

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
WITH CONCENTRATION IN THEORY
& RESEARCH
CAMPUS-BASED PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**



**GRADUATE STUDENT POLICIES &
PROCEDURES MANUAL
UPDATED FALL 2024**



UNT
COLLEGE OF HEALTH
& PUBLIC SERVICE
Department of
Criminal Justice

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) with Concentration in Theory and Research program requires satisfactory completion of 36 hours beyond the bachelor's degree. For graduate programs, 9 hours (3 courses) is considered full-time enrollment. The degree requires each student to select a thesis or non-thesis option. The courses required under each option are listed below:

Thesis Option

Part I: Core Curriculum

CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy	3 hours
CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory	3 hours
CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies	3 hours
CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics	<u>3 hours</u>

12 core hours

Part II: Electives

18 elective hours

Part III: Thesis

CJUS 5750 – Thesis	6 thesis hours
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Total hours: 36 hours

Non-Thesis Option

Part I: Core Curriculum

CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy	3 hours
CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory	3 hours
CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies	3 hours
CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics	<u>3 hours</u>

12 core hours

Part II: Electives

24 elective hours

Part III: Cumulative Essays

Total hours: 36 hours

Required Course Offerings – (12 hours) Courses comprising the core curriculum are scheduled in the fall and spring semesters. The schedule for required course offerings is as follows:

Fall of each academic year:

- CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy
- CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies

Spring of each academic year:

- CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory
- CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics

Required courses should be completed in the following sequence as to not delay the completion of thesis/cumulative essays and graduation:

Fall Cohort (Thesis):

Fall I: CJUS 5700, Elective, Elective
Spring I: CJUS 5600, CJUS 5750, Elective
Fall II: CJUS 5000, CJUS 5950, Elective
Spring II: CJUS 5950, Elective, Elective

Spring Cohort (Thesis):

Spring I: CJUS 5600, CJUS 5750, Elective
Fall I: CJUS 5000, CJUS 5700, Elective
Spring II: CJUS 5950, Elective, Elective
Fall II: CJUS 5950, Elective, Elective

Fall Cohort (Non-Thesis):

Fall I: CJUS 5000, Elective, Elective
Spring I: CJUS 5600, CJUS 5750, Elective
Fall II: CJUS 5700, Elective, Elective
Spring II: Elective, Elective, Elective

Spring Cohort (Non-Thesis):

Spring I: CJUS 5600, CJUS 5750, Elective
Fall I: CJUS 5700, Elective, Elective
Spring II: Elective, Elective, Elective
Fall II: CJUS 5000, Elective, Elective

POLICIES

Two “C” Rule

The graduate committee in the Department of Criminal Justice will recommend dismissal of a student from the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program if the student receives two course grades of C or below (for purposes of this rule, the first grade received in a course is used). The departmental graduate committee is comprised of the Director of Graduate Programs and three departmental faculty members who are currently serving as graduate faculty for the University. If the departmental graduate committee recommends the dismissal of a student under this policy, the student may provide a written appeal to the departmental graduate committee for consideration. The decision to reinstate a student after dismissal is recommended is solely at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee. If a student who is reinstated receives a third grade of C or below, the student will be dismissed from the program without further recourse within the department.

For the purposes of this policy, a grade of “C” can count toward the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree but a grade of “D” or “F” cannot.

Interdisciplinary Studies, MA/MS

The Department of Criminal Justice does not participate in the MA or MS in Interdisciplinary Studies degree. Therefore, Criminal Justice cannot be an Academic Area within the MA or MS in Interdisciplinary Studies degree.

Degree Plan

During the first or second semester in the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program, a degree plan will be submitted for each student to the graduate school through the departmental Director of Graduate Programs. The degree plan must be approved by the departmental Director of Graduate Programs and the graduate school. Once filed, any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs. Therefore, if a student plans on taking a course that is not on their degree plan, they must notify the Director of Graduate Programs for approval prior to enrollment in the course so that necessary changes to the degree plan can be made.

Transfer Hours

A maximum of 9 hours of transfer credit previously earned at an outside institution or academic unit may be applied to the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree. Only transfer credit with a grade of “B” or higher from an outside institution or academic unit may be applied toward the MSCJ degree. The acceptance of transfer work is at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Programs. If a student would like to transfer hours from another University or academic unit into the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program, please contact the Director of Graduate Programs as other restrictions beyond those stated may apply.

Courses Taken Outside of Criminal Justice

A maximum of 6 graduate hours taken at UNT outside of the on-campus MSCJ courses may be applied to the campus-based MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree. Any courses taken outside of Criminal Justice must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs prior to enrollment in the course. It is an expectation of the department that students will choose regular course offerings to satisfy degree requirements; therefore, enrolling in courses outside of criminal justice are only approved in rare circumstances. Students should also avoid choosing outside topics that are already covered by regular curriculum.

Online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration Courses

Students pursuing the on-campus Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) with Concentration in Theory and Research have the option to incorporate a limited number of online courses from the MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration program into their degree plan. However, this flexibility comes with specific restrictions:

1. All required courses must be completed on campus.
2. Only elective courses may be taken online.
3. Online courses are exclusively available during summer sessions.
4. Prior to enrolling in any online course, students must obtain approval from their Director of Graduate Programs.

This approach allows students to benefit from some online learning opportunities while maintaining the core on-campus experience of their chosen program. Please note any credit hours earned counts to the 6-hour rule noted above.

On-Campus to Online MSCJ Program Transfer Policy

Students are allowed to transfer their enrollment between the on-campus MSCJ program and the online MSCJ program only once during their academic career. This transfer option is available to students in good academic standing within the on-campus MSCJ program. Interested students must contact the Director of Graduate Programs to initiate the transfer process. Students may be required to re-apply to the online MSCJ program, depending on individual circumstances and at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Programs. The Director of Graduate Programs will review each transfer request on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as academic performance, available space in the online program, and the student's rationale for transfer. Students will not be able to transfer back to the on-campus MSCJ program.

All credits earned in the on-campus MSCJ program will be fully transferable to the online MSCJ program, provided that (1) the courses taken in the on-campus program are equivalent to those offered in the online program; and (2) the credits were earned within the university's established time limit for degree completion. The effective date of transfer, if approved, will typically be at the start of the next academic term. Upon transfer, students will be subject to all policies, procedures, and requirements of the online MSCJ program.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of "I" is assigned when extraordinary circumstances prevent the completion of coursework within the time frame of a given semester. What constitutes extraordinary circumstances meriting the grade of "I" is solely at the discretion of the course instructor. To remove the grade of "I", the student must complete the coursework remaining in a time frame determined by the course instructor. However, a student must remove a grade of "I" within one year of receiving the initial grade by completing the stipulated work. If a student does not complete the stipulated work within one year, the instructor may change the grade of I to a grade of F.

Admission Provisions

Students that are required to complete undergraduate course hours in Criminal Justice per the terms of their conditional admission into the campus-based MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program must complete these hours prior to enrollment in graduate Criminal

Justice coursework. All undergraduate coursework must be taken through the Department of Criminal Justice at UNT, but students may enroll in either online or campus-based courses.

Note: Undergraduate work, including 4000 level courses, cannot be applied to the campus MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree.

Directed Studies

Directed studies can be arranged with any graduate faculty member within the Department of Criminal Justice. The directed study will include assignments that require the student to complete substantive reading/research, with the ultimate objective of producing scholarly work. It is an expectation of the department that students will choose regular course offerings to satisfy degree requirements; therefore, directed studies is only approved in rare circumstances. It is also an expectation of the department that students will have completed two full semesters in the MSCJ program before requesting to enroll in directed studies. When selecting a topic you want to explore more fully, avoid choosing a subject already covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850 Form must be completed by the student and faculty member. The contract must then be submitted to the Director of Graduate Programs for additional approval. A Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850 Form can be found at the end of this manual.

Progress Toward the Degree

Students are expected to maintain continual progress toward completion of the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree. The following policies ensure our students maintain progress toward the degree.

1. Students must enroll in criminal justice classes within one (1) year of being admitted into the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program.
2. Students must also enroll in at least one (1) course each year that will count toward their MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree.
3. Students have one (1) week after the conclusion of each semester to submit their cumulative essays for CJUS 5600, CJUS 5700, and CJUS 5750; OR
4. Students have one (1) year after completing their coursework on their MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree to defend their thesis proposal. Students have one (1) year after defending their thesis proposal to defend the final version of their completed thesis.

Students who fail to meet the above requirements will be dismissed from the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program. Students who are dismissed under this policy may provide a written appeal to the departmental graduate committee for consideration. The decision to reinstate a student after dismissal is solely at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee. Students who violate the above policies twice will be dismissed from the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program without further recourse within the department.

Time Limitations

All requirements for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree must be completed within 5-years of the first semester of enrollment in the program. As individual courses, transfer credits as well as those completed in the program, exceed these time limits they lose all value for degree purposes. While it is possible to request a one-year time extension through the Graduate School, the Department of Criminal Justice typically does not grant extension requests. Students who fail to complete all requirements for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree within 5-years will be dismissed from the program without recourse within the department.

Graduation

Students should track their progress through the campus MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program and are responsible for ensuring that all required components necessary to graduate have been met. During the final semester of enrollment, the student will apply for graduation and should be in direct contact with the Graduate School as well as their advisor to ensure eligibility. Students must be aware of the graduation application deadlines for the semester they plan on graduating. These dates can be found at <http://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/graduation-information>.

MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN THEORY AND RESEARCH DEGREE EXIT REQUIREMENTS

As the final exit requirement for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree, students may choose to complete either the cumulative essays or write a thesis as their capstone experience. If a student has unsuccessfully attempted the cumulative essay, the student may not switch to the thesis option. However, if the student has unsuccessfully attempted the thesis, the student may switch to the non-thesis option and complete the cumulative essays as well as two additional electives.

Cumulative Essays

Students who do not wish to complete the thesis option for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree will be required to complete a series of cumulative reflective essays. Students who choose this option will complete three cumulative reflective essays, one for each of the following courses:

- CJUS 5600 – Criminological Theory
- CJUS 5700 – Research Methodologies
- CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics

Students should review the texts and articles assigned for each class as they begin thinking about the essay. Students should also review the cumulative essay guidelines in order to assist

with the writing process. The instructions are located below as well as on our webpage. Following the start of the semester when enrolled in CJUS 5600, CJUS 5700, and/or CJUS 5750, students will receive an email from MSCJ-Advising@unt.edu reminding them the cumulative essay will be due upon completion of the course as well as the writing expectations, and the deadline for submission.

Essays are due one week after the final day of the semester. However, to provide some flexibility, students may submit their essays starting from two weeks before the last day of the semester up until the final due date. For example, if the semester ends on May 15, students can submit their essays anytime between May 1 and May 22. Students are encouraged to submit their essays when they feel the work is complete and ready for evaluation, keeping in mind the final due date. Cumulative essay submissions must be sent from students' UNT email address to MSCJ-Advising@unt.edu.

The grade reported to students will be pass or fail for each of the three cumulative essays. Students may also be asked to revise and resubmit an essay if it does not meet the standard for a graduate level reflective essay. Students will be required to resubmit any failed essay submissions. If the student fails to submit a cumulative essay by the due date and time, it will be a considered failed attempt.

Should the student be asked to revise and resubmit one or more essay, the student will have one week from the date the grade was received, regardless of whether one or more essays must be revised. Students must include a cover letter that briefly summarizes the concerns provided and the student's response to the concern, including the changes that were made in the revision. In addition, any changes or new text in the essays themselves should be highlighted.

Students will be informed of the results of the essay by email only. Every attempt will be made to have the results available within four weeks of the submission deadline. Do not contact the Director of Graduate Programs or any faculty member about the cumulative essay results during the evaluation process.

Students who fail a cumulative essay submission will automatically be allowed one revision. If the revision is not submitted by the one-week deadline, or does not meet the passing standard, it will be considered a failed attempt. If a student fails any essay twice, the student is dismissed from the program. A student may appeal the decision to be dismissed from the program and submit the essay for a third time only in cases of extreme hardship. The decision to allow a student a third essay submission will be decided by the departmental graduate committee. The burden of proof for extreme hardship is on the student. Appeals for a third submission must be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Programs. The final decision to allow a student a third submission attempt is solely at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee. If a student submits an essay a third time and fails, the student is dismissed from the program without further recourse within the department.

Students who fail a cumulative essay are strongly encouraged to discuss their questions and answers with the Director of Graduate Programs. If a student feels that the essay evaluation was unfair for some reason, the student should file a written appeal with the Director of Graduate Programs. All grade appeals on cumulative essays will be referred to the departmental graduate committee. The decision concerning the appeal and the disposition thereof will be at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee.

Cumulative Essay Guidelines

This reflective discussion requires students to elaborate on what they learned in each course, making connections between their experiences and theoretical concepts, while also considering how the course content relates to their academic and/or professional goals. Using readings, class discussions, and course work, students are expected to write about the topics that seem most relevant to these experiences and how new knowledge of the criminal justice system and criminology has resulted. The following questions should guide your discussion:

- What are your thoughts on your course experience in general and was it a useful learning experience?
- In what specific ways do you believe the content of this course will impact your academic/professional career?
- What specific skills or perspectives did you acquire as a result of taking this course?

Remember:

1. The reflective essay is not a summary or description of course readings or assignments. Instead, the reflective paper involves the identification of the main themes of readings integrated with coursework experiences, and how they affected your thinking and practice.
2. The reflective essay is your opportunity to add your thoughts and analysis to what you have read and experienced.
3. Consider how what you have read and learned changes, or changed, your understanding of the topic or how you would apply course concepts in academic and/or professional settings.
4. While the reflective essay may adopt an informal tone, it should still have an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion.
5. Your essay should be well organized. Consider the use of subheadings to designate themes and provide structure.
6. Use of the singular person "I" is appropriate in a reflective paper.
7. In order to be considered for credit, your essay must be 2.5-3 full pages (excluding a title page/heading or any references), typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and double-spaced. Include in-text references and a reference page for any materials you cite using APA citation formatting (however, references are not required).

Thesis

The thesis option is open to all students and is particularly appropriate for those wishing to pursue a Ph.D. after completing the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research or those wishing to work in research positions in the field. In addition to writing a thesis, students must also successfully defend their completed work in an oral examination.

As part of the departmental consent process to enroll in thesis, all students who are planning on writing a thesis must satisfactorily complete CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics before enrolling in thesis hours.

The thesis must be initiated, executed and reported by the student under the supervision of one chair and two other graduate faculty members within the Department of Criminal Justice. The thesis chair will serve as the director of the thesis committee while the two other graduate faculty members will serve as members of the thesis committee. The thesis chair and committee members are chosen by the student. After assembling the committee, the student must complete the Thesis Committee Designation Form and submit it to the graduate advisor. This form can be found at the end of this manual or online at <http://cjus.hps.unt.edu/programs/graduate-mscj/forms>.

Before the thesis is begun, the student should consult the graduate school for information concerning the proper form for preparation of the thesis. The policies and procedures of the graduate school governing thesis preparation can be found at the graduate school's website. This site includes the guidelines for thesis preparation as well as requirements for electronic filing of the thesis. It is imperative that a student completing a thesis be familiar with the policies and procedures of the graduate school regarding thesis preparation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the policies and procedures of the graduate school not the thesis committee.

Once the thesis is begun, the student is required to enroll in a minimum of 3 semester hours of thesis credit (CJUS 5950) and must maintain continuous enrollment in CJUS 5950 during each Fall and Spring semester until the thesis has been completed and submitted to the graduate school. Only one enrollment in CJUS 5950 is required during the summer session if the student is using university facilities and/or faculty time during that semester. The total number of semester hour credits recorded for the thesis may not exceed 6, regardless of the number of enrollments in CJUS 5950. The student must be enrolled in CJUS 5950 in the semester of graduation. For example, if a student is planning on graduating in August, the student must be enrolled in CJUS 5950 for 5WK1. Until the student successfully defends their completed thesis, grades of "PR" and "NPR" will be assigned based on whether the student made progress or did not make progress. Grades of "PR" will be changed to traditional letter grades upon completion.

Thesis Defense Guidelines

These are guidelines that every graduate student completing a thesis should bear in mind. The

student must obtain the Graduate School guidelines for preparing a thesis and follow these guidelines for successful completion of the thesis. These requirements are in addition to anything contained in this policy manual. ***It is crucial that the student maintain continual communication with the thesis chair and committee members throughout the preparation and defense of the thesis.*** It is also important to bear in mind that the final structure of the thesis and defense is up to the thesis chair and committee members. Preparing and defending a thesis involves several parts and steps.

Formation of the Thesis Committee

The student is free to choose any graduate faculty member within the Department of Criminal Justice to serve on the thesis committee. The student is encouraged to identify a chair for the thesis first and discuss the thesis topic, timeline for completion, and other faculty members the student wishes to select for the thesis committee with the chair. Upon selecting a topic, a thesis chair, and two committee members, the student should file a Thesis Committee Designation Form with the Director of Graduate Programs. This form can be found at the end of this manual or online at <http://cjus.hps.unt.edu/programs/graduate-mscj/forms>. A Thesis Committee Designation Form cannot be filed until the student completes the core required courses and a total of 24 hours of graduate coursework in the MSCJ program. However, the student can and should bear the thesis topic in mind during completion of all coursework. They should also feel free to discuss potential thesis topics with various faculty members at any time.

Human Subjects Review

All research conducted at the University of North Texas needs to conform with human subjects guidelines. Any student preparing a thesis should consult the policies and procedures for conducting research at the University. Human subjects approval and appropriate documentation must be obtained prior to the student collecting any data or conducting any research on topics where human subjects are involved. The approval forms and human subjects documentation should be included in the final thesis whenever human subjects are involved.

Prospectus Preparation and Defense

Upon the formation of a thesis committee and the filing of the formal declaration, the student should schedule a meeting with the thesis chair and committee members to determine the specific form the prospectus will take. The prospectus defense involves defending the conceptualization, operationalization, and methodology of a proposed thesis topic. The student, with the advice and consent of the thesis chair and committee, will prepare a written prospectus of the proposed thesis topic. This will typically take the form of the first 3 thesis chapters. However, the form of the prospectus will be ultimately up to the thesis chair and committee. The student should maintain continual communication with the thesis chair and committee throughout the development of the prospectus and prospectus defense.

Upon completion of the written prospectus, the student should submit a copy to the chair and each committee member. The student should then schedule a prospectus defense with the committee. The prospectus defense date cannot be in the first or last two weeks of the Fall or Spring semesters. Students should not expect to defend their prospectus in the summer unless

they have received prior approval from their committee. The student will then orally defend the prospectus to the committee. The defense is open to any faculty members or graduate students wishing to attend. The format of the defense should be determined by the committee; however, the student should be prepared to present an oral presentation of the prospectus followed by questions from the committee. The committee can decide to pass the prospectus without revisions, pass the prospectus with revisions, or not pass the prospectus whereupon the student will have to revise and / or alter the thesis plan and set another prospectus defense date.

Final Thesis Defense

Upon final completion of the thesis, the student should submit a copy to the thesis chair and the committee members. The date for a thesis defense cannot be in the first two weeks or the last two weeks of the Fall or Spring semester. Students should not expect to defend their thesis in the summer unless they have received prior approval from their committee. The student should consult with the chair and committee concerning the format for the thesis defense. However, the student should be prepared to deliver an oral presentation of the thesis followed by questions from the committee.

The committee can pass the student without revisions, pass the student with minor revisions, pass with major revisions, or not pass. The committee may not sign the final signature sheet until the document is in its final form ready for submission to the graduate school per established guidelines. If the student does not pass, the student must reschedule the final defense for another date. If they pass with major revisions, they must complete their revisions to the satisfaction of their committee prior to obtaining final signatures for the thesis document. If the student passes without revisions or passes with minor revisions, the final signatures may be obtained at the thesis defense.

Upon passing the thesis defense, the student should make sure that all Graduate School requirements regarding formatting and paperwork are met within established timeframes and guidelines. It is up to the student to know and understand all Graduate School policies regarding the preparation and submission of a thesis. It is also incumbent upon the student to file all the paperwork necessary for the thesis defense and graduation.

Graduation application / Thesis defense deadlines

Students must be aware of the graduation application deadlines and/or thesis defense deadlines for the semester they plan on graduating. These dates can be found at <http://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/graduation-information>.

FORMS

Thesis Committee Designation Form

Department of Criminal Justice

Student _____

Student ID # _____

Proposed Thesis Title _____

Anticipated Graduation Semester and Year _____

Synopsis of Proposed Thesis (brief outline of proposed research and methodology):

Thesis Chair*:

Committee Member*:

Committee Member*:

Student Signature:

Date:

Graduate Advisor Approval:

Date:

*You are not required to obtain the signatures of the thesis chair and committee members on this form. However, it is expected that you have asked the chairs and members to serve on your committee and they have agreed before submitting the form.

MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN THEORY AND RESEARCH

Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850
Department of Criminal Justice

Part I – To Be Completed by Student

Name: _____

Student ID#: _____

Semester: _____, 20____

Professor: _____

Part II – To Be Completed by Professor

I. Proposed topic and course objectives:

II. Assigned course readings:

III. Assignments/Proposed final written product:

IV. Grading scale/criteria to assess the final written product:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Professor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Graduate Advisor Approval: _____ Date: _____