

Criminal Justice Sciences – Graduate Assessment Plan

The Department's Curriculum and Assessment Committee is charged with assessing the program and proposing and overseeing program improvements.

Program Goals and Intended Student Outcomes

The student learning outcomes for the graduate program are as follows:

Student Learning Outcomes
1) Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills
a) Theory
Be able to summarize and evaluate the major theoretical perspectives of criminology and criminal justice as well as apply social policy to these perspectives.
b) CJ Systems
Be able to integrate the major components, and analyze the organizational dynamics of the criminal justice system. Apply the historical, sociological and international context to develop best practices in criminal justice.
c) Research & Evaluation
Apply the principles of empirical social science evaluation to the analysis of problems and evaluation of policy. Demonstrate competency in designing and carrying out a research project.
d) Human Behavior
Understand the role of human behavior and diversity in relation to offending, victimization, and responding to crime both in terms of developing policy and evaluating policy impact.
e) Professionalism
Expose students to attitudes, values, and habits of professionals in the field of criminal justice with an awareness of ethical behavior and cultural diversity.
2) Communication Skills
a) Oral and Written Communication
Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication, including: effectively connecting concepts to examples, using appropriate citation methods, writing professional-level reports or analyses, and using appropriate presentation techniques.
b) Computer Applications
Be able to effectively utilize relevant computer applications to represent and convey information in a meaningful way.
c) Information
Be able to independently acquire, effectively evaluate, and accurately utilize multiple sources of information including both online and archival content.
3) Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving

Be able to accurately define the nature of a problem and critically evaluate the quality of the solution(s), including the identification of consistencies/discrepancies in research findings and limitations of research designs/methodology.

Systematic Assessment of Student Learning Methodologies

The learning outcomes were tied to a matrix identifying specific required graduate courses that are supposed to meet these outcomes. The matrix provides the baseline for pursuing graduate assessment in the department.

	Required Courses								
	CJS 401 Criminological Theory	CJS 412 Correctional Systems	CJS 497 Introduction to Research	CJS 402 Issues in Justice	CJS 415 Policing and Society	CJS 421 Management Issues	CJS 440 Statistical Applications in CJS	CJS 499 Master's Thesis (6 hr) - Req. for thesis option	CJS 400 Independent Study (4 hr) - Req. for comp. exam option
Student Learning Outcomes (faculty unanimously approved 4-15-11)									
1) Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills									
a) Theory									
Be able to summarize and evaluate the major theoretical perspectives of criminology and criminal justice as well as apply social policy to these perspectives.	x								
b) CJ Systems									
Be able to integrate the major components, and analyze the organizational dynamics of the criminal justice system. Apply the historical, sociological and international context to develop best practices in criminal justice.		x			x	x			
c) Research & Evaluation									
Apply the principles of empirical social science evaluation to the analysis of problems and evaluation of policy. Demonstrate competency in designing and carrying out a research project			x				x		
d) Human Behavior									
Understand the role of human behavior and diversity in relation to offending, victimization, and responding to crime both in terms of developing policy and evaluating policy impact.	x			x					
e) Professionalism									
Expose students to attitudes, values, and habits of professionals in the field of criminal justice with an awareness of ethical behavior and cultural diversity.		x				x			

2) Communication Skills									
a) Oral and Written Communication									
Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication, including: effectively connecting concepts to examples, using appropriate citation methods, writing professional-level reports or analyses, and using appropriate presentation techniques.	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
b) Computer Applications									
Be able to effectively utilize relevant computer applications to represent and convey information in a meaningful way.			x					x	
c) Information									
Be able to independently acquire, effectively evaluate, and accurately utilize multiple sources of information including both online and archival content.									x
3) Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving									
Be able to accurately define the nature of a problem and critically evaluate the quality of the solution(s), including the identification of consistencies/discrepancies in research findings and limitations of research designs/methodology.					x				

Indirect Methods:

The Graduate Program Exit Survey (Appendix I) provides student perspectives on several of the learning outcomes. We believe the student perceptions of the graduate program and its stated objectives are valuable. The survey contains both open and closed-ended questions.

Feedback from Key Stakeholders

Students:

- 1) Each graduating Master’s student will be given the Criminal Justice Department Graduate Program Exit Survey (Appendix I). The survey asks a variety of questions about the Criminal Justice graduate program, and provides the department with information about student perspectives of courses, career goals, desires, as well as specific outcomes identified in the learning outcome matrix.

Alumni:

- 1) Feedback is collected through the Alumni Survey, which is administered each April by University Assessment Services. The low response rate limits the usefulness of the data acquired for assessment purposes.

Closing the Loop

Each Fall the Curriculum and Assessment Committee examines the prior year’s assessment data and uses it to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program, and identify curricular/program changes that may be needed, and other programmatic changes that could improve the department. These recommendations are submitted to the faculty during monthly department meetings, and action needed is followed up upon.

Appendix I: Criminal Justice Department Graduate Program Exit Survey

The Department of Criminal Justice Sciences seeks input from you to aid in the assessment of its graduate program. This information will be used to improve our service to students.

DO NOT place your name on this form.

Please use the OPSCAN form to complete the following questions.

- 1.) When do you expect to graduate?
A.) Spring 2014 B.) Summer 2014 C.) Fall 2014
- 2.) Did you receive your undergraduate degree from Illinois State University?
A.) Yes B.) No
- 3.) Was your undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice?
A.) Yes B.) No
- 4.) Did you complete the thesis or comprehensive exams?
A.) thesis B.) comprehensive exams

For each of the following questions, please select the choice that best captures your experience with the criminal justice graduate program.

A.) Strongly agree B.) Agree C.) Disagree D.) Strongly disagree E.) Does not apply

- 5.) Faculty were helpful when I needed assistance
- 6.) Overall, the quality of instruction was excellent in CJS courses
- 7.) Faculty were experts in their subject matter areas
- 8.) I was treated fairly in my dealings with faculty
- 9.) Department computer resources met my needs
- 10.) I was treated equitably by other students
- 11.) A graduate degree in CJS expanded my career options
- 12.) Overall, I increased my knowledge and skills as a result of my CJS graduate degree
- 13.) I had an opportunity to get involved in community service/volunteering while working on my CJS graduate degree
- 14.) I would recommend the CJS graduate program to a good friend or family member

How well did the criminal justice graduate program enhance your knowledge or skill in the following? For each of the skills, answer:

A.) A great deal B.) Moderately C.) Not much

- 18.) Problem-Solving
 - 19.) Critical thinking
 - 20.) Writing ability
 - 21.) Knowledge of criminal justice theory
 - 22.) Understanding of the criminal justice system
 - 23.) Research methods
 - 24.) Communication and presentation skills
 - 25.) Professional and ethical behavior
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How did you find out about the CJS graduate program?

Who or what influenced you in deciding to pursue the CJS graduate program at ISU?

What are your career plans upon graduation from the CJS graduate program?

What do you feel are the strengths of the CJS graduate program at ISU?

What do you feel are the weaknesses of the CJS graduate program at ISU?

Are there specific skills or areas of knowledge you wish you had acquired as a criminal justice graduate student at ISU?

Would you please share any additional comments about your experiences with the criminal justice graduate program at ISU?