial aid)</td>
<td>GRE, LSAT or GMAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special requirements

- These deadlines are designed to allow sufficient time for application review and admission processing. Applications may be submitted after the deadline; however, there is no guarantee of sufficient time for processing. Applications submitted too late for current semester processing will be considered for the following semester. Please contact the program chair with specific application questions.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), admission to the Master of Science in Criminal Justice also will be based on:

1. An undergraduate GPA that exceeds 2.7 overall
2. A satisfactory score on the graduate standardized test (GRE, LSAT or GMAT)
3. Previous evidence of ability to perform graduate-level work (where applicable)
4. Professional experience in criminal justice (where applicable)

The courses in the post-baccalaureate graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice program are the same as the master’s courses. With minimum grades of B and, upon acceptance into the master’s degree program,
courses from the certificate program are fully transferable to the Master of Science in Criminal Justice degree program.

**Degree requirements**

In addition to the general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/graduation-requirements), the Master of Science in Criminal Justice requires a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours of course work, with a minimum overall grade-point average of 3.0. Students who do not have at least one year of professional-level experience are encouraged to take a three-credit-hour internship as part of the 30 semester hours.

To complete the M.S. curriculum, students must submit a portfolio of their work before they graduate. Contact the program director for format and submission details.

A maximum of nine semester hours of graduate credit from an accredited institution may be transferred and applied toward the master’s degree. All transfer requests require the approval of the graduate program coordinator and the Graduate School and may not have been counted toward another degree.

**Curriculum requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJS 501</td>
<td>Principles of Criminal Justice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJS 550</td>
<td>Professional Ethics and Liability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJS 617</td>
<td>Law and Criminal Justice Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJS 620</td>
<td>Seminar in Criminology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJS/GVPA/PADM/URSP 623</td>
<td>Research Methods for Government and Public Affairs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJS 690</td>
<td>Criminal Justice Policy Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select 12 credits in consultation with an adviser.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Any additional CRJS, GVPA, HSEP, URSP or PADM course may be used as an elective. Other course(s) may be selected with permission of the criminal justice graduate coordinator.

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 30.

**Graduate program director**
Amy Cook, Ph.D.
Program chair, Criminal Justice
Email: cookak@vcu.edu

**Additional contacts**
Christina Mancini, Ph.D.
Assistant chair, Criminal Justice
Email: cnmancini@vcu.edu

Denia A. Lee-Hing, Ed.D.
Director of graduate studies
Email: dleehing@vcu.edu
Phone: (804) 827-1430

Program website: wilder.vcu.edu/academic/criminal/grad.html (http://wilder.vcu.edu/academic/criminal/grad.html)