



THE UNIVERSITY *of*
MISSISSIPPI
MASTER OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Online

Graduate Student Handbook Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) Online Program

Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies

School of Applied Sciences

University of Mississippi

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1. MISSION, VISION, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT

VISION STATEMENT

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies aspires to be at the forefront of applied research and education to provide an unmatched educational experience for our graduate students.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies is to promote evidence-based policy and practice and to prepare future leaders in the fields of criminal justice, homeland security, and emergency management.

We work to accomplish this mission through the following educational objectives:

Objective 1: Graduates will be able to demonstrate comprehension of research and empirical evidence related to the fields of criminal justice, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership.

Objectives 2: Graduates will be able to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained in the program to new problems and areas relevant to the fields of criminal justice, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership.

Objective 3: Graduates will be able to use their skills and knowledge to develop and/or advance their profession in the fields of criminal justice, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership or be successful in achieving advanced degrees.

Objective 4: Graduates will become forerunners in positions to promote and advocate for effective, evidence-based policies and practices. They will become recognized experts addressing some of the challenging criminal justice, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership issues of our times.

Objective 5: Graduates will become leaders in their chosen profession and in related activities.

2. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome interested and admitted students to the Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) Online program in the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies at the University of Mississippi! As you know and will soon experience, our graduate degree program options (i.e., fully online, accelerated 8-week courses) and multiple options for emphasis areas including Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) and Criminal Justice Leadership (CJL). Furthermore, our program represents one of the most flexible, accessible, and customizable MCJ Online programs. Our program has been informed by extensive background and market-based research and is designed for the purpose of providing an unmatched educational experience that will directly translate to jobs, career advancement, and further career specialization. We look forward to working with you all!

Warm Regards,

Dr. Wesley Jennings, Chair & Professor

3. HANDBOOK INTRODUCTION

This handbook summarizes the general requirements for the MCJ Online program to serve as a guide for students. This handbook is intended to familiarize graduate students with the applicable policies, procedures, and requirements relating to the MCJ Online program and required by the Graduate School regulations.

The primary responsibility for adherence to policies, regulations, deadlines, and degree requirements rests with the student. Questions should be directed to the Graduate Program Director or their Graduate Student Advisor. Information in this handbook is intended to supplement the Graduate School policies and information, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Website at <https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/>.

PRIMARY CONTACTS:

Mr. Andy King (MCJ Online Graduate Student Advisor) Andy@olemiss.edu
Dr. Kimberly Kaiser (Graduate Program Director) Kakaise1@olemiss.edu

4. GRADUATE FACULTY

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5. MCJ ONLINE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MCJ Online offers two program emphasis options:

- (1) Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM)
- (2) Criminal Justice Leadership (CJL)

Both online program emphasis options are offered as accelerated courses and are designed to be completed within one year. These programs are designed to provide people with the necessary skills and knowledge to become effective decision-makers and leaders in the fields of criminal justice, homeland security, and emergency management, or criminal justice leadership.

6. ADMISSION CRITERIA

The following admission requirements apply to the MCJ Online program.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The MCJ Online program accepts rolling admission for fall, spring, and summer admission. We ask that applicants submit their completed applications (including all letters of recommendation received) **at least 4-6 weeks** before the start of the term seeking admission.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1) All students must complete and submit the Graduate School's on-line admission application found at <https://apply.olemiss.edu/graduate/>
- 2) Evidence of an awarded Baccalaureate Degree from an accredited college or university.
- 3) Quality of the applicant's academic record, as evidenced by cumulative grade point average. At least a 3.0 or equivalent grade point average on the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework is required.
- 4) **Three (3) letters of professional recommendation**, preferably from professors familiar with your academic qualifications or others familiar with your work ethic and ability to be successful in graduate school.
- 5) **Statement of Interest.** A 400- to 500-word statement of interest that describes your interest in pursuing the MCJ degree and your chosen emphasis. Please discuss the strengths you will bring that will help you to be successful in the program and how earning this degree might help you to achieve your career and life goals. If there are any deficiencies in your application (GPA below 3.0, failed courses, etc.), please address those within your statement.
- 6) **Writing Sample.** Submit a sample of your recent written work that best showcases your skills as a writer and critical thinker. Writing samples should be in English and no more than 10 double-spaced pages in length. There are no specific formatting requirements. This could be a term paper, professional report, policy brief, or any other document that demonstrates writing and analytic skills.
- 7) **Resume or Curriculum Vitae**
- 8) International students must demonstrate compliance with the University of Mississippi's English Language Proficiency Score Requirements and Exemptions policy

Please note that the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies does NOT require the submission of GRE scores for the MCJ Online program.

7. PROGRAM CURRICULUM & REQUIREMENTS

All students in the MCJ Online program must complete a total of 30 credit hours of graduate coursework. All Classes are offered in accelerated online sessions.

- 1) Complete all four (4) core courses with a grade of B- or above.
- 2) Complete four (4) elective courses, 3 courses of which need to be in your designated emphasis.
- 3) Complete the two-part capstone series that includes CJ 692: Criminal Justice Capstone 1 and CJ 693: Criminal Justice Capstone 2 with a grade of B- or above. Students must also achieve an 80% or above on their final capstone paper to be eligible to graduate.

CORE CLASSES:

All students are required to take the following courses:

- 1) CJ 600: Criminal Justice Administration
- 2) CJ 601: Criminal Justice Statistics
- 3) CJ 602: Criminal Justice Research Methods
- 4) CJ 624: Theories of Criminal Behavior

OPTION 1: HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (HSEM)

EMPHASIS

Students choose a minimum of three (3) of the following courses for the Homeland Security & Emergency Management emphasis. Each course is 3 credit hours.

- 1) CJ 630: Seminar in Homeland Security Operations
- 2) CJ 631: Seminar in Emergency Management
- 3) CJ 632: Seminar in Extremism and Terrorism
- 4) CJ 634: Emergency Response Management Policy & Planning
- 5) CJ 636: Critical Infrastructure Security
- 6) CJ 641: Transnational Crime
- 7) CJ 642: Cyber Crime & Cybersecurity
- 8) CJ 649: Independent Study*
- 9) CJ 651: Special Topics in Emergency Management & Homeland Security*

*May be taken 2 times with a different topic.

OPTION 2: CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP (CJL) EMPHASIS

Students choose a minimum of three (3) of the following courses for the Criminal Justice Leadership emphasis. Each course is 3 credit hours.

- 1) CJ 649: Independent Study*
- 2) CJ 671: Communications for Criminal Justice Leaders

- 3) CJ 672: Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making
- 4) CJ 673: Criminal Justice Evidence-Based Decision-Making
- 5) CJ 674: Budgeting & Finance
- 6) CJ 676: Principles of Leadership
- 7) CJ 678: Diversity and Inclusivity
- 8) CJ 679: Special Topics in Criminal Justice Leadership*
- 9) CJ 680: Personnel Management

*May be taken 2 times with a different topic.

DEGREE CULMINATION: CRIMINAL JUSTICE CAPSTONE

All students must complete a two-course capstone series (CJ 692 and CJ 693) to complete their degree. Each class is 3-credit hours and will be completed sequentially. As part of this capstone series students will review, research, and evaluate a criminal justice, emergency management, homeland security policy or issue. Students must complete this course series with a grade of B- or above and receive an 80% or above on their final capstone project to be eligible for their degree.

Students will enroll in the capstone series toward the end of their coursework in the program and must have successfully completed CJ 600, CJ 601, CJ 602, and CJ 624 with a grade of B- or above before enrolling in the capstone courses. Students must successfully pass CJ 692 with a B- or above to be eligible to continue on and enroll in CJ 693.

Learning Objectives for Capstone Series:

Upon successful completion of your capstone project, you will be able to:

1. Synthesize and integrate knowledge across multiple classes
2. Apply knowledge from the program to a specific project
3. Demonstrate depth of knowledge and expertise in their chosen area for the capstone project

Eligibility Criteria:

Students will enroll in the capstone series after the completion of 18 hours of coursework with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and must have successfully completed CJ 600, CJ 601, CJ 602, and CJ 624 with a grade of B- or above before enrolling in the capstone courses.

Students must successfully pass CJ 692 with a B- or above to be eligible to continue on and enroll in CJ 693.

8. DEGREE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

A student who expects to complete all degree requirements by the end of a particular semester must submit a degree application form to the Graduate Program Director which will then be forwarded to the Graduate School. The deadline for submitting this application form is approximately one month after the beginning of Fall or Spring semester. The actual deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website at <https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/current-students/the-end-game-preparing-to-graduate/>. If a student is not able to complete the degree requirements at the end of the semester they applied to graduate, the student must resubmit their application in a future semester.

Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 credit hours during the semester they intend to graduate for Fall or Spring semesters and a minimum of one credit hour for students planning to graduate during the Summer.

9. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

GRADUATE CATALOG

Graduate students in the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies are advised to become familiar with the policies published by the Graduate School each year. These can be found in the Graduate Catalog, at <http://catalog.olemiss.edu/graduate-school>.

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDITS FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION

With department approval, students may request transfer of up to six (6) credit hours from other accredited colleges and universities for the MCJ degree. Transfer courses must be taken at the graduate level with a passing grade of B or higher; the student must have had graduate status at the time the courses were taken. There is a six-year time limit on the applicability of transferred credit, as there is on all credits applicable toward the MCJ degree.

Grades from other institutions may not substitute for unsatisfactory grades earned at the university; nor may the grade of A or B earned at another institution be used to offset a lower grade earned at the university. All transfer of credit is subject to the following conditions: (1) The residence or degree credit requirement is not reduced; (2) The other graduate school must offer a graduate degree in the field in which the work has been completed; and (3) The credit must be recommended by the student's department in the university as specifically applicable to the student's degree program.

Students may not transfer credits from another college or university for the four (4) required core courses.

MINIMUM/MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT AND DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME

The University of Mississippi calculates enrollment based on total hours for the regular, full semester, defined as 1st and 2nd fall sessions combined or 1st and 2nd spring sessions combined. A minimum enrollment of 3 hours per regular semester is required of every graduate student, meaning that students must enroll in at least one class in either 1st or 2nd session to be considered continuously enrolled. Students that do not enroll in at least one class for one regular, full semester will need to complete the [GS-10 Readmission Application to a Graduate Degree Program](#) to reactivate their status to enroll in future classes. Students that do not enroll in at least one class for two or more regular, full semesters (four or more sessions), must reapply to the program.

Full-time enrollment for the MCJ Online program is considered 6 credits (2 classes) per session for a total of 12 credits per regular, full semester. Taking more than 6 credits per session will be considered as an overload by the department. **Students wishing to enroll in more than 6 credits per session must seek approval from the Graduate Program Director.** The maximum enrollment for a graduate student during a regular, full semester is 15 semester hours, including both 1st and 2nd sessions combined. Maximum enrollment for the summer session is 6 credits.

GRADES

Graduate students may receive quality grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, or F on graduate coursework, but grades of C-, D, and F are not acceptable for graduate credit. Grades of C+, C, C-, D, and F in the core classes (CJ 600, CJ 601, CJ 602, CJ 624) and in the capstone courses (CJ 692 and CJ 693) are not acceptable for graduate credit in the MCJ program.

In calculating grade-point average, the quality points associated with the above scale are as follows: A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D = 1.0 and F = 0. In certain specifically designated courses, the mark of Z is given to indicate that a student has received graduate credit but has been assigned no quality grade in the course; however, in courses approved for the Z mark, instructors may assign the quality grade of F. The only other marks that may be assigned in courses approved for the Z mark are I or W.

Graduate students must maintain at least a B average (GPA = 3.0 or above) on all graduate coursework undertaken. In any situation in which a graduate student wishes to appeal a grade, he or she should contact the Dean of the Graduate School for a copy of the Graduate School Appeal Procedure, which shall apply in this case.

GOOD STANDING AND ACADEMIC PROBATION

To be in good standing, graduate students are expected to maintain a B average. Students must have a 3.0 GPA on coursework that is presented to satisfy requirements for a degree. Students whose grade-point average falls below 3.0 in any regular semester will be placed on probation and expected to improve their grades to an acceptable level before the end of their next period of enrollment. If the grade-point average of a graduate student for a semester or term has been unsatisfactory, the Dean of the Graduate School may refuse permission for the student to register for further work or change the student's classification.

PROGRAM DISMISSAL POLICY

This policy describes the conditions and procedures, including appeals procedures, for the dismissal or change in admission status of a degree-seeking graduate student. A sanction of dismissal or expulsion, among other possible sanctions, may also result from academic discipline, non-academic discipline, or research misconduct proceedings. The policy below applies to students who are not meeting academic expectations and/or professional expectations within the degree program.

Additional information on policies for dismissal or change in status of graduate students can be found in the [M Book here](#).

A student may be dismissed from the program for any of the following reasons:

1. **Academic Performance.** A student whose grade point average is less than 3.0 for any regular semester will be placed on probation, and a dean's registration hold will be applied to the student's record. Such a student will not be allowed to register unless the academic department/program makes an affirmative recommendation to the Graduate Dean, who will then temporarily lift the hold. Without a written, favorable recommendation from the chair or graduate program coordinator of a department/program, a student on probation will be converted to an inactive status and must re-apply and be re-admitted to the graduate program in order to continue in the same or other program.

In addition, a student may be dismissed from a graduate program or have his or her admission status changed (e.g., from full-standing to conditional or non-degree seeking) if the student fails to meet specific course requirements of the department/program.

These course requirements may have been specified for an individual student or may involve required grades in "core" courses. Ordinarily, these course expectations should be made known to the student before enrollment. In some

circumstances, however, an appropriate faculty group, which may be the student's advisory committee or the graduate education committee of a department/program, may require additional course work based upon the student's performance in the program or failure to timely progress towards a degree.

If in the judgment of the appropriate faculty group a student fails to satisfy specific course or program requirements in a timely manner, the faculty group may recommend dismissal from a graduate program or change of status. This recommendation shall be forwarded by the graduate program coordinator or department chair to the Graduate Dean and to the affected student with an indication whether the chair or program coordinator concurs with the faculty recommendation. The Graduate Dean will act on the faculty recommendation and inform the student and the graduate program coordinator or department chair of the action taken. The decision of the Graduate Dean with respect to the faculty recommendation is not subject to appeal. Ordinarily, dismissal or change of status for failure to meet specific course requirements would take effect between semesters or enrollment periods. If a student is dismissed from a graduate program, he or she will be considered a non-degree II student and may re-apply to a graduate program.

2. **Issues of Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty.** Faculty members will handle cases of academic dishonesty involving graduate students by recommending an appropriate sanction after discussion with the student. Possible sanctions include failure on the work in question, retake of an examination, extra work, grade reduction or failure in the course, disciplinary probation, or suspension or expulsion from the university. An appeals process is available to the student. A more complete statement concerning definitions, offenses, penalties, and grievance procedures [may be found at here](#). Additionally, faculty will notify the Graduate Program Director or Department Chair of instances of academic misconduct. If a student engages in egregious forms of academic misconduct or repeated instances of academic misconduct, the department may recommend dismissal of the student.
3. **Issues of Professionalism or Unethical Conduct.** All issues relating to a student's alleged violations of the University's student code of conduct ([M Book](#)) will be processed following the university's disciplinary procedures. Graduate students are also expected to behave in a collegial manner and to adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the discipline. These include the [American Society of Criminology Code of Ethics](#) and the [Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Code of Ethics](#).

Students are expected to develop collaborative and collegial relationships with and to work with graduate faculty, students, and other professionals in research, academic, or professional settings. If in the judgment of the appropriate faculty group a student fails to meet the above expectations, or otherwise fails to act in ways that are consistent with the norms and standards of the profession or discipline, an appropriate faculty group may recommend dismissal or change in the admission status of that graduate student. This recommendation shall be forwarded by the graduate program coordinator or department chair to the Graduate Dean and to the affected student, with an indication whether the chair or program coordinator concurs with the faculty recommendation. The Graduate Dean will act on the faculty recommendation and inform the student and the graduate program coordinator or department chair of the action taken. Ordinarily, if a student is dismissed from a graduate program for the above reasons, he or she will be considered a non-degree II student and may re-apply to a graduate program. The judgment of the Graduate Dean may be to prohibit the individual from re-applying to some programs. Failure to adhere to these principles of professional conduct is considered a lack of professionalism. Repeated or egregious failure to adhere to these standards may the recommendation of dismissal from the program.

4. **Failure to comply with program requirements.** Graduate students who fail to comply with the program requirements may be recommended for dismissal.

PROGRAM DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

When possible, a student will be notified by the Graduate Program Director or Department Chair that they are at risk of being dismissed from the program to provide the student an opportunity to implement corrective action. In this communication, the student will be informed on what actions are needed for them to remain in the program and the timeline upon which the student's status will be reassessed. In instances of egregious violations, dismissal may be recommended without providing prior notification.

If a student chooses to appeal the dismissal decision, the student must follow the appeals procedures outlined in the M Book.

GRADUATE ORGANIZATIONS

There is a University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council, and the website for this organization can be found online at <http://gsc.olemiss.edu/>.

Graduate students enrolled in a graduate program in criminal justice or related field who have completed at least four graduate courses and have a minimum GPA of 3.4 on a 4.0 scale may apply to be a member of The University of Mississippi's chapter of Alpha Phi Sigma, Mu Rho. Alpha Phi Sigma is the National Criminal Justice Honor Society. To start the application process, interested students should contact the Alpha Phi Sigma advisor, Dr. Linda Keena at ldkeena@olemiss.edu.

10. GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT & RELEVANT LINKS

Financial Aid and Scholarships

While there are no scholarships specific to our program, there are funding opportunities available both through UM and through outside funding organizations that you might use to help fund your program.

Military and Veterans Awards

The University of Mississippi offers a variety of scholarships and benefits to U.S. military personnel and veterans. You can find detailed information about these awards on the [Veteran and Military Services page](#).

UM Graduate School Awards

The UM Graduate School also provides a number of scholarship opportunities as well as connections to outside funding opportunities. While assistantships are not currently available for online students, students in our program would be eligible for other listed awards. The Graduate School's scholarship information can be found on the [Graduate School financial information page](#).

UM Staff Tuition Benefit

Staff members at the University of Mississippi can utilize the further education benefit to enroll in up to two courses per semester. You can find detailed information about this benefit on the [Human Resources Tuition Benefit page](#).

Employer Tuition Assistance

Many other employers also provide tuition for employees seeking to further their education and gain professional development in their field. Usually your supervisor or human resources department benefits coordinator can provide details specific to your workplace. If after speaking with staff at your workplace you need additional information to qualify for their assistance, you can [contact Coordinator of Advising, Recruitment, and Retention Andy King](#) and he will assist you in gathering that information.

Federal Grants and Loans

Many of our students will also apply for federal need-based grants and loans to cover a portion or all of their program costs. Most of these funding opportunities will require that the student completes a FAFSA prior to the start of the semester. Details on federal aid programs and assistance in completing the FAFSA is provided by the UM [Financial Aid Office](#).

Additional Resources:

[Graduate School Website](#)

[University Graduate Student Forms](#)

[Graduation Preparation Information](#)

[Tuition Cost Estimates](#)