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. Students will communicate effectively about criminal justice issues/policies using well-reasoned evidence from empirical studies to support their arguments and/or positions.
2. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and articulation of major issues related to the field in a diverse socio-cultural context while also understanding the diversity of lived experiences.
3. Students will integrate their knowledge of existing theoretical and methodological frameworks to evaluate policy issues related to criminal justice and to be able to communicate to community stakeholders about the consequences of policy implementation.

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.graduate.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. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/)

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. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/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. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/)

Apply online today. (https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.S.	Fall	Feb 1 (early admission); Apr 1 (priority deadline); May 1 (final deadline)	
	Spring	Oct 1	

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. Any application 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 (https://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. Personal narrative that clearly conveys professional goals and how they align with the objectives of the CRJS graduate program (Examples include prior work and life experiences related to interest in criminal justice and aptitude for the program; perception of intellectual capability and professionalism to successfully complete the graduate program and enhance the learning environment; information about academic honors or professional awards, including internships, scholarships, fellowships, prizes, honorary society memberships, publications, inventions or other creative work; and interest in receiving funding and or graduate teaching/research

assistantships. If such opportunities are of interest, please be sure to describe relevant credentials for such positions.)
3. Two letters of recommendation
4. Previous evidence of ability to perform graduate-level work (where applicable).
5. A resume or curriculum vitae that includes all relevant information and professional designations

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 (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/), 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.

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

Course	Title	Hours
Core courses		
CRJS 501	Principles of Criminal Justice	3
CRJS 550	Professional Ethics and Liability	3
CRJS 617	Law and Criminal Justice Policy	3
CRJS 620	Seminar in Criminology	3
CRJS/GVPA/PADM/URSP 623	Applied Research Methods	3
CRJS 690	Criminal Justice Policy Analysis	3
Electives [1]		
Select 12 credits in consultation with an adviser.		12
Total Hours		**30**

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Any additional CRJS, GVPA, HSEP, URSP, PADM or PPAD course may be used as an elective. Other course(s) may be selected with permission of the criminal justice graduate coordinator. 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. The internship must be criminal justice-related and the student must be in their second semester of study.

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

Students who complete the requirements for this degree will receive a Master of Science in Criminal Justice.

Accelerated opportunities

The department offers opportunities for qualified undergraduate students to earn both an undergraduate and graduate degree in a minimum of five years by completing approved graduate courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. See the individual program pages in the Undergraduate Bulletin for details.

- B.S. in Criminal Justice and M.S. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/government-public-affairs/criminal-justice-bs-concentration-justice/)
- B.S. in Criminal Justice with a concentration in forensic crime scene investigation and M.S. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/government-public-affairs/criminal-justice-bs-concentration-forensic-crime-scene-investigation/)

Contacts

Nancy Ann Morris, Ph.D.
Program chair
nmorris@vcu.edu

Sarah-Jane Brubaker, Ph.D.
Assistant program chair and graduate program director
sbrubaker@vcu.edu

Wilder School recruitment
wsrecruit@vcu.edu
(804) 827-0364

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