

CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE, PHD

The Ph.D. in Criminology and Criminal Justice gives students the opportunity to specialize in one of three areas: violent crime, courts and corrections, or global criminology. This program supports both current and new scholars and practitioners in the areas of criminology, intelligence, digital forensics, social science, and other justice related fields.

Admissions

Important Points to Consider Before You Apply

If your career plan involves conducting and disseminating research, you should apply directly to the Ph.D. program – not the MS Program.

- Review our description of research in the department and **faculty areas of expertise**.
- Start date for new students: All of our newly admitted students will start the program in the Fall semester, which begins mid-August.
 - We do not invite students to begin mid-year.

Application Deadlines

- For the Master's program: November 15th to be considered for priority funding, February 1st to be considered for admission.
- For the PhD program: February 1st.

To Apply

You can start the application process at **The University of Alabama Graduate School's website**.

Application Components

1. **Application Fee**
 - If you are concerned about not being able to afford this fee, please email the Graduate School at gradschool@ua.edu.
2. **Statement of Purpose**
 - Clearly describe how a graduate degree in criminology and criminal justice relates to your career goals. Summarize your relevant education experiences including any research you conducted. If you were involved in research projects, please include details on your responsibilities on the project, the skills you learned and/or applied, and any outcomes from the project that you were involved with (e.g., research presentations or manuscripts). Your SOP should also include a statement regarding the area of graduate research you intend to pursue if admitted. If you are considering a range of possible research areas, please describe them. Your SOP should also demonstrate awareness of the research being conducted in our department by our faculty and how your research interests. If you are interested in working with one or more specific faculty in our department, please mention them by name in your SOP.
3. **Your Resume or CV**
 - Example CVs can be found on the **Career Center's website**.
4. **Undergraduate Transcripts** (you can upload them yourself)
 - Official transcripts will be requested only after admission.
5. **Contact Information for the three people who have agreed to write letters of recommendation for you**
 - At least two of your references should be professors or instructors who have taught you in the past.
 - Letters should be uploaded electronically by the letter writers, not submitted by the applicant.
6. **A Writing Sample** (paper from an academic course)

- There is not a minimum or maximum length, but writing samples should be about 5-10 pages in length excluding references.

7. For applicants whose first language is not English, the UA Graduate School requires one of the following:

- TOEFL score of at least 550 on the paper-based test (PBT)
- TOEFL score of at least 213 on the computer-based test (CBT)
- TOEFL score of at least 79 on the internet-based test (iBT)
- IELTS score of at least 6.5
- Duolingo English test score of at least 105

Additional information for International Student applicants can be found on the UA Graduate School website: <https://graduate.ua.edu/applicants/international-students/>

Master of Science vs. Ph.D. Program

Students will apply to either the Master of Science program OR the Ph.D. program.

Master's En Route

The master's en route is a streamlined way for doctoral students to earn their master's degree. In contrast to the standard model of students earning a master's and then earning a doctoral degree, the master's en route works in one of the following two ways:

1. A student who does not have a master's degree yet (in the academic field where they will pursue a doctorate) is admitted directly to the doctoral program. Once they pass the written component of the doctoral comprehensive exam, they are granted the master's degree "on the way" or "en route." They then complete their doctoral requirements and earn the doctoral degree.
2. Students might be admitted to the master's program, but before the end of their second semester as full-time graduate students, they decide they would like to earn a doctorate or are outstanding enough that the department thinks they can progress directly to the doctoral program before earning a master's. The student then fills out an abbreviated application form to be moved to the doctoral program. The master's is granted "on the way" once they pass the written component of the doctoral comprehensive exam requirement.

Accelerated Master's Program (AMP) students wishing to apply to the Ph.D. program for the Master's en route option can apply at any point before the end of their second semester as full-time graduate students, but cannot begin the doctoral program until they complete their Bachelor's degree.

Students who have been admitted to the doctoral program and are earning their Master's en route do not need to complete the Master's-level comprehensive exam requirement.

Curricular Requirements

Students must compete a minimum of 60 credit hours (of which up to 21 hours can be transferred or counted from prior graduate study, contingent on department and UA graduate school approval). This includes:

- 42 hours of graduate coursework credits. This includes 27 hours of required courses and 15 hours of elective courses.
- At least 18 hours of dissertation credit.

It is anticipated that all students will complete the Proseminar in Criminology and Criminal Justice during their first year in the program if they enter with a Master's degree and during their first or second year

in the program if they enter with a Bachelor's degree. This course will provide an overview of the field, provide opportunities to learn about faculty research projects, encourage the development of professional identities and provide students insights into potential career paths.

The UA Graduate School offers a 1 credit course "Preparing Future Faculty and Scholars." Students are strongly encouraged but not required to complete this course.

Code and Title		Hours
Required		
CJ 581	Applic Statistics In CJ	3
CJ 584	Criminological Theory	3
CJ 586	Research In CJ Process	3
CJ 680	Proseminar in CCJ	3
CJ 681	Advanced Quantitative Analysis	3
CJ 684	Criminological Theory II	3
CJ 685	Advanced Qualitative Methods	3
CJ 686	Criminal Justice Policy	3
CJ 687 or	Special Topics in Statistics	3
CJ 688	Special Topics in Methods	3
Credit Hours Subtotal:		27
Electives		
Students must take 15 hours of elective course work.		15
CJ 505	Gender & Crime	
CJ 506	Terrorism	
CJ 520	Seminar Law Enforcement	
CJ 540	Sem Juvenile Delinquency	
CJ 570	Sem Correction Policy	
CJ 590	Special Topics	
Special Topic Subjects Include: Cybercrime, Forensic Science, Crime Mapping, Southern Crime and Justice, Global Criminology, Hate Crimes, White Collar Crime, Ecology of Crime, Organized Crime, and Life Course Criminology		
Credit Hours Subtotal:		15
Dissertation		
CJ 699	Dissertation Research	18
Total Hours		60

Courses specific to the PhD program are designated as 600 level; only doctoral students are eligible to take these courses unless a specific exception is granted by the Graduate Director of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Students are encouraged to incorporate their own research ideas into their coursework whenever possible. For example, students might develop the theory discussion of their dissertation in CJ 684 or develop a framework for collecting or analyzing qualitative data for a manuscript or their dissertation in CJ 685.

Transfer Credit

Upon admission, up to 21 hours can be transferred or counted from prior graduate study, contingent on department and UA Graduate School approval. In addition, students who are currently enrolled in the PhD program can count 6 credit hours of graduate coursework from other departments at The University of Alabama toward their degree, contingent on approval of those specific courses by the Graduate Director of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

Doctoral Plan of Study Requirement

Graduate School information on the Doctoral Plan of Study.

Comprehensive Exams

PhD students should complete all their coursework before beginning work on their doctoral comprehensive exams and must complete doctoral comprehensive exams before enrolling in dissertation research credits.

The exam has three components:

First, students must prepare a sole-authored, publishable piece of research that (1) draws upon criminological theory, (2) employs a quantitative or qualitative method, and (3) analyzes a distinct topic. Potential formats for this manuscript can include a traditional journal article, scholarly book chapter, or technical report, but **the student must inform both their dissertation chair and the Graduate Director of Criminology and Criminal Justice in writing which format they have selected prior to submission.** Students are responsible for obtaining IRB approval for their projects, in advance, whenever applicable. Papers must be approximately 40 pages in length (double-spaced, inclusive of abstract, tables, figures, appendices, and references) and formatted in APA style. **This manuscript must be submitted within nine months of students completing their coursework for them to remain eligible for funding.**

The candidate must give members of the grading committee a minimum of two weeks to read the comprehensive exam before the date of the final oral examination.

Second, following submission of their sole-authored paper, students must participate in an oral examination. **Opportunities for this oral examination will typically be held in the first week of November (Fall semester) and April (Spring semester).**

Third, after the oral examination, students will be given one opportunity to revise their sole-authored paper and submit it for grading. **The revision must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the oral examination.**

Following submission of their revised manuscript and its evaluation by their grading committee, students will receive two grades for their doctoral comprehensive exam: (1) pass/fail on their publishable piece of research, and (2) pass/fail on their oral examination. The grading committee will be composed of three CCJ faculty members. Ideally, the chair of each student's grading committee will be a faculty member who has agreed to serve as the student's dissertation chair. If a faculty member has not yet agreed to serve as the student's dissertation chair, a grading committee chair will be appointed by the department chair. The two remaining grading committee members will be determined based upon a rotating list of faculty members.

- If students pass both the written and oral portions of the doctoral comprehensive exam, they will have met the program-determined milestone for earning a Master's degree "en route" (for students to whom this is applicable) and may proceed to the dissertation stage.
- If students pass only the written portion of the doctoral comprehensive exam (and fail the oral portion), they will have met the program-determined milestone for earning a Master's degree "en route" (for students to whom this is applicable) but will no longer be eligible to complete their doctoral degree in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at The University of Alabama.
- If students fail the written portion of the doctoral comprehensive exam, they will no longer be eligible to complete their doctoral degree in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at The University of Alabama (regardless of their performance on the

oral portion). These students may still be eligible to complete the Master's Comprehensive Exam requirement to earn a master's degree from the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, but should communicate with the Graduate Director to determine whether this is possible.

Admission to Candidacy Requirements

After a student has completed all coursework, passed their comprehensive exams, and passed an oral defense of the dissertation proposal, a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the degree will be made.

Students entering the program with a Masters degree are expected to advance to candidacy by December 15 of their third year. Students who have not previously completed a Masters degree are expected to advance to candidacy by May 15 of their third year.

Graduate School information on Admission to Candidacy.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

Graduate School information on Continuous Enrollment.

Dissertation Requirements

Dissertation Committee

The entire dissertation committee should be formed and approved early in the dissertation research process, before significant progress is made on the dissertation. The committee must be formally established via a process initiated by the student and requiring the consent of each committee member, followed by Graduate School review for compliance with the regulations outlined below. Students initiate this process via their Graduate Student Portal.

PhD committees must consist of at least five members. Any committee may have additional (voting or nonvoting) members if deemed appropriate. At least one of the committee members must be from outside the student's major department. These external members may be from another academic department at UA, from other universities, or from industry or the professional field. In all cases, these members external to the department/program must be appointed to UA's Graduate Faculty by the dean of the Graduate School, and must have significant professional qualifications that directly contribute to the depth and rigor of the dissertation.

All members of the dissertation committee must hold Graduate Faculty status at The University of Alabama. The chair of the committee must hold Full Graduate Faculty status in the department where the degree is housed; others may be Full, Associate, or Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty. A majority of the Dissertation Committee members must be full-time regular University of Alabama faculty (that is, full-time, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor).

In rare cases, a student may be unable to form a committee within their program or secure a thesis or dissertation chair. In these circumstances, the student's progress to date will be reviewed by the program's designated committee for such reviews. If the program does not have such a standing committee, the department chair will appoint an ad hoc committee of graduate faculty to review the student's progress to date.

This ad hoc committee will not work in the capacity of an advisory committee but will identify a path forward for the student, which shall include written expectations for progress and responsiveness to mentorship. The expectations and timeline must be agreed upon by a

majority of the committee members, and all of the expectations must be shared in writing with the student.

In the context of these written expectations, the student will then have the subsequent semester to secure the support of an advisor, form a committee, and meet the written expectations of the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will reconvene at the end of that semester to evaluate the student's progress in meeting these three milestones. If the student does not meet the outlined expectations, the student will be dismissed from the program based on lack of progress.

The dissertation committee must be approved by the UA Graduate School Dean. Receipt of the approval from the Graduate School Dean should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Any changes after the committee has been approved will require a change of committee form to be approved by either the department chair or the department's Graduate Director and the UA Graduate School Dean. It is strongly encouraged that students discuss potential changes with the department's Graduate Director before formally submitting the request.

Dissertation Proposal

Students must defend a dissertation proposal before they can defend their dissertation. The dissertation proposal aims to show the appropriateness, manageability, and significance of the projected research. The student formally presents the written proposal to the dissertation committee and defends it in a meeting with the committee. The proposal normally includes an introduction that provides an overview and states the significance of the proposed research, review of the literature, and methodology. Departments determine the details of the dissertation proposal's format with respect to specifics such as the length of the introduction and level of detail of the literature review. Once the student and dissertation chair have developed a proposal, and the graduate dean has approved the dissertation committee, the student schedules the dissertation proposal meeting that includes all committee members. **The student cannot propose a dissertation and have its final defense in the same semester.**

Dissertation

A dissertation showing the ability to conduct independent research and skill in organization, writing, and presentation must be prepared on a topic in the major field. It must constitute an original contribution to knowledge. The dissertation must be based upon research completed while the student is enrolled at The University of Alabama.

The subject of the dissertation must be approved by the student's dissertation committee and by the dean of the Graduate School. The final dissertation may take the form of a traditional, chapter-based document or a series of full-length publication-ready manuscripts which are part of a larger, cohesive body of work. The format (traditional vs. article-style) must be approved by the committee in accordance with the standards for the program and the discipline.

For article-style dissertations, the document must contain a minimum of three articles, in addition to introductory and concluding materials.

A single abstract must accompany the document. In addition to an introduction presenting the unifying framework that supports the research, the document must include a concluding section that summarizes the importance of the work, integrates the major findings, and discusses the implications for the overall body of work.

Individual departments may have policies or guidelines related to whether sections of the dissertation may be included if they have been previously published elsewhere. Copyright issues also may arise if sections of the dissertation have been previously published. Therefore, students who

are considering the submission of dissertation chapters/articles for publication prior to their dissertation defense should consult with their advisor, and also with potential publication outlets, before submitting any dissertation-related manuscript for publication.

All parts of the dissertation must conform to the provisions set forth on the Graduate School page, except when the circumstances of a specific project or discipline's style manual require deviation. Students should email t (gradschool@ua.edu)he graduate school before beginning their work if they have questions concerning specific problems or deviations from traditional procedure.

The Dean of the Graduate School must approve the dissertation before the student can be cleared for graduation. See "Final Dissertation Submission and Approval" for details on the Graduate School website.

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

The anticipated time to degree for students entering the Ph.D. program with a Bachelor's degree is 4-5 years. The anticipated time to degree for students entering the Ph.D. program with a Master's degree is 3-4 years. The Graduate Council allows for 9 years before credits must be reactivated regardless of whether students are considered full or part-time.

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

Student Progress Requirement

Annual Evaluations

All students will be evaluated on an annual basis. These evaluations will be completed by the Graduate Director until the student has selected a major professor, after which time evaluations will be completed by the major professor. Evaluations will be conducted to assess whether students are meeting appropriate benchmarks in the program including completing required coursework, the completion of the required comprehensive examination (see Masters Comprehensive Examination and Doctoral Examination) and whether students are making appropriate progress toward the completion of their dissertation project. These evaluations will identify whether students are meeting each of these benchmarks. Students who are not meeting department benchmarks will be provided written guidance about why they have not met a particular benchmark and be provided suggestions about how they can meet these benchmarks moving forward. The results of annual evaluations will be provided to students and a copy will be saved in the main office. These evaluations will also provide guidance whether students are completing suggested benchmarks such as presenting their research at conferences and submitting single or co-authored manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals for publication consideration.

Additional Academic Requirements

Academic Suspension

Any student who receives two graduate course grades of "C" or lower, or one graduate course grade of "D" or "F," will automatically be subject to Academic Suspension (dismissal) from the program and the Graduate School. Students who are academically suspended may not attend class or enroll in any form of distance learning courses.

Departmental Colloquia

Throughout the year, department colloquia are held, including special presentations by scholars from outside The University; presentations of research by departmental faculty and other UA faculty; and presentations

of research by graduate students. Attendance at departmental colloquia is mandatory.

Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leave of Absence.

Academic Grievance Information

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

Application for Graduation Information

Information on the Application for Graduation.

Multiple funding opportunities are available to graduate students in The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. This includes funding for assistantships that include a monthly stipend, tuition waiver, and health insurance benefits, and funding for research and travel that support students' research productivity. Students are also eligible to be considered for fellowships and other funding opportunities offered by The University of Alabama's Graduate School.

Applicants for the Ph.D. program will be given priority for funding for assistantships and research/travel over applicants to the M.S. program. Assistantship offers to PhD program applicants with Master's degrees will guarantee funding for four years. Assistantship offers to PhD program applicants with Bachelor's degrees will be guarantee funding for five years. Funding for research and travel requests will be determined on an annual basis depending on department resources. **Guaranteed funding is contingent on meeting basic contract, department, and university expectations.** This includes the expectation that students will maintain expected progress towards the degree and complete the doctoral comprehensive exam requirement. In the case that summer funding becomes available, Ph.D. students will be given priority.