

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
WITH CONCENTRATION IN JUSTICE POLICY
AND ADMINISTRATION
ONLINE PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**



**GRADUATE STUDENT POLICIES &
PROCEDURES MANUAL
UPDATED FALL 2025**



DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The online Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration requires satisfactory completion of 36 hours beyond the bachelor's degree. For graduate programs, 9 hours (3 courses) is considered full-time enrollment.

Part I: Core Curriculum

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy | 3 hours |
| CJUS 5500 – Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration | 3 hours |
| CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory | 3 hours |
| CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies | <u>3 hours</u> |
| | 12 core hours |
| Part II: Electives | 24 elective hours |

Part III: Cumulative Essays

Total hours: 36 hours

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

Fall of each academic year:

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

Spring of each academic year:

CJUS 5500 – Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration
CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory

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

Fall Cohort:

Fall I: CJUS 5000, Elective, Elective
Spring I: CJUS 5500, Elective, Elective
Fall II: CJUS 5700, Elective, Elective
Spring II: CJUS 5600, Elective, Elective

Spring Cohort:

Spring I: CJUS 5500, Elective, Elective
Fall I: CJUS 5700, Elective, Elective
Spring II: CJUS 5600, Elective, Elective
Fall II: CJUS 5000, Elective, Elective

POLICIES ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Progress Toward the Degree

Students are expected to maintain continual progress toward completion of the online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration degree. The following policies ensure our students maintain progress toward the degree:

1. Students must enroll in criminal justice classes within one (1) year of being admitted into the online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration program.
2. Students must also enroll in at least one (1) course each year that will count toward their online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration degree.
3. Students must submit their cumulative essays for CJUS 5500, CJUS 5600, and CJUS 5700 on-time.

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

Time Limitations

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

Graduation

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

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND SUPPORT POLICIES

Early Support and Registration Hold Policy

To proactively support student success and provide timely assistance before academic challenges become barriers, the graduate program will implement the following support measures for students who may benefit from early intervention:

- Students who do not attend the required orientation or convocation during their incoming semester will have submission of their official degree plan delayed until they have participated in an orientation session or completed a one-on-one meeting with a graduate advisor.
- Students who earn a grade of C or below in any graduate-level coursework will have a registration hold placed on their account. The hold will be lifted once the student has met with a graduate advisor to discuss strategies and resources for academic improvement.

These steps are intended to ensure students have the opportunity to access resources, reflect on their academic goals, and develop strategies for continued growth and success in their graduate studies.

Two “C” Rule

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

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

Incomplete Grades

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

Admission Provisions

Students that are required to complete undergraduate course hours in Criminal Justice per the terms of their conditional admission into the online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration program must complete these hours prior to enrollment in graduate Criminal Justice coursework. All undergraduate coursework must be taken through the Department of Criminal Justice at UNT, but students may enroll in either online or campus-based courses.

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

DEGREE PLAN AND COURSE APPROVAL POLICIES

Degree Plan

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

Transfer Hours

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

Courses Taken Outside of Criminal Justice

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

Campus-Based MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research Courses

While the online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration is designed as a fully online program, there may be exceptional circumstances where students may be considered for enrollment in select campus-based courses. These exceptions require approval prior to enrollment. Students with compelling reasons to enroll in a campus-based course may submit a request to the Director of Graduate Programs. To do so, email the Director with the course name, your student ID, and your reasons for choosing the campus-based course. Please note that these requests are approved based on individual circumstances and program capacity.

If enrollment is approved, students will be notified and provided instructions for registration. Approved campus-based courses will count towards the 6-hour limit for non-online courses within the program. However, CJUS study abroad courses are exempt from this limit and are treated as online elective courses.

Online to On-Campus MSCJ Program Transfer Policy

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

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

SPECIAL ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Directed Studies

Directed studies can be arranged with any graduate faculty member within the Department of Criminal Justice. The directed study will include assignments that require the student to complete substantive reading/research, with the ultimate objective of producing scholarly work. It is an expectation of the department that students will choose regular course offerings to satisfy degree requirements; therefore, directed studies are only approved in rare circumstances. It is also an expectation of the department that students will have completed two full semesters in the online MSCJ program before requesting to enroll in directed studies.

When selecting a topic a student wants to explore more fully, avoid choosing a subject already covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850 Form must be completed by the student and faculty member. The contract must then be submitted to the Director of Graduate Programs for additional approval. A Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850 Form can be found at the end of this manual.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Interdisciplinary Studies, MA/MS

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

MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN JUSTICE POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION DEGREE EXIT REQUIREMENTS

To satisfy degree requirements, students must submit three cumulative reflective essays-one for each of the following courses:

CJUS 5500 – Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration

CJUS 5600 – Criminological Theory

CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies

As you begin each essay, review the assigned texts and articles for the course, as well as the cumulative essay guidelines provided below and on our program webpage.

Important Policy on Generative AI Tools

- **Prohibited:** Use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT or similar programs) is not permitted in the writing of cumulative essays.
- **Academic Integrity:** All work must be your own original reflection and analysis. Submissions found to be generated or significantly assisted by AI will be considered a violation of academic integrity and may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action.

Timeline & Communication

- You will receive an email from MSCJ-Advising@unt.edu at the start of the semester reminding you of the due date and writing expectations.
- **Essay Due Date:** Essays are due one week after the final day of the semester.
 - **Submission Window:** You may submit essays starting two weeks before the last day of the semester up until the final due date.
 - *Example:* If the semester ends May 15, you may submit between May 1 and May 22
- **Graduating Students:** Students who intend to graduate in the current semester must

submit their essays by a mid-semester deadline. The exact date will be communicated in the initial email from MSCJ-Advising at the beginning of the semester.

- **Submission Method:** Email your essay, formatted as a PDF, from your UNT email address to MSCJ-Advising@unt.edu.
- **Confirmation:** You will receive a confirmation email within 3 business days of submission. If you do not receive confirmation, it is your responsibility to follow up.

Submission Guidelines

- **Format:**
 - Length: 2.5–3 full pages (excluding title page and references)
 - Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt
 - Spacing: Double-spaced
 - Include in-text references and a reference page for any cited materials (APA format; references not required)
- **Organization:**
 - Include an introduction, body, and conclusion
 - Use subheadings to designate themes and provide structure
 - Use first-person (“I”) as appropriate

Cumulative Essay Guidance

The purpose of this reflective essay is for you to thoughtfully consider how your learning in this course connects to your personal, academic, and professional development. This is not a summary of readings or assignments, but an opportunity to analyze how the course content, discussions, and activities have influenced your understanding, perspectives, and future goals—especially as they relate to the criminal justice system and criminology.

Your essay should address the following:

- **Overall Course Experience:** Reflect on your overall experience in the course. What aspects stood out to you, and in what ways was the experience meaningful or useful?
- **Personal and Professional Impact:** Discuss how the knowledge, skills, or perspectives you gained from this course will influence your current or future academic and/or professional life. Consider how you might apply what you learned in practical settings or how it has shaped your thinking about your career in criminal justice.
- **Connections and Application:** Make connections between your experiences in the course (including readings, discussions, and assignments) and key theoretical concepts. Explain how these connections have affected your understanding of the subject and how you anticipate using this knowledge moving forward.

Tips for Writing Your Reflective Essay:

1. **Focus on Reflection, Not Summary:** Rather than summarizing course materials, identify the main themes that resonated with you and analyze how they have influenced your thinking and approach.
2. **Personal Voice:** Use the first person (“I”) to express your thoughts, insights, and growth.

3. **Structure and Organization:** Your essay should have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Consider using subheadings to organize your thoughts and highlight key themes.
4. **Depth of Analysis:** Go beyond describing what you learned—reflect on how your learning has changed your understanding of criminal justice and how you will apply it in academic or professional contexts.

Grading and Revisions

- **Pass/Fail:** Each essay is graded as pass or fail.
 - Pass: Meets or exceeds all requirements outlined in the rubric (see below) and guidelines.
 - Fail: Does not meet required standards, is incomplete, is not submitted by the deadline, or is submitted in an unopenable or incorrect format (unless corrected before the deadline).
- **Notification:** you will be notified of your result via email within 4 weeks of the due date.
- **Revision:** If you fail an essay, you must resubmit a revised version within one week of notification.
 - The revised submission must include:
 - A cover letter summarizing the original concerns and changes made
 - Highlighted changes in the revised essay

Consequences of Failure

- **First failure:** Mandatory revision (due within one week of notification)
- **Second failure (same essay):** Dismissal from the program
- **Appeals:** A third attempt may be requested only in cases of extreme hardship, subject to approval by the departmental graduate committee.
 - A third failure results in dismissal.

Evaluation Process

- **Blind Review:** Essays are evaluated anonymously by faculty members familiar with the course content.
- **Rubric-Based Assessment:** Faculty use the cumulative essay rubric (see below) to assess the depth of reflection, application of course material, and overall quality.
- **Communication:** Results (pass/fail and comments) will be emailed within four weeks of submission.
 - Do not contact course faculty about your essay during the evaluation process; all communication should go through MSCJ-Advising@unt.edu.

Additional Policies

- **Extensions:**
 - Requests for extensions must be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Programs before the essay deadline.

- Extensions will only be granted for documented emergencies (e.g., illness, family emergency, military service).
- Documentation (e.g., doctor's note, official letter) must be attached to the extension request.
- Late submissions with no approved extension will be considered a failure.
- **Academic Integrity:**
 - Definition: Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and unauthorized assistance (including use of generative AI tools).
 - Plagiarism: Submitting work that is not your own, or failing to properly cite sources, constitutes plagiarism.
 - Reporting: Suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and may result in a failing grade, academic probation, or dismissal from the program.
 - For more information, see the [UNT Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Support and Resources

- **Writing Support:**
 - [UNT Writing Center](#)
 - [Criminal Justice Guide for Graduate Students](#)
 - [Cumulative Essay Guidance Document](#)

Cumulative Essay Rubric

| Criteria | Pass (Satisfactory) | Fail (Unsatisfactory) |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Depth of Reflection | Demonstrates thoughtful reflection, integrates personal experience and course material, and provides critical analysis. | Lacks depth; reflection is superficial or descriptive only. |
| Application of Theory/Content | Clearly and specifically applies course theories, concepts, and readings to personal or professional context. | Minimal or no application of course content; lacks specificity. |
| Personalization | Essay is individualized, with clear connections to student's goals, background, or experiences. | Essay is generic, could apply to any student. |
| Organization & Structure | Well-organized, logical flow, clear introduction, body, and conclusion; uses subheadings as appropriate. | Poor organization, unclear structure, or missing sections. |
| Writing Quality | Clear, concise, and free of major grammatical or spelling errors; appropriate tone and style. | Frequent errors, unclear writing, or inappropriate tone. |
| Formatting | Meets all formatting requirements (length, font, spacing, citations, file type, naming). | Does not meet formatting requirements. |

ONLINE MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN JUSTICE POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850

Department of Criminal Justice

Part I – To Be Completed by Student

Name: _____

Student ID#: _____

Semester: _____, 20____

Professor: _____

Part II – To Be Completed by Professor

I. Proposed topic and course objectives:

II. Assigned course readings:

III. Assignments/Proposed final written product:

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

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Professor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director of Graduate Programs Approval: _____ Date: _____