

HANDBOOK  
FOR  
GRADUATE STUDENTS



SCHOOL OF  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY  
State University of New York

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## **PH.D. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The Ph.D. degree prepares students for careers in research and teaching in the interdisciplinary field of criminal justice. Although each student's experience in the program is unique, designed around his or her interests and professional objectives, the curriculum is designed to ensure that each student acquires, practices, and becomes proficient in social science research skills and develops a thorough familiarity with a substantive area. Key experiences and milestones (see Table 1) in the program include not only coursework, but also research opportunities undertaken through independent study, collaboration with faculty and other students, individual work on the comprehensive examination, and original scholarship in the form of dissertation research. The School also provides opportunities to develop teaching skills, through supervised teaching internships and assistantships.

### **Course Credits and Cumulative Grade Point Average**

The Ph.D. degree requires the completion of 60 credits of coursework with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. Up to 30 credits of graduate-level studies completed elsewhere may be applied toward the required 60 credits. Appropriate courses may be taken outside of the School of Criminal Justice at this University, and credits earned applied toward the Ph.D. degree in criminal justice. Students should receive the approval of their academic advisors before enrolling in such courses.

To satisfy requirements for the Ph.D. degree, students must:

1. Complete 60 credits of coursework with a B (3.0) or better grade point average; including
  - RCRJ 507 (formerly 607) - Theories of Crime
  - RCRJ 540 (formerly 640) – Theoretical Foundations of Criminal Justice
  - RCRJ 687 - Statistical Techniques in CJ Research II
  - RCRJ 688 - Research Design in CJ II
  - RCRJ 701 - Research/Analytical Writing Seminar
2. Pass the comprehensive examination
3. Complete the Ph.D. tool requirements
4. Present and successfully defend a dissertation prospectus
5. Present and successfully defend a dissertation
6. Comply with the University's statute of limitations requirement by completing all requirements within eight (8) calendar years from the date of initial registration in the program

### **Comprehensive Examination**

The doctoral comprehensive examination is designed to provide students with the opportunity to practice and to be assessed on important skills: development of a research knowledge base, exercise of critical synthesis and writing skills, execution of an independent research project, and presentation and defense of individual work. The following comprehensive examination system was adopted by the faculty in January 2008, effective for all students entering the program after

that date, and optionally retroactively effective for all returning students who have not yet completed comprehensive exams under the old system.

A faculty committee selected by the student shall administer the doctoral student comprehensive examination. The committee shall be comprised of at least three faculty members eligible to teach graduate courses. The chair and at least one other committee member shall be voting members of the School of Criminal Justice faculty. A record of the committee's composition shall be filed with the Dean's Office when the committee is constituted. The committee must be formed not later than the end of the student's third semester of enrollment following admission to the doctoral program.

The committee must approve the subject of the student's examination. Thereafter, a written description of the examination subject shall be distributed to the faculty.

The committee shall determine how to assess the student's proficiency, and will conduct the assessment. All examinations shall include:

1. completion of a research project, involving a written report that in the committee's view is suitable for publication in an academic journal
2. an oral presentation and defense of the written product

As a function of the Student Performance Committee's annual review process, each student's committee will report to the faculty regarding the student's progress on the examination.

The committee will report to the Dean regarding its assessment of the student's performance on the comprehensive exam. The committee must deem the student's performance to be acceptable in order for the student to pass the comprehensive exam.

In the event an examining committee reports that a student has performed unsuccessfully on a comprehensive exam, or in the event that the student has disbanded his or her committee, the student may petition the Student Performance Committee to be allowed to form a new committee. The Student Performance Committee's recommendation shall be considered by the faculty. Not more than one petition to form a new examining committee shall be made.

### **Research Methodology Support Sequence**

In their first year, most students enroll in Statistics I (CRJ 681) and Research Design I (CRJ 682), which are prerequisites for two required courses, Statistics II (CRJ 687) and Research Design II (CRJ 688). A student whose prior coursework is substantively similar to the prerequisites may seek approval from the instructors for entry directly into the required courses.

### **Research Tool Requirement**

Students must demonstrate competence in a specialized area of research methodology by completing a research tool requirement. The area of research methodology must be appropriate to

academic study in criminal justice. Illustrative areas that may satisfy the research tool requirement include statistical analysis, legal research, foreign language proficiency, historical research, computer utilization, survey design, techniques of field observation, and clinical research techniques. (This listing is not intended to be exhaustive.)

A level of proficiency in research that is appropriate to the Ph.D. degree must be evidenced in order to demonstrate competence in an area of research methodology. Such competence may be evidenced by accomplishing one of the following:

1. Successfully completing an approved course. The following classes have been approved as satisfying the Research Tool Requirement. Additional classes may be appropriate, but require prior consideration by the School's Graduate Committee and approval by the faculty.
  - CRJ 788 Historical Research in Criminal Justice
  - CRJ 690 Statistical Techniques in CRJ Research III
  - CRJ 691 Program Evaluation
  - CRJ 692 Data Utilization in CRJ II
  - CRJ 693 Geographic Information Systems in CRJ I
  - CRJ 694 Spatial Data Analysis in CRJ
  - CRJ 696 Geographic Information Systems in CRJ II
  - ANT 608 Field Methods in Ethnology
  - HIS 590 Quantitative Methods in History
  - ISP 657 Introduction to Legal Research (or an equivalent class offered in law school)
  - PAD 624 Simulating Dynamic Systems
  - PAD 626 Evaluation of Public Sector Programs
  - PSY 753 Psychometric Theory and Research
  - SOC 535 Qualitative Research Techniques
  - SOC 626 Survey Design and Analysis
2. Demonstrating proficiency in a foreign language under procedures and criteria approved by the Student Performance Committee. This normally will involve an examination administered by a foreign language department at the University (e.g., the Departments of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies), under specified procedures, including materials suitable for translation and designated level and type of skill that must be demonstrated (e.g., ability to translate with or without a dictionary, or factual or summary translation, as opposed to literal translation). Otherwise, the foreign language in which proficiency is demonstrated must have a sufficient body of literature relevant to studies in criminal justice, and examinations will be administered, as possible, under procedures and criteria approved by the Student Performance Committee.
3. Certification of two members of the faculty that the student has satisfactorily completed an approved research tool proposal. Students must submit a proposal to the Student Performance Committee specifying the area of research methodology in which they will demonstrate competence, and the manner in which such competence will be

demonstrated. The proposal must include a statement explaining why the selected area is appropriate to the student's anticipated research in criminal justice. Upon approval of the student's proposal by the Student Performance Committee, and upon certification to the Committee that the proposal has been satisfactorily completed pursuant to the above procedures, the Committee shall notify the Dean that the student has satisfied the research methodology tool requirement.

## **Prospectus and Dissertation**

### Prospectus and Dissertation Committee

A committee must be formed to oversee the development of and formally approve a student's dissertation prospectus and dissertation. The committee shall be comprised of a minimum of four or a maximum of five members. At least three committee members, including the Chair, must be regular, full-time faculty members in the School of Criminal Justice.

The student may nominate the individuals who, upon their agreement and the approval of the Dean, shall serve as the members of the committee. One of the members shall serve as the chair of the committee. The student is expected to work with his/her committee in the initial development and written articulation of the prospectus and the dissertation. The oral defense of a prospectus or a dissertation shall not be scheduled until all members of the committee have had the opportunity to read and comment upon the proposed prospectus or dissertation.

Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. is conferred upon the student's completion of the comprehensive exam, formation of a dissertation committee, and the committee's approval of a concept paper.

With the approval of the student, the committee and the Dean, associate committee members may be appointed, in addition to the four- or five-person committee, for the purpose of advising the student and committee on matters relevant to their expertise. Associate members do not have the power to vote on the approval of a prospectus or dissertation. They shall act exclusively in an advisory capacity.

Following the formal approval of a committee, the composition of the committee shall not be subject to change without the Dean's approval. The Dean's approval normally should be expected if the student, the affected committee member(s), and the committee chair concur regarding the proposed change, and constitution of a new committee is feasible. In cases involving requests to remove or replace a committee member that are not fully consensual, and in which the Dean is the committee member who is the subject of such a request, the chair of the faculty shall be consulted and shall have the authority to render decision.

### The Prospectus

The written prospectus should detail the research methods and techniques to be used in conducting the dissertation research. It also should address the relevance of the dissertation topic

to the field of criminal justice, describe the conceptual and research content in which the proposed study is located, specify the originality or uniqueness of the proposal, and review, in bibliographic form, the research and other literature relevant to the topic.

When a prospectus is ready for oral defense a copy is to be filed and made available to the faculty at least two weeks prior to the scheduled hearing. At that time, notification of the prospectus defense is given to the faculty, and an abstract of the prospectus is circulated. Faculty and students are encouraged to attend defenses and are entitled to raise questions and participate in discussion in a non-voting capacity.

Prospectus defenses may be scheduled during each academic year, except during the final examination period of each semester. With the unanimous approval of the student's committee, prospectus defenses may be scheduled during the summer months, or when the School is not otherwise in academic session.

At the prospectus hearing, questions may be put to the student regarding his/her general knowledge of the field of criminal justice, familiarity with the literature and research relevant to the topic and methodology, and the like. Questions need not be limited to the written prospectus. The hearing is a formal scrutiny of the student's ability to fit his/her dissertation project into the many facets of the field of criminal justice.

Approval of a student's prospectus shall be conferred after the student's defense, upon stipulation by at least four members of a five-person committee or at least three members of a four-person committee. Once the prospectus is approved it becomes a contract binding on the faculty, but not on the student, regarding the scope and nature of the dissertation project. (This is intended to alleviate problems encountered by students where, subsequent to the defense of a prospectus, the membership of the student's committee may change. The student may proceed with the study as outlined in the prospectus without securing approval from new faculty advisors.)

### The Dissertation

The dissertation is the culmination of the program of advanced study leading to a doctoral degree. It is expected that the dissertation report, in accepted scholarly style, is an investigation of a problem of significance and makes a unique contribution to the field of study. It must demonstrate that the candidate is capable of independent research and analysis, scholarly reporting, and that she or he has attained a high degree of scholarly competence.

The student ordinarily must be admitted to candidacy at least one session (exclusive of a summer session) before the acceptance of his/her dissertation.

An oral examination relating to the written dissertation must be held unless waived by action of the general faculty. At least two weeks prior to the date of the scheduled oral defense the candidate must provide written copies of the dissertation to each individual on his/her committee. The dissertation must conform to the University Policy on Style Format for Ph.D. Dissertations and Submission Procedure. (The number of copies submitted and other regulations concerning

the form, filing and costs associated with the dissertation are there specified.) One additional copy of the dissertation must be made available in the Dean's Office for review by interested parties.

At that time, all members of the faculty shall be notified of the time and place of the oral defense of the dissertation. Faculty and students are encouraged to attend defenses and are entitled to raise questions and participate in discussion in a non-voting capacity. Acceptance of the dissertation shall be by affirmative vote of at least four members of a five-person committee or three members of a four-person committee.

**PROGRESS THROUGH THE PH.D. PROGRAM**

It is the responsibility of each student to make satisfactory progress through his/her course of study. It is the responsibility of the faculty to assist the student in achieving this objective via the advising process, to evaluate the rate of progress, and to provide feedback to the student.

**Requirements**

There are five basic requirements for the Ph.D. degree at the School of Criminal Justice. They are: the satisfactory completion of 60 credits of coursework (including required courses), passing a comprehensive examination, completing the Ph.D. tool, and successfully completing and defending a doctoral dissertation. More detailed information on each of these requirements is found in other sections of the Handbook.

Satisfactory progress toward the degree includes maintaining an acceptable grade point average and successfully completing the other requirements.

**Milestones**

Table 1 - Milestones for Progress in Ph.D. Program

<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>Student Progress Toward Degree</b>	<b>Planning and Milestones</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	24 credits 1 <sup>st</sup> year research assignment Complete CRJ 687 (2 <sup>nd</sup> semester)	December: submit plan of study, including submission of advanced standing application, if any
2 <sup>nd</sup>	18-20 credits RA or TA assignment Complete CRJ 688 (3 <sup>rd</sup> sem.) Complete CRJ 701 (4 <sup>th</sup> sem.)	Form comprehensive committee and file comp. plan by end of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sem. Complete CRJ 607 and CRJ 640 (target)

3 <sup>rd</sup>	18-20 credits RA or TA assignment	Complete 60 academic credits (target) Complete comprehensive exam: 5 <sup>th</sup> sem. (target) 6 <sup>th</sup> sem. (required) Complete research tool: 6 <sup>th</sup> sem. (required) Complete CRJ 607 and CRJ 640 (required)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Credits as appropriate RA or TA assignment	Dissertation concept paper: 7 <sup>th</sup> sem. (required) Complete 60 academic credits: 7 <sup>th</sup> sem. (required) Prospectus: end of summer following 8 <sup>th</sup> sem. (target)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Credits as appropriate RA or TA assignment as appropriate	Prospectus: 9 <sup>th</sup> sem. (required) Dissertation: end of summer following 10 <sup>th</sup> sem. (target)
8 <sup>th</sup>		Dissertation (required)

### **Evaluating Progress**

Each student's progress through the Ph.D. program will be evaluated on an annual basis by the Student Performance Committee. Evaluation will be based on the following:

1. The student's transcript and file.
2. Evaluations from the student's Advisor, Chair of the Comprehensive Examination Committee or the Dissertation Committee, as appropriate. The Student Performance Committee can, on an as needed basis, request input from other faculty who have worked with the student.
3. The Student Activity Report. Each Ph.D. student is required to complete and submit a Student Activity Report (available online at <http://www.albany.edu/scj/forms.htm>) on an annual basis. The report describes the student's objectives and goals for graduate study, coursework, progress on the comprehensive examinations and dissertation, and professional activities. It is recognized that the relevance of various sections will vary at different stages of the student's career.
4. Any additional information the committee would like to have in reaching a decision about the student's progress.

Based on the full record, the Student Performance Committee will recommend one of three evaluations of the student's progress. They are:

1. Satisfactory - full compliance. This evaluation means that the student has an acceptable grade point average, is meeting the major milestones of the program in a timely fashion,

and has earned positive evaluations from the comprehensive and dissertation committees, as appropriate.

2. Marginal - lack of full compliance. An evaluation of a lack of full compliance will be given if the student has not completed degree requirements in a timely fashion or if there are serious questions about the student's likelihood of successfully completing the program. This evaluation is required if the student is on University probation. Other factors that could lead to an evaluation of lack of full compliance include:
  - a marginal grade point average, especially if it continues over time;
  - incomplete grades in coursework; and
  - serious reservations by either the Comprehensive Examination Committee or the Dissertation Committee about the likelihood of the student successfully meeting the requirement.

The Student Performance Committee is not limited to a consideration of the above factors in making its evaluation. The committee will base its judgment on the student's full record.

Following an evaluation of a lack of full compliance, it is the student's responsibility, working with his or her advisor, to develop a remedial plan. The Student Performance Committee, in consultation with the student and his or her advisor, will establish a deadline for the submission of a remedial plan. The remedial plan must be in writing and include clearly specified deadlines for resolving the involved issues. The Student Performance Committee will review the remedial plan and, as necessary and appropriate, consult with the student and his or her advisor before recommending its approval to the Dean. Following approval, the remedial plan will be included as a permanent part of the student's academic file.

The evaluation of a lack of full compliance is designed to remediate whatever problems are identified and to alert both the student and the faculty that problems may exist in completing the degree unless remedial action is successfully taken.

3. Unsatisfactory Progress. A student will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress toward the degree if he or she has not successfully addressed the issues that led to an earlier evaluation of a lack of full compliance in a timely fashion. Students who are judged to be making unsatisfactory progress will be denied permission to enroll for further study.

The faculty anticipate that PhD students ordinarily will remain fully compliant with degree requirements and expectations. Students who are not fully compliant (marginal) or who receive an unsatisfactory evaluation will have their progress and performance considered by the faculty. Students will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Student Performance Committee before the Committee makes an evaluation of marginal or unsatisfactory progress and to meet with the faculty before the faculty considers such evaluations.

## **Statute of Limitations**

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree must be completed within eight calendar years of the date of initial registration in the program.

## **M.A. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **Course Credits and Cumulative Grade Point Average**

The M.A. degree requires the successful completion of 30 credits of coursework with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. Up to six (6) credits of graduate level studies completed elsewhere may be applied toward the required 30 credits. Appropriate courses may be taken outside of the School of Criminal Justice at this University, and credits earned applied toward the M.A. degree in criminal justice. Students should receive the approval of their academic advisors before enrolling in such courses.

To satisfy requirements for the M.A. degree, students must:

1. Complete 30 credits of coursework with a B (3.0) or better grade point average, including:
  - RCRJ 504 – Statistics (or equivalent)
  - RCRJ 505 – Research Design (or equivalent)
  - RCRJ 507 (formerly 607) - Theories of Crime
  - RCRJ 540 (formerly 640) – Theoretical Foundations of Criminal Justice
2. Pass the M.A. comprehensive examination
3. Comply with the University's statute of limitations requirement

## **Statute of Limitations**

All study for which credit is applied to a Master's degree, including transfer credit for graduate courses taken elsewhere, must be completed within a period of six years.

## **Comprehensive Examination**

A comprehensive examination will be administered to MA students requiring students to demonstrate analytical, integrative, and applied knowledge of the foundational subject matter of criminology and criminal justice, including relevant theory and methodology. The exam will consist of answering a question designed to elicit a response that will integrate material covered in the required courses with material covered in courses in students' areas of interest.

The exam question will be distributed to students at the beginning of their first semester of graduate study. Students expecting to complete the Master's degree requirements in any given semester must submit a brief topic statement to the Associate Dean within the first two weeks of the semester in which requirements will be completed. The exam essay is due six weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the student expects to complete the degree requirements.

The exam should be no longer than 20 pages of text (12 pt. Times Roman, double spaced, 1-inch margins – submitted as MS Word .doc or Adobe Acrobat .pdf file). Students are encouraged to consult with faculty regarding their essays, but faculty will not read the essay until it is completed and submitted for grading.

Each essay will be evaluated by a committee of two faculty members who have been assigned by the Associate Dean. If the exam is not acceptable, the student will have one chance to submit a revision. The revision must be submitted within one month after the date on which the student was informed that the essay was not acceptable.

### **The Master's Essay Option**

A Master's Essay may be completed as an elective within the M.A. curriculum. The Master's Essay shall be a graded, three-credit course (RCRJ 698), which will be offered each semester. Students may enroll in the course only once. The essay may be based upon library research, secondary analyses, or field experience. The collection of original data is permitted, but not required. If a field experience is part of the Essay it may not duplicate a student's occupational experiences and, by itself, field experience does not satisfy this requirement. The Essay must be original work, and not merely a revision of a previously submitted paper.

A committee of three faculty members selected by the student shall oversee and approve the Master's Essay. One member of the committee (who must be a member of the faculty of the School of Criminal Justice) shall serve as its chair. The student must submit a detailed outline of the proposed Master's Essay to his/her committee, and the outline must be approved prior to the student's registering for the course. The Essay must be approved by a majority of the committee, who will assign the grade in the course. A copy of the final written work or product must be submitted to the Dean's office.

### **The B.A./M.A. Program**

The combined B.A./M.A. program enables students to apply a maximum of nine credits toward both the Bachelor's degree and the Master's degree. Students may only be admitted to the program after the beginning of their junior year (56 credits) and before completing 100 undergraduate credits. Students are considered undergraduates until they have completed 120 academic credits and all other requirements for the B.A. degree; thereafter they automatically are considered graduate students.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONCENTRATIONS**

The information technology graduate curriculum provided by the School of Criminal Justice builds on the School's outstanding reputation as a center of high-level, quantitative research in criminal justice. The curriculum is designed to extend and expand the statistical and methodological expertise learned in the traditional sequence of the School's methods and statistical courses.

Both Ph.D. and M.A. students take a selection of the School's courses in information technology to graduate with a degree with a concentration in information technology in criminal justice.

The 9-credit M.A. Concentration requires:

1. IIST 523 - Fundamentals of IT or IINF 523 - Fundamentals of IT
2. RCRJ 592 - Data Utilization in Criminal Justice I
3. RCRJ 693 - Geographic Information Systems or RCRJ 695 - Responsible Use of CJ Information
4. Non-credit module comprising data utilization software (focusing, for example, on SPSS)

The 15-credit Ph.D. Concentration requires:

1. IIST 523 - Fundamentals of IT or IINF 523 - Fundamentals of IT
2. RCRJ 692 - Data Utilization in Criminal Justice II
3. RCRJ 693 - Geographic Information Systems
4. RCRJ 695 - Responsible Use of CJ Information
5. RCRJ 694 - Spatial Data Analysis or RCRJ 690 - Statistical Techniques in CJ Research III
6. Non-credit module comprising data utilization software (focusing, for example, on SPSS) – NOTE: While the non-credit module is optional for students pursuing the Ph.D. Concentration, it is highly recommended.

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **Course Load and Registration Rules**

Full-time students who have been admitted to a degree program must comply with the following rules:

1. The School requires that first-year doctoral students take a minimum of 22 credits in their first two sessions, with no fewer than 10 credits in either. (Note: The University specifies that, "to be considered in full-time study a graduate student ordinarily must be registered for not less than 12 credits of work or the equivalent.")
2. Students must take at least two graded courses (i.e., a grade of A, B, C, etc. is assigned) out of their first 15 credits.
3. It is expected that students will continue their studies in consecutive semesters after their enrollment until they have earned the M.A. or Ph.D. degree. (Students may apply for leaves of absence under procedures specified in "Leaves of Absence" below.)

4. Doctoral students who are in the process of comprehensive examination work may register for the appropriate number of credits of CRJ 893. Students who register for 893 must have a committee formed and a topic determined (e.g., an approved abstract) by the end of the first semester of 893 registration.
5. Doctoral students who have passed their comprehensive examinations and who are developing their prospectuses under the guidance of a faculty member, but who have not yet met the requirements for CRJ 899 (below), should register for the appropriate number of credits of CRJ 895, under that faculty member's name and with his/her permission.
6. Doctoral students shall be eligible to register for CRJ 899 following:
  - a) satisfactory completion of required coursework including a minimum of 60 credits and no outstanding Incompletes in required classes
  - b) satisfactory completion of the research tool requirement
  - c) satisfactory completion of the comprehensive examination
  - d) formation and formal approval of a dissertation committee
  - e) the dissertation committee's approval of a dissertation topic based on a concept paper
  - f) approval of the Dean

Pursuant to University policy, registration for one credit of CRJ 899 represents "full-time" registration. Students eligible to register for CRJ 899 are not authorized to take leaves of absence.

7. Students with an assistantship must comply with course load and registration requirements as specified under the terms of the assistantship.

### **Waivers of Required Courses**

Courses that are required may be waived upon certification from the course instructors that the student has demonstrated adequate knowledge of the course material. No academic credit is awarded to students for waived courses. The waiver simply signifies that the curriculum requirement has been satisfied. The procedure for waiving a required course typically proceeds as follows:

1. The student shall meet with the course instructor and present material describing previous coursework (e.g., course syllabi, book lists, papers, examinations). After reviewing the material and discussing the previous work with the student the instructor may determine if a waiver should be granted.
2. At the request of students who have taken no courses equivalent to the required course, or of students not granted waivers through the process described above, a written waiver examination will be scheduled, administered and evaluated by the instructor of the

course. This process normally should be completed before the drop-add period is over at the beginning of the semester.

3. Substitute procedures for waiving a required course may include passing the final examination given in the course.

### **Transfer of Credits and Advanced Standing**

Students seeking advanced standing or the transfer of credits to be applied toward their degrees for coursework completed elsewhere should consult with their academic advisors, and thereafter must file requests with the Associate Dean. Transfer credit (for M.A. students) and advanced standing (for Ph.D. students) forms can be obtained with the assistance of the School's Assistant Dean for Student Services. Students should submit their request forms and syllabi and/or course descriptions from the universities that granted the credits. Requests for the transfer of credits are governed by the following University and School guidelines.

Coursework for which transfer credits are sought (1) must have been at the graduate level, (2) must have been completed with a grade of "B" or better, (3) must be relevant to the student's degree in criminal justice, and (4) if the credits are to be applied toward the M.A. degree, the coursework must have been completed within six years of the date when a degree is expected to be earned from the University. No transfer credit is recognized for a Master's Thesis or Master's Essay completed at another university.

Appeal of matters related to transfer credits may be made to the Dean of the School, and thereafter to the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **Grading Policies: Academic Standards**

The graduate school grading scale includes grades of A, B, C, D, E, S and U. Only grades of A, B, C and S result in course credits being awarded toward the graduate degree, and a "B" (3.0) average is required for a graduate degree to be awarded.

The University's Graduate Bulletin specifies that, "All graduate students are expected to remain in good academic standing during the course of their study; that is, to maintain an academic record consistent with the standard above. A student whose record falls much below those standards or which otherwise indicates a lack of ability or effort needed to succeed in graduate study will be denied permission for further study."

Under this provision, the School of Criminal Justice has adopted the following policies: In the event that a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.0 or if a student's semester GPA is 2.5 or below, the student shall be placed on academic probation, with the following consequences:

1. The student shall be required to consult with the Dean or Associate Dean concerning the causes and consequences of his/her academic performance;

2. The student shall be required to obtain the approval of his/her academic advisor concerning the schedule of classes in which she/he intends to enroll for each semester while his/her cumulative GPA remains below 3.0;
3. The student's performance shall be reviewed by the Student Performance Committee at the end of the semester of studies during which the student has been placed on academic probation. The student shall have the right to appear and be heard before the Committee. The Committee shall thereafter recommend to the faculty that:
  - The student be relieved of his/her probationary status; or
  - The student be continued on probationary status; or
  - The student be denied permission for further study in the School (no such denial shall be made if the student's cumulative GPA is 3.0 or better at the time of review).
4. The faculty shall receive the recommendation of the Student Performance Committee and render a decision in the case of any student who has been placed on academic probation. Before the faculty takes final action, the student shall have the right to appear before the entire faculty and be heard. The faculty may then:
  - Relieve the student of his/her probationary status; or
  - Continue the student on probationary status; or
  - Deny the student permission for further study in the School (no such denial shall be made if the student's cumulative GPA is 3.0 or better at the time of review).

Action of the faculty denying permission for further study to a student is reviewable by the University's Graduate Academic Council.

The School of Criminal Justice is not obligated to continue funding for graduate students who receive a grade of E or U in any graduate course. When a graduate student fails or obtains an unsatisfactory grade in a graduate course, the Dean shall meet with the student regarding his or her status in the program. If a graduate student fails a required graduate course, the student must retake the course at the next time that course is offered. Graduate students will be dismissed from the School upon receiving any two grades of E or U in graduate courses.

### **Incompletes**

A grade of Incomplete (I) may be assigned for a course when the academic situation warrants it. Normally, an I is to be made up prior to or during the following semester, before the deadline imposed by the University. The first extension of an I will be given automatically unless the faculty and student agree otherwise.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the actions necessary to extend a grade of I. Incompletes not satisfied under the above provisions may be converted to letter grades by course instructors.

## **Independent Study and Research**

No student will be allowed to register for CRJ 800 (Independent Study in Criminal Justice) or CRJ 801 (Independent Research in Criminal Justice) without written approval from the professor under whom credits will be assigned. Independent study and independent research credits are graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

The prior approval of the Student Performance Committee must be obtained before registration is permitted in either CRJ 800 or CRJ 801 under the following circumstances:

1. An M.A. student seeks to register for more than 3 credits of independent study or independent research within the first 30 credits of study.
2. A student seeks to enroll in more than 6 credits of independent study or research during any academic term.

## **Leaves of Absence**

Students normally are expected to maintain continuous registration and enrollment status and make continuing progress toward completion of their degrees. However, leaves of absence may be granted under extenuating circumstances that entail significant personal hardship and prevent progress toward completion of degree requirements. Students who are on leave of absence are not entitled to use faculty resources or University resources and facilities. Students who plan to consult with faculty about academic work, including development of a prospectus or dissertation, must be in enrolled status.

Leave of absence requests must be made separately for each semester for which a leave is requested.

1. Such requests normally must be filed by petition to the Dean at least one month before the end of the session which precedes the session during which the leave will be in effect. Emergency requests may be accepted and considered at any time.
2. The Dean shall refer the request to the Student Performance Committee. If the request is for the student's first or second semester of leave, the Committee shall recommend to the Dean whether it should be granted.
3. In the event of additional leave requests (beyond two semesters), the Student Performance Committee shall make its recommendation to the entire faculty, which shall determine whether the leave should be granted. Pursuant to University policy, leaves may be extended for one year beyond an initial year "under compelling justification."
4. If a student must drop out during an academic session, normal withdrawal procedures should be followed. A leave of absence for the following session may be filed contemporaneously, if necessary.

5. All leave requests must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies as well as the School.

Students who do not register and who are not granted a leave of absence will be terminated from further studies, barring exceptional circumstances. Students who are terminated must apply for readmission and pay an application fee.

In accordance with University policy, students eligible to register for CRJ 899 are not authorized to take leaves of absence.

### **Readmission**

All applicants for readmission to graduate study must apply through the Graduate Admissions Office and pay an application fee. The Admissions Committee will evaluate such applications on a rolling basis throughout the year, for spring or fall admission, as appropriate. Applicants seeking readmission should also submit a formal written request for readmission to the School of Criminal Justice and provide appropriate supporting credentials which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Official transcripts of all previous college work (applicants may rely on transcripts already on file if available and complete).
2. Three letters of reference from persons who can speak to the applicant's academic potential and ability. Such letters may include letters from professors and/or employers. Letters from current and former faculty of the School of Criminal Justice are considered especially helpful.
3. A statement of the applicant's objectives and intended graduate study, which may include plans for completion of coursework, for completion of comprehensive exams, a proposed dissertation topic, and similar information.
4. An applicant seeking readmission to the Ph.D. program may wish to assemble a group of faculty willing to serve on his or her comprehensive exam or dissertation committee. Applicants are encouraged to furnish as detailed a statement as possible outlining their plans for completing the degree.
5. A writing sample.
6. Applicants may rely on previously submitted standardized test scores that are on file. New standardized test scores are not required.
7. A list of all publications, conference papers, and the like.
8. A current curriculum vitae.

Students readmitted to graduate study are governed by degree requirements in effect at the time of their readmission. They must specifically request that credit be given for any academic work completed previously at this institution or elsewhere. The Student Performance Committee will review such requests expeditiously.

### **Non-Degree Admission**

Individuals who have specific interests or professional needs, but who do not intend to pursue a master's or doctoral degree, may apply for admission as non-degree students. The Admissions Committee will review and make recommendations to the Dean on all such applications. No registration will be allowed while such review is pending.

By University policy, non-degree students may take no more than 14 credits over a period not longer than two academic years. However, non-degree admission does not extend beyond a single semester, and students must apply for non-degree admission each semester in which they take classes.

### **Applicable Academic Policies**

The School has adopted a "grandfather clause" policy such that students have a right to complete their academic programs under the degree requirements that existed at the time of their enrollment, to the extent that curriculum offerings make that possible. Alternatively, students may elect to complete degree requirements under the changes made in academic policies during their period of enrollment. Students electing to proceed under revised academic policies must comply with all requirements under the changed program.

### **Research Standards**

Students who work on research projects sponsored or directed by faculty members must obtain the prior consent of the faculty member(s) if they intend to publish information generated in the course of the project.

### **School Letterhead**

Students shall not use the letterhead of the School of Criminal Justice or have cards printed bearing the name of the School without clearly indicating on the involved writing their status as student.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Most financial support in the School is awarded to entering and continuing Ph.D. students. That support may be in the form of fellowships, assistantships, or internships with state agencies. Fellowships entail no work requirement, whereas assistantships and internships involve assignment to specific tasks for a certain number of hours per week (20 hours per week for a

typical assignment). Fellowship and assistantship support may be combined, so that the number of hours worked per week is reduced from what would be expected with a normal assistantship. Awards (fellowships, assistantships, and internships) also include tuition scholarships covering full-time enrollment.

Assistantships may involve teaching, research, or administrative responsibilities. Those assistantships funded by Hindelang Research Center projects are offered by individual project directors and are coordinated through the Research Center; all others are managed through the Dean's Office. The specific amounts of awards and tuition scholarships are determined by the School, the Center, and the University. The School recognizes an obligation to ensure that the assistantships it oversees involve appropriate educational experiences; it is inappropriate, for example, for graduate assistants to be required to undertake tasks of a personal nature for the person to whom they are assigned.

Financial awards are based upon faculty evaluation of several considerations including applicants' academic performance and progress, the skills required to fulfill the obligations of assistantships, and program and curriculum needs. A multi-year funding commitment to a student may be fulfilled by the School through any combination of fellowships, assistantships and internships. It is the student's responsibility to apply for assistantships on Hindelang Center projects and for internships available in state agencies (which may become available at any time during the year) and to keep the Dean's office apprised of any assistantships that are offered and accepted.

The recipients of awards must comply with the following general requirements:

1. All graduate fellows, assistants, and interns must have been formally admitted to a regular degree program and must maintain a satisfactory standard of academic performance in order for their fellowships and assistantships to be continued. The School is not obligated to continue funding for a graduate student who has earned a grade of E or U in any graduate course.
2. Unless otherwise specified, recipients of fellowships, assistantships, and internships are expected to make a commitment of two academic semesters to their positions. Those who leave the School or terminate their positions before the mid-semester date may forfeit the tuition scholarship associated with their original awards. Students may not accept offers for new assistantships or internships without ensuring that they are released by the School or a project director from any previous commitments they have made.
3. In order to qualify for tuition scholarships, all graduate fellows and assistants must apply through the University for New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). Students (other than International Students) who qualify for tuition scholarships must apply for and be granted New York State residency prior to beginning their second year of study, or else pay the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition.

4. University policy states that recipients of financial awards may not hold two assistantships or fellowships of any kind simultaneously. This restriction does not include Veterans Educational Assistance Allowance.
5. University policy states that recipients of fellowships and assistantships are expected to refrain from engaging in outside employment during the terms of their appointments. Exceptions may be authorized by the Dean when recommended by the student's major advisor. Exceptions will be based on educational, rather than financial, need.
6. Fellowship (full or partial) recipients generally are required to register for at least 12 credits of coursework per semester unless eligible to register for CRJ 899. They must comply with all other requirements that accompany financial awards.
7. Assistantship recipients and interns must register for at least 9 but not more than 10 credits per semester unless eligible to register for CRJ 899.

### **Applications for Assistantships**

The School will solicit and accept applications for School-managed assistantships in the early part of each spring semester, for the following academic year. All students who wish to be supported must apply - even those who have multiple-year funding commitments from the School - since the information on the application is critical to making timely assignments based on interest areas, expertise, and experience.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

### **School By-Laws**

The governance of the business of the School of Criminal Justice is through the combined action of the Dean, the faculty and students, subject to the rules and regulations of the University. Many important aspects of the School's governance are described and defined in the School's By-Laws. The provisions of this Handbook are to be construed consistently with those of the By-Laws.

### **Student Participation in School Governance**

#### **The Student Association**

The Criminal Justice Graduate Student Association has been established to address the needs and advance the best interests of the University at Albany Criminal Justice graduate students. The rules governing its operation are provided in the CRJGSA Constitution and accompanying Election Procedure/Guidelines.

All currently enrolled graduate students in the School of Criminal Justice at the University at Albany are entitled to membership in the CRJGSA and shall be deemed members of the organization unless they state in writing that they do not desire membership.

The CRJGSA Assembly shall act as the legislative body of the CRJGSA. It shall be responsible for approving the budget; developing, approving, and adopting policy of the CRJGSA; and relaying information from the CRJGSA to members and other interested persons. The CRJGSA Assembly shall be made up of 11 members: (a) President, (b) Vice President, (c) Treasurer, (d) two Advanced Representatives, (e) two At-Large Representatives, (f) two Second-Year representatives and (g) two First-Year representatives. General elections for the President, Vice President, Treasurer, two Advanced Representatives, two At-Large Representatives, and two Second-Year Representatives shall be held during the spring semester. General elections for the two First-Year Representatives shall be held during the fall semester not later than October 1.

Officers shall serve one year beginning June 1, except First-Year representatives, who shall serve from their election in the fall semester until the ensuing election for First-Year representatives.

The CRJGSA Assembly shall conduct meetings at least once each month during the fall and spring semesters. Each meeting shall be publicly announced no less than one week in advance. All meetings shall be open to all members of the CRJGSA.

#### Participation and Voting Rights

- A. Subject to the exceptions enumerated below, the President and Vice President of the Student Association act as the voting representatives of the Student Association at all general faculty meetings.
- B. The President and Vice President (or their designees) may be present, participate and vote at general faculty meetings except at such times as any of the following are under discussion:
  - 1. The employment, conditions of employment, or performance of members of the faculty, except as specifically provided herein;
  - 2. The academic performance of individual students, including the granting of awards or fellowships;
  - 3. The content of examinations by which student academic achievement is judged.

Before each general faculty meeting the Dean shall designate on the agenda which, if any, of the items scheduled for discussion fall within the described categories. These designations shall be subject to review by a majority vote of the faculty.

- C. The Student Association may recommend the students who shall serve as members of the School's committees. Students who are members of committees shall have the same prerogatives as any other committee member, except that they are not to have access to individual student records, nor participate in academic or financial decisions relating to individual students.

1. Students serving on committees shall be invited to attend the general faculty meetings when reports or recommendations from the committees on which they serve are scheduled for consideration, subject to the same rules of exclusion which apply to the general student representatives. The Dean is to notify the student members of committees from which formal reports are expected of the time and place of the general faculty meetings at which such reports are to be considered.
  2. The student committee members may participate in the discussion of the reports or recommendations of the committee at the general faculty meeting; the authority to vote, however, is retained by the general student representatives, unless otherwise specified.
- D. Student participation in matters concerning the initial hiring of faculty to the School, and the promotion and continuing appointment of faculty members, is subject to the following specific provisions.
1. Initial Appointments  
The two general student representatives may cast votes on recommendations concerning the initial appointment of persons to the School's faculty. The student representatives should, to the best of their ability, poll and represent the sentiments of the student body in determining their votes.
  2. Contract Renewals, Tenure and Promotion  
Student representatives do not have voting rights in matters involving faculty renewal, promotion, tenure, retention, or salary issues. However, student representatives will communicate student feedback regarding the candidate in question to the Dean. The procedures that will guide student participation and the solicitation of student feedback are currently under review. An addendum to the Graduate Handbook will be issued upon conclusion of the review.

### School Committees: Membership and Responsibilities

Much of the School's business is initiated or conducted in committee. A number of standing committees exist, which are described below. Other standing committees may be established by majority vote of the faculty. Ad hoc and temporary committees may be created without faculty action.

#### Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee shall consist of not less than three faculty members and two graduate students. The Committee shall be responsible for evaluating and modifying the graduate curriculum (including course requirements, examination and grading policies, admission procedures, and policies regarding the evaluation of graduate students in the program). In addition, the Committee will be responsible for the recruitment of new graduate students.

### Undergraduate Committee

The Undergraduate Committee shall consist of at least three faculty members and two graduate students. The Committee shall be responsible for evaluating and making recommendations to the faculty to modify the undergraduate curriculum and policies regarding admission to the undergraduate program. It will also be responsible for overseeing the undergraduate honors program, internship program and undergraduate student association.

### Admissions Committee

The Committee on Admissions shall consist of not less than three voting faculty members. The Committee shall be responsible for the administration and implementation of the graduate admissions policies of the School of Criminal Justice.

### Student Performance Committee

The Committee on Student Performance shall consist of not less than three voting faculty members. The Committee shall be responsible for making such recommendations as may be necessary to the faculty relative to the adequacy of the academic performance of individual students in the School of Criminal Justice.

### Course Evaluations

Professors who are not tenured or who are eligible for promotion must have their courses evaluated for consideration in personnel decisions. Professors who teach undergraduate courses should also make arrangements for the distribution and collection of student evaluations of their courses.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Grievances occasionally arise on matters related to the School's business, which may involve students, faculty, and staff. The following procedures have been established to govern the resolution of grievances in the School of Criminal Justice.

### **STEP I**

1. Any member of the School of Criminal Justice, who concludes that the actions of another member of the School of Criminal Justice, provide grounds for a grievance, must first discuss the issue fully with the party involved, within six weeks of the alleged occurrence of the grievance action, absent exceptional circumstances. Every effort to achieve satisfactory resolution of the problem should be made through such direct discussion. If the grievance is of a personal nature such that the aggrieved party cannot approach directly the subject of grievance (hereinafter the "respondent"), then the grievant should go directly to the Dean

within the above time period, and the Dean will attempt to resolve the matter informally, as described in step I.3.

2. If the matter remains unresolved, a letter should be provided by the grievant to the Dean, with a copy to the respondent, to the effect that the respondent has been consulted by the grievant and that no resolution satisfactory to both parties has been achieved. The grievant should also include in this letter a detailed statement of the substance of the grievance. The grievant must provide this letter to the Dean within two weeks of the time that the steps taken in step I.1. have been completed. At this time the Dean may request a letter of response from the respondent. If the respondent is unable or unwilling to respond, this should be so noted by the Dean.
3. The Dean of the School of Criminal Justice within six weeks of receipt of this documentation shall attempt to settle the matter with the involved individuals. The Dean should make a thorough investigation of the case and make every effort to resolve the problem at this level. At completion of this stage, a letter should be provided by the Dean to the grievant to the effect that the Dean has been consulted concerning the grievance and whether a resolution or lack of resolution was achieved. A copy of this letter should be submitted as part of the documentation required in Step II together with all other written documentation so far produced.
4. If the Dean is him/herself an object of the grievance, the Chair of the Faculty should substitute. If both are involved, then the Associate Dean should substitute, or appoint another third party from the faculty.

## **STEP II**

1. If no resolution is reached in Step I, the grievant may, within four weeks of the time that all actions required in Step I have been completed, petition the Student Performance Committee to establish an ad hoc Grievance Sub-committee. The petition should contain copies of all the letters and statements referred to in Step I. The chair of the Student Performance Committee should verify the authenticity of those letters and statements. In addition, the grievant should be invited to modify or amend his/her statement concerning the original grievance, a copy of which should be given to the respondent, who may respond, with a copy also to the grievant. These statements should also include suggestions for a satisfactory remedy.
2. No action will be taken by the Student Performance Committee to establish an ad hoc Grievance Sub-committee until all documentation relating to the grievance-claim has been supplied in full. If the Committee determines that the petition and any or all accompanying materials are incomplete, the Committee shall return the petition to the grievant who shall then resubmit the petition.
3. The Grievance Sub-committee shall be composed of 3 faculty members (one of whom shall serve as chair) and two graduate students; however, in the case of a grievance involving an undergraduate student, one of the student members will be an undergraduate student. All

members of the ad hoc committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Faculty in consultation with the Chair of the Student Performance Committee, or by appropriate substitutes if such individuals are directly involved in the grievance. In the appointment of student members to the committee, the President of the Student Association will be consulted. Both grievant and respondent may object to any appointment. This must be done in writing to the Chair of the Student Performance Committee, who will use every effort to assemble qualified individuals acceptable to all parties.

### **STEP III**

1. Upon receiving a completed petition for its review of the grievance claim, the Grievance Sub-committee will first determine whether that petition provides adequate grounds for its action. If there is a majority vote of the sub-committee that it does provide such grounds, the sub-committee is to make every effort to conduct as thorough an investigation as the case warrants and arrive at its findings within 60 days of receiving the statement of grievance and supporting materials. This investigation may include the following:
  - a) Collection of documents relevant to the case.
  - b) Interviewing by the sub-committee as a whole, or by a majority of the sub-committee, all individuals the sub-committee considers relevant to a resolution of the case. If individuals refuse to be interviewed, this should be noted and submitted as a written record to the file.
2. After the information gathering process is complete, the ad hoc committee shall schedule a meeting to review the evidence. At this point, the grievant and the respondent have the right to appear before the ad hoc committee to present their respective positions regarding the grievance, and to be present while their counterparts' positions are presented. Except for their own respective presentations, the roles of the grievant and respondent will be limited to observation and note-taking.
3. The ad hoc Grievance Sub-committee meetings shall be conducted in camera. No counsel shall be permitted to attend the meetings.
4. The grievant shall have the burden of proving facts essential to the resolution of the grievance by a preponderance of evidence.

### **STEP IV**

1. The Grievance Sub-committee shall prepare and send a written statement of its findings, together with its recommendation for resolution of the grievance claim to the Student Performance Committee. Grievants should realize, however, that a Grievance Sub-committee does not have the power to enforce any of its findings. It can only recommend remedies to the appropriate person(s). Upon acceptance of the Sub-committee's written report, copies of this report will be sent to: the grievant(s), the respondent(s), and the Dean of the School of Criminal Justice.

2. The Student Performance Committee shall provide a summary of the sub-committee's findings and recommendations to the Faculty Meeting Executive Session, for information only.
3. The Dean shall, within 30 days of receipt of the Sub-committee's findings, report the position of the Office of the Dean on the grievance claim. Copies of this report shall be distributed to all parties noted above, including the faculty.
4. The findings of the ad hoc Grievance Sub-committee or of the Dean may be appealed by either grievant or respondent to the appropriate University Governance bodies; the Committee on Academic Standing of the Undergraduate Academic Council via the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies or the Graduate Academic Council via the Office of the Dean for Graduate Studies. The decision of the Academic Standing Committee of the Undergraduate or Graduate Academic Council is final (as per approved Senate Bill No. 0203-10).
5. Records of the entire grievance process will be kept in the Dean's office, in a separate, secure file. The grievant or respondent may request that copies of these records be kept in either the student file or personnel file accordingly.