



**Master of Science in Criminal Justice  
with Concentration  
in Theory and Research  
(Campus-based Program)**

**Graduate Student  
Policies and Procedures Manual**

**Spring 2019**

# DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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

## **Thesis Option**

Core Curriculum – Part I (9 hours)	
CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy	3 hours
CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory	3 hours
CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies	<u>3 hours</u>
	9 hours
Core Curriculum – Part II (3 hours)	
CJUS 5200 – Legal Aspects of the Criminal Justice System	
<u>or</u> CJUS 5500 – Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration	3 hours
Statistics (3 hours)	
CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics	3 hours
Electives	15 hours
Thesis	
CJUS 5950 – Thesis	6 hours
	Total hours: 36 hours

## **Non-Thesis Option**

Core Curriculum – Part I (9 hours)	
CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy	3 hours
CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory	3 hours
CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies	<u>3 hours</u>
	9 hours
Core Curriculum – Part II (3 hours)	
CJUS 5200 – Legal Aspects of the Criminal Justice System	
<u>or</u> CJUS 5500 – Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration	3 hours
Statistics (3 hours)	
CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics	3 hours
Electives	21 hours
	Total hours: 36 hours

**Required Course Offerings:**

Courses comprising the core curriculum are scheduled in the Fall and Spring semesters. The schedule for required course offerings is as follows:

Fall of each academic year:

CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy

CJUS 5700 – Evaluation and Research Methodologies

Spring of each academic year:

CJUS 5600 – Advanced Criminological Theory

CJUS 5200 – Legal Aspects of the Criminal Justice System **or** CJUS 5500 –  
Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration

CJUS 5750 – Criminal Justice Statistics

# **POLICIES**

## **Two “C” Rule**

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

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

## **Interdisciplinary Studies, MA/MS**

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

## **Degree plan**

During the first or second semester in the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program, the student must submit a degree plan to the graduate school through the departmental graduate advisor. The degree plan must be approved by the departmental graduate advisor and the graduate school. Once filed, any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the graduate advisor. Therefore, if you plan on taking a course that is not on your degree plan you must notify the graduate advisor for approval prior to enrollment in the course so that necessary changes to your degree plan can be made.

## **Transfer Hours**

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

## **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.

## **4000 Level Courses**

4000 level courses cannot be applied to the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree.

## **Progress toward the Degree**

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

- 1) Students must enroll in criminal justice classes within one (1) year of being admitted into the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program.
- 2) Students must also enroll in at least one (1) course each year that will count toward their MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree.
- 3) Students have one (1) year after completing their coursework on their MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree to take comprehensive exams or defend their thesis proposal. Students who fail one or more sections of the comprehensive exams have one (1) year to retake the exams. Students have one (1) year after defending their thesis proposal to defend the final version of their completed thesis.

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

## **Time Limitations**

All requirements for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree must be completed within 5 years. While it is possible to request a one-year time extension through the Graduate School, the Department of Criminal Justice typically does not grant extension requests. Students who fail to complete all requirements for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree within 5 years will be dismissed from the program without recourse within the department.

## **Courses taken outside of Criminal Justice**

**Note:** A maximum 6 hours of a combination of courses outside the discipline, directed studies, online courses, or internship may be applied to the degree plan. Exceptions may be made in exigent circumstances.

Any courses taken outside of Criminal Justice must be approved by the graduate advisor 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.

### **Directed Studies**

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

### **Online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration Courses**

Students enrolled in the campus-based MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program may take a limited number of hours of online MSCJ with Concentration in Justice Policy and Administration coursework to apply toward their degree. However, all required courses must be taken on campus; only electives may be taken online. Online courses may be taken only in the summer. Any online courses must be approved by the graduate advisor prior to enrollment in the course.

# **MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN THEORY AND RESEARCH DEGREE EXIT REQUIREMENTS**

## **Options**

As the final exit requirement for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree, students may choose to complete either the comprehensive exam or write a thesis. If a student has unsuccessfully attempted the comprehensive examination, the student may not switch to the thesis option. However, if the student has unsuccessfully attempted the thesis, the student may switch to the non-thesis option and take comprehensive exams as well as two additional electives.

## **Comprehensive Exams**

Comprehensive exams will be required of all students who do not wish to complete the thesis option for the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research degree. To be eligible to take comprehensive exams, a student must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Must have completed the core curriculum in the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research program, namely CJUS 5000, CJUS 5600, CJUS 5700, CJUS 5750, and CJUS 5200 **or** CJUS 5500;
- 2) Must have completed 24 hours toward the Master of Science in Criminal Justice with Concentration in Theory and Research.

## **Scheduling and Registering:**

The comprehensive exams will be offered in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters of each academic year. Exams are always due the Friday before the coming semester begins, and students will receive the exam via UNT email address one week prior. Examinations will only be given at the three scheduled times each academic year. The examinations will be scheduled and graded to allow those students who have completed all other degree requirements to graduate the same semester the examination is successfully completed. Students must register to take comprehensive exams at least one month prior to the scheduled exam date. To register, the student is required to complete a MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research Comprehensive Examination Registration Form and submit it to the graduate advisor. The MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research Comprehensive Examination Registration Form is found at the end of this manual. If a student does not register with the graduate advisor at least one month prior to the exam, the student may not be allowed to take the exam. It is recommended that if a student decides not to take the comprehensive exam after registering that the student inform the graduate advisor of his/her decision prior to the exam date. Once the exam has been administered, it will count as an attempt at the exam. If the student fails to submit a completed exam by the due date and time, it will be a considered failed attempt.

### **Examination Preparation:**

Preparation for the examination should begin with the first course the student takes. Notes taken in class and on textual material will be necessary in preparing for the examination. Students should review the texts and articles assigned for each class as they prepare for the examination. Total reliance on notes is not recommended. Essay answers will be strengthened by references. Students should obtain the study guide for the Comprehensive Exams for the Master of Science in Criminal Justice in order to assist with the studying process. Students should also seek out the faculty graders of the comprehensive exams for any questions that arise during preparation as well as advice on taking the comps.

### **Structure:**

The comprehensive exams are divided into three sections based on the core curriculum to obtain the Master of Science in Criminal Justice with Concentration in Theory and Research degree. The first section is research methods and is based on the course CJUS 5700, Evaluation and Research Methodologies. The second section is Criminological Theory and is based on the course CJUS 5600, Advanced Criminological Theory. The third part is law or administration and based on either CJUS 5200, Legal Aspects of the Criminal Justice System, or CJUS 5500, Seminar in Criminal Justice Administration. The student's choice of administration or law as their comprehensive exam area is irrevocable. For example, if a student takes administration and fails, the student cannot take law the next time.

Although there are no specific sections or specific questions directly from the CJUS 5000 – Criminal Justice Policy course per se, the material from the course is directly applicable to all the areas of the comprehensive exams. A good working knowledge of policy implications, policy analysis tools and techniques, policy-making practices and implementation issues, and the operation of the criminal justice system are essential throughout the comprehensive exams.

Students are required to take all three sections on their first attempt of the exam. Students may take only one section if they have previously failed one or more sections of the exam. Students are required to answer one question in each section from a list of two possible questions.

Students are encouraged to provide parenthetical citations for references in the text of their answers (provide author last name and date of publication). Note that citations to classes, class notes, and/or professors are not considered appropriate support. Citations to books, journal articles, government documents and the like are considered appropriate support.

### **Administration of the exam:**

Students who have registered for the exam will be emailed the exam to their UNT email address only. Students will have one week to complete the exam. Exams will be submitted by email directly to MSCJ-Advising@unt.edu.



## **Grading:**

The grade reported to students will be high pass, pass, revise and resubmit, or fail for each of the three sections. Therefore, it is possible to pass one, two or three sections of the exam. Likewise, it is possible to fail one, two, or three sections of the exam. You may also be asked to revise and resubmit one, two, or three sections of the exam. Obviously, the student will be required to retake the section(s) that was/were failed. Two graduate faculty members will grade each question. Each student taking the exam will be assigned a number by the graduate advisor and only the assigned number, not names, will appear on test packets for grading. Individual question grades will be based on the following categories:

High Pass  
Pass  
Revise and Resubmit  
Fail

To pass a section, a student must receive a high pass or pass from each of the two graders. If a student receives a high pass from each grader, the student will receive a high pass on that section. If a student receives a high pass from one grader and a pass from the other, the student will receive a pass on that section. If a student receives a pass from each grader, the student will receive a pass on that section. If a student receives a revise and resubmit from each grader, the student must submit a revision to their answer. If a student receives a fail from each grader, then the student will fail the section.

If a student receives a high pass or pass from one grader and a fail from another grader, then a third grader will grade the response. If the third grader grades the response as a pass or high pass, then the student will pass the section. If the third grader grades the response as fail, then the student will fail the section. If a student receives a revise and resubmit from one grader and a high pass, pass or fail from another grader, a third grader will grade the response. The third grader will only grade as revise and resubmit or the other graders response (high pass, pass, or fail). This eliminates the possibility of three different grade responses. If the third grader grades the response as a revise and resubmit, then the student will need to submit a revision to their answer.

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

Students will be informed of the results of the exam by email only. Every attempt will be made to have the results available within four weeks of the date of the exam. Do not contact the graduate advisor or any faculty member about comprehensive exam grades during the grading process.

Students who fail one or more sections their first attempt will automatically be allowed one retake at the next available comprehensive exam date scheduled. If a student fails

any section twice, the student is dismissed from the program. A student may appeal the decision to be dismissed from the program and take a section for a third time only in cases of extreme hardship. The decision to allow a student to take comprehensive exams for a third try will be decided by the departmental graduate committee. The burden of proof for extreme hardship is on the student. Appeals for a third take must be made in writing to the graduate advisor. The final decision to allow a student to take comprehensive exams for a third time is solely at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee. If a student takes comprehensive exams for a third time and fails, the student is dismissed from the program without further recourse within the department.

Students who fail comprehensive exams are strongly encouraged to discuss their questions and answers with the faculty graders. If a student feels that the grading was unfair for some reason, the student should file a written appeal with the graduate advisor. All grade appeals on comprehensive exams will be referred to the departmental graduate committee. The decision concerning the appeal and the disposition thereof will be at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee.

### **Thesis**

The thesis option is especially appropriate for students wishing to pursue a Ph.D. after completing the MSCJ with Concentration in Theory and Research or students wishing to work in research positions in the field, but it is open to all students. Students will be required to successfully complete an oral defense of the completed thesis.

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

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

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

Once the thesis is begun, the student is required to enroll in a minimum of 3 semester hours of thesis credit (CJUS 5950) and must maintain continuous enrollment in CJUS 5950

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

## **Thesis Defense Guidelines**

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

### **Formation of the Thesis Committee:**

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

### **Human Subjects Review:**

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

### **Prospectus Preparation and Defense:**

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

Upon completion of the written prospectus, the student should submit a copy to the chair and each committee member. The student should then schedule a prospectus defense with the committee. The prospectus defense date cannot be in the first or last two weeks of the Fall or Spring semesters. Students should not expect to defend their prospectus in the summer unless they have received prior approval from their committee. The student will then orally defend the prospectus to the committee. The defense is open to any faculty members or graduate students wishing to attend. The format of the defense should be determined by the committee; however, the student should be prepared to present an oral presentation of the prospectus followed by questions from the committee. The committee can decide to pass the prospectus without revisions, pass the prospectus with revisions, or not pass the prospectus whereupon the student will have to revise and / or alter the thesis plan and set another prospectus defense date.

### **Final Thesis Defense:**

Upon final completion of the thesis, the student should submit a copy to the thesis chair and the committee members. The date for a thesis defense cannot be in the first two weeks or the last two weeks of the Fall or Spring semester. Students should not expect to defend their thesis in the summer unless they have received prior approval from their committee. The student should consult with the chair and committee concerning the format for the thesis defense. However, the student should be prepared to deliver an oral presentation of the thesis followed by questions from the committee. The committee can pass the student without revisions, pass the student with minor revisions, pass with major revisions, or not pass. The committee may not sign the final signature sheet until the document is in its final form ready for submission to the graduate school per established guidelines. If the student does not pass, the student must reschedule the final defense for another date. If they pass with major revisions, they must complete their revisions to the satisfaction of their committee prior to obtaining final signatures for the thesis document. If the student passes without revisions or passes with minor revisions, the final signatures may be obtained at the thesis defense. Upon passing the thesis defense, the student should make sure that all Graduate School requirements regarding formatting and paperwork are met within established timeframes and guidelines. It is up to the student to know and understand all Graduate School policies regarding the preparation and submission of a thesis. It is also incumbent upon the student to file all the paperwork necessary for the thesis defense and graduation.

### **Graduation application / Thesis defense deadlines**

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

# FORMS

**MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN THEORY AND RESEARCH**  
**Comprehensive Examination Registration Form**  
Department of Criminal Justice

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Exam: \_\_\_\_\_

I am taking the following sections:

NOTE: Students taking comprehensive exams for the first time **MUST** register for all three sections

Research Methods Section (8AM-10AM)

Criminological Theory Section (11AM-1PM)

Law

**OR**

Administration Section (2PM-4PM)

Please return the form to the graduate advisor at least one month prior to the examination date.

University of North Texas  
Department of Criminal Justice  
1155 Union Circle #305130  
Denton, TX 76203-5130

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Thesis Committee Designation Form

Department of Criminal Justice

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Thesis Title

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Anticipated Graduation Semester and Year \_\_\_\_\_

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

Thesis Chair\* \_

Committee Member\* \_

Committee Member\* \_

Student Signature \_

Date \_

Graduate Advisor Approval \_

Date \_

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



# MSCJ WITH CONCENTRATION IN THEORY AND RESEARCH

Directed Studies Contract for CJUS 5850  
Department of Criminal Justice

## Part I – To Be Completed by Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II – To Be Completed by Professor

I. Proposed topic and course objectives:

II. Assigned course readings:

III. Assignments/Proposed final written product:

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

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Professor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Advisor Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_