



TEXAS A&M **INTERNATIONAL** UNIVERSITY

Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Student Handbook

Department of Social Sciences

College of Arts and Sciences

Texas A&M International University

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I. Introduction

The Ph.D. in Criminal Justice (CJ) Student Handbook is a resource for policies that pertain to doctoral students in the Criminal Justice Program at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU). This handbook outlines the requirements and procedures of the Ph.D. in Criminal Justice program. This program-specific handbook supplements the TAMIU graduate student handbook and the TAMIU student handbook. (<https://www.tamiau.edu/gradschool/studenthandbooks.shtml>). The requirements and procedures contained in this doctoral student handbook are subject to revision. The handbook will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

If you have any questions about the handbook or the Ph.D. in CJ program, please contact Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors Dr. Daniel Scott (daniel.scott@tamiau.edu, 956-326-2626, AIC 345) and Dr. Brittany Hood (brittany.hood@tamiau.edu , 956-326-2687, AIC 314).

II. Orientation

The Graduate School at Texas A&M International University hosts an online Graduate Student Orientation event for all incoming graduate students (<https://www.tamiau.edu/cees/arc/orientation.shtml>). Graduate Student Orientation was initiated to assist newly enrolled TAMIU students learn about the different resources on campus. Participating in this orientation will not only make students aware of the resources and tools available to them but also act as a catalyst for them to begin planning for their academic success in the various fields. TAMIU Graduate School aims to provide assistance to ensure our graduate students go beyond and successfully complete their degrees.

The criminal justice program hosts an in-person orientation and welcome event for all incoming doctoral students at the beginning of the Fall semester. All new students are expected to attend the orientation and meet with other doctoral students and faculty members. Details about the criminal justice program orientation will be sent via email.

III. Program Descriptions

The Doctorate of Philosophy in Criminal Justice at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is a comprehensive program designed to guide students through an advanced, supervised course of study in criminal justice. The program provides opportunities to study a variety of criminal justice topics with a unique focus on border and homeland security issues.

Students are provided the opportunity to take courses through a hybrid format where they participate in person for two semesters (Fall semester and every other Spring semester) and then switch to online synchronous delivery for the remainder of their coursework. This unique hybrid feature allows for a diverse group of both traditional and non-traditional students to participate.

The Ph.D. program capitalizes on TAMIU's geographic location by closely studying various salient border and South Texas issues. This includes research related to homeland security issues such as human trafficking, immigration, gangs, organized crime and counter-terrorism practices, as well as research focusing more broadly on exposure and resource availability in connection with mental health, victimization, court services, intervention and prevention programs. It provides students and faculty with quality research and collaboration opportunities with local, state, and federal organizations involved in border and homeland security issues that are not emphasized in other regional programs.

It also emphasizes the diverse real-world criminal justice cases, issues, and perspectives afforded by its unique geographic location on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Ph.D. program aims to produce doctoral graduates who possess the theoretical knowledge, actual and practical experience, and marketable skills to assume high-level leadership roles in various areas of criminal justice practice such as in academia, government, and the private sector.

Ph.D. Program Admission

Admission to the Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice degree program requires prospective students to meet specified standards provided by the Graduate School at TAMIU. The Ph.D. in Criminal Justice degree program faculty will review all applications and determine admissibility to the program. TAMIU's Ph.D. in Criminal Justice degree program requires the following materials to be submitted by an applicant to the [Graduate School](#):

1. Official Texas A&M International University online doctoral degree application and an application fee of \$35.00.
2. A master's degree in criminal justice or a closely related field. Students with a master's degree in a discipline other than Criminal Justice/Criminology or closely related disciplines will be reviewed and determined on a case-by-case basis.
3. Official transcripts from each post-secondary school attended. If the applicant has

- completed a master's degree, then a final official transcript must show evidence of degree completion. A minimum 3.0 GPA is required in the last 60 hours of graduate/undergraduate coursework.
4. Official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores. Applicants with a completed Juris Doctorate (J.D.) may use an official LSAT report in lieu of the GRE if this was taken within the past five years. (Applicants with only a J.D. will be required to complete and pass with at least a "C" in a master's level statistics course or TAMIU Statistics Bootcamp.)
 5. Two letters of recommendation from university faculty members familiar with the applicant's academic work; if the applicant desires, a third letter of recommendation may be submitted from another person qualified to evaluate the applicant's potential for doctoral study.
 6. Applicants must submit a personal statement, limited to 1,000 words (12-point font, double-spaced). An applicant will need to address the following questions in his/her personal statement: [1] What are your research interests and discuss some of your research experiences. [2] Which faculty member(s) in the Ph.D. program would you most likely work with? Why? [3] What are your career goals and how do you see our Ph.D. program helping you to achieve those goals? [4] What personal assets (talent, skills, experiences, etc.) can you bring to our program? Note that only a few students will be admitted each year and applicants are unlikely to be successful if there is no suitable supervisor available within the program.
 7. A resume or curriculum vita. Please limit this to no more than 10 pages.
 8. A writing sample that illustrates the applicant's ability to synthesize information and think critically. Examples of acceptable writing samples are a thesis or graduate-level class research paper, a peer-reviewed publication, or a technical report written by the applicant. For a multi-authored peer-reviewed publication, the applicant should be the first or the primary author.
 9. International students must comply with all admission requirements set by the Graduate School at TAMIU, including TOEFL requirements (<https://www.tamiau.edu/admissions/Internat.shtml>).
 10. Upon acceptance, students are expected to complete the graduate school online orientation.

Note: We offer Fall admission only. Those who meet minimum academic requirements are NOT guaranteed admission.

Ph.D. Courses

TAMIU's 49-credit-hour doctoral degree includes 22 credit hours of required coursework and 12 portfolio and dissertation hours. All required courses are provided in Table 1. The remaining credit hours are elective courses selected from the doctoral program's offerings. Students can choose electives from a list of homeland security-centered courses in addition to traditional criminal justice courses. To complete the degree of study, 15 credit hours of elective coursework must be taken in any combination. All course electives are provided in Table 2.

Table 1. Course of Study

Year	Semester	Course Prefix/number	Course Title	Course Hours
1	1*	CRIJ 6101	Proseminar in Criminal Justice	1
	1*	CRIJ 6302	Advanced Research Methods in Criminal Justice	3
	1*	CRIJ 6303	Advanced Statistics I	3
	1	CRIJ 6340	Seminar in Criminological Theory	3
1	2**	CRIJ 6304	Advanced Qualitative Methods	3
	2	CRIJ 6361	Program and Policy Evaluation in Criminal Justice	3
	2**	CRIJ 6390	Teaching Seminar	3
2	3	CRIJ 6351	Criminal Law and Procedure	3
	3	Elective 1	Elective—see Table 2	3
	3	Elective 2	Elective—see Table 2	3
2	4	Elective 3	Elective—see Table 2	3
	4	Elective 4	Elective—see Table 2	3
	4	Elective 5	Elective—see Table 2	3
3	5***	CRIJ 6396	Research Portfolio I	3
	6***	CRIJ 6397	Research Portfolio II	3
4	7***	CRIJ 6398	Dissertation I	3
	8***	CRIJ 6399	Dissertation II	3
Total				49

* Three required courses in the first semester are delivered face-to-face and online (hybrid every other weekend face-to-face). Students are highly encouraged to take all three in-person classes in the first semester; otherwise, they will need to return to campus the following fall to take pending classes in person.

** These two courses are delivered face-to-face and online (hybrid every other weekend face-to-face) every other Spring, with both classes held on weekends. Students are highly encouraged to take all two in-person classes in the Spring semester in which they are first offered to them; otherwise, they will need to return to campus the Spring semester after the following to take pending classes in person.

***Students must meet with faculty advisor regularly each semester to ensure continued progress toward the degree.

Note. Starting in the second semester, students from multiple cohorts will take classes together, so the order of spring semester courses students take may be different. For example, you may take electives in the second semester and take CRIJ 6304, CRIJ 6361, and CRIJ 6390 in the spring semester of the second year (fourth semester).

Table 2. Total Ph.D. Course Electives

Course Prefix/Number	Course Title
CRIJ 6305	Advanced Statistics II
CRIJ 6306	Advanced Mixed Methods
CRIJ 6307	Seminar in Corrections
CRIJ 6308	Contemporary Criminal Justice Issues
CRIJ 6309	Seminar in Law Enforcement
CRIJ 6311	Neighborhoods, Crime, and Mapping
CRIJ 6320	Homeland Security
CRIJ 6321	Human Trafficking and Smuggling
CRIJ 6325	Cybercrime
CRIJ 6330	Immigration and Crime
CRIJ 6335	Advanced Topics in Victimology
CRIJ 6355	Intelligence Gathering
CRIJ 6356	Terrorism
CRIJ 6357	International Criminal Court
CRIJ 6365	Criminal Justice Management
CRIJ 6391	Special Topics in Criminal Justice

Summer Statistics Bootcamp

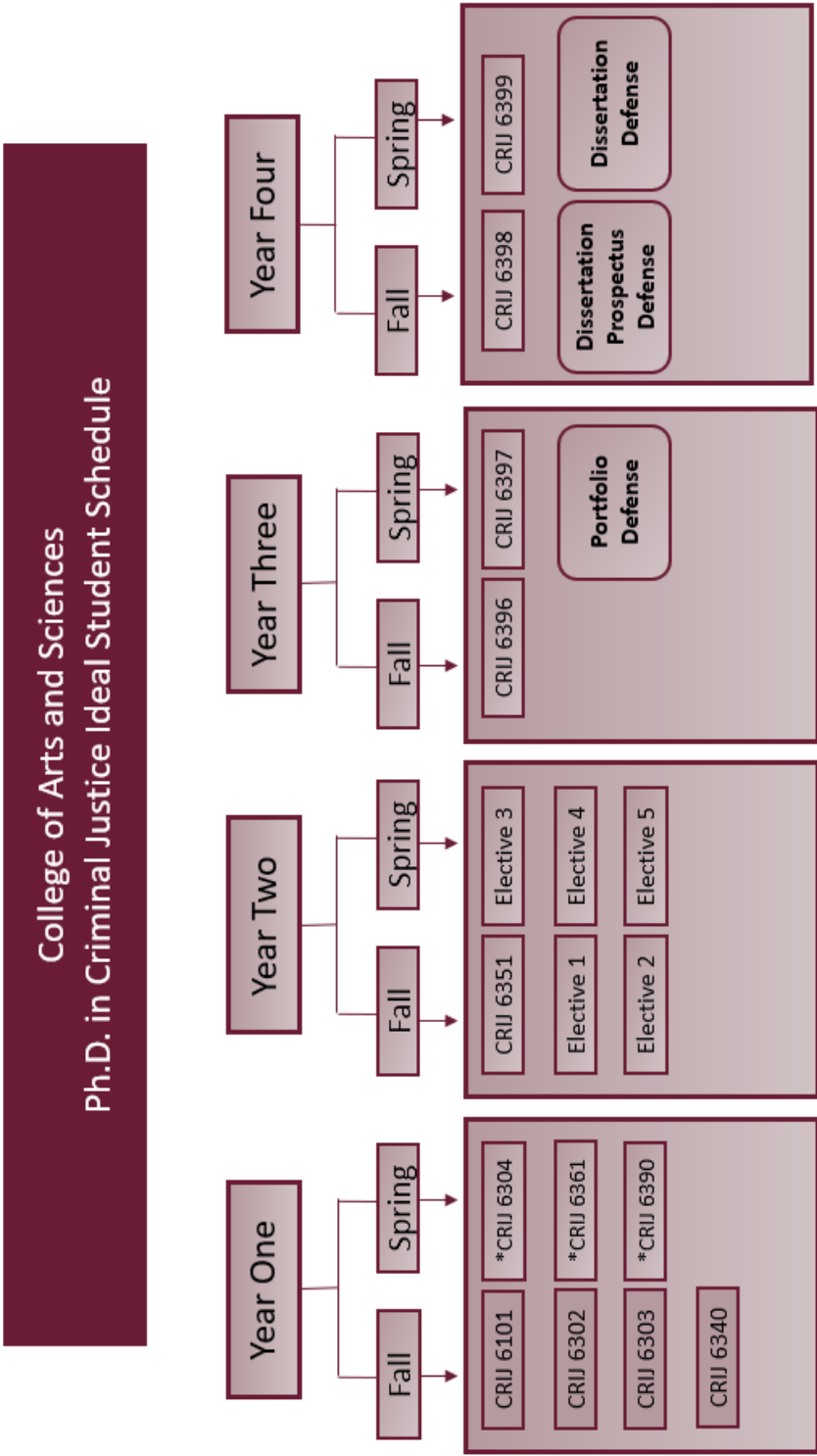
All incoming doctoral students will be enrolled in a summer Statistics Bootcamp in the summer prior to the first semester. Students will not earn credit hours toward their degree from this summer Bootcamp and do not need to pay tuition. If you have taken and passed a master-level statistics course (with at least a “B”) within the past three years, you can withdraw from this Summer Statistics Bootcamp. Students must pass the bootcamp with at least a “C”, or they will need to enroll in and pay for a Social Science graduate level statistics course, and pass it with at least a “B”. If the student does not wish to pay for a statistics class, they will need to defer their admission to the next fall, and retake the stats bootcamp the following summer, and pass with at least a “C”.

Transferring Policy

The Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Program at TAMIU accepts students transferring from other criminal justice/criminology or closely related Ph.D. programs. Any students seeking to transfer credits will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Any transfer credit is contingent on prior coursework aligning with the program of study in TAMIU’s criminal justice Ph.D. program. A maximum of twelve (12) semester credit hours with a minimum grade of 3.0 (“B”) on a 4.0 scale can be transferred into the Ph.D. program with the

consent of the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and Department Chair. Transferred courses must also comply with the graduate school's expired coursework policy.

Ideal Ph.D. Student Schedule



- Note:**
1. First semester is entirely face-to-face; classes are held on weekends. Students are highly encouraged to take all four in-person courses in the first semester, otherwise, they will need to return to campus the following fall to take pending classes in person.
 2. For the research portfolio and dissertation, students must meet with faculty advisors regularly to ensure continued progress toward the degree.
 3. * Starting in the second semester, students from multiple cohorts will take classes together, so the order of spring semester courses students take may be different. For example, you may take electives in the second semester and take CRIJ 6304, CRIJ 6361, and CRIJ 6390 in the spring semester of the second year (fourth semester).

Independent Study Course

Independent Study (IS) courses are offered only under exceptional circumstances, such as when a student needs to complete a single course to fulfill all coursework requirements, but the course is not available in that semester. Required courses intended to build academic skills cannot be taken as IS. Each student may take no more than one IS course during the program. The IS course should be taken in the final semester of coursework if needed. Any exceptions require approval from the program director(s).

IV. Research Portfolio

Ph.D. in Criminal Justice students are required to demonstrate competence to proceed to a dissertation. Admission to doctoral candidacy is granted upon successful completion of stipulated coursework, followed by an oral defense of the Research Portfolio (Portfolio).

Students need to form a *Research Portfolio Committee* upon completion of their first year of coursework and defend their portfolio after completion of all portfolio courses. The portfolio committee should consist of a chair and two committee members (area experts). The chair and committee members must be core criminal justice faculty at TAMIU. All faculty must be members of the graduate faculty. Students will select their committee chair based primarily on research expertise to ensure proper mentoring and guidance. Once their chair is chosen the student then must pick two faculty from two different categories of expertise. For the portfolio the categories are Methods, Theory, and Policy; with the understanding that their committee chair will fall under the third category. For example, if a student pick Dr. X as their committee chair, Dr. X will be their overall chair of the committee, and then focus on Methods. With that understood, the student will then pick a faculty member for theory, and for policy to complete their Portfolio committee. It is acknowledged that a faculty member will be able to advise under more than one category, the reason for this categorization is so the student justifies their committee selection based on relevant criteria, and not just “I have them as an instructor” or “I know them”. The students are suggested to meet with multiple faculty members who have expertise in their area of research interest and identify a chair. If a faculty member is willing to serve as the portfolio chair, the student should discuss with the chair to identify potential faculty members who can serve on the portfolio committee from the core areas of expertise. The student should meet with these faculty members to ascertain if they are willing to serve on the committee.

The “Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee” form should be submitted to the Criminal Justice Program director/s and graduate school if all faculty agree to serve on the portfolio committee. The chair should facilitate a formal meeting with all committee members to discuss expectations and materials to be included in the portfolio.

The portfolio will include materials demonstrating the student’s: [1] sophisticated understanding of the research methods and literature in their areas of specialization; [2] the ability to critically assess key issues/policies/theories in the areas of interest; and [3]

proficiency in writing and analytical skills.

The portfolio will consist of a minimum of two publishable manuscripts that can be submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals. One manuscript needs to be a solo-authored manuscript completed by the student. The other manuscript(s) may be co-authored (no more than two authors), but the student needs to be the lead author on the second manuscript. If the student includes additional manuscripts for Portfolio, they do not need to be lead author on portfolio manuscripts starting with the third manuscript. The student should specify their role and contribution to co-authored manuscripts. The portfolio committee can decide what other documents and materials should be accepted and included. All committee members carry equal weight in the assessment process and need to participate fully in the assessment.

Successful completion of the portfolio will require an oral defense (formal presentation). The committee will assess the competence of the candidate and decide if a student has either “passed,” needs to “revise and resubmit,” or “failed” the portfolio. The committee vote must be unanimous for a “pass”. If a single committee member votes to “revise and resubmit” or “fail”, then the student does NOT pass and must either revise and resubmit, try again, or be dismissed from the program (if it’s their second attempt). If it is their first attempt, the process of revising and resubmitting and/or orally defending again will be decided by the committee, but it needs to be completed the following semester (if it’s Fall, then in Spring, if it’s Spring, then in Fall, Summer term is optional) If the defense was in the summer, the student will need to complete Portfolio the following Fall term. Students who successfully defend their portfolio become doctoral candidates in the Ph.D. program and can begin their dissertations in earnest. Students are provided two attempts to orally defend their portfolio. If they fail both times, they will be dismissed from the program. If a student fails the oral defense and wants to change their committee, he/she has to obtain approval from the Criminal Justice Program Director/s.

V. Dissertation

Upon reaching doctoral candidacy status (successfully defended their portfolio), students may enroll in dissertation hours and begin work on the dissertation. The dissertation will be guided by the student’s dissertation advisory committee. The four-person dissertation advisory committee will be composed of a chair and two committee members from the criminal justice program (all three committee members should be criminal Justice core faculty), and an external faculty member from a different graduate program at TAMU or another University. All faculty must be members of the graduate faculty. The process for committee member selection works the same as the student’s Portfolio committee (see portfolio section above), the only difference is that a student will need to pick an external committee member as well. The external member needs to be someone that can assist with expanding the substantive area of the dissertation topic, theory, policy, and/or methods. It cannot be a faculty member from an unrelated field or area of expertise. If the student desires, a fifth committee member from another institution can be included as long as the faculty is approved by the dissertation committee chair and the graduate

council. The students are encouraged to discuss with several faculty members before selecting a chair and discuss with the chair to identify other committee members. The student should communicate with all potential committee members to ascertain if they are willing to serve on the dissertation committee.

The research portfolio committee and the dissertation committee may consist of the same or different faculty members. A student can request a modification of the portfolio and/or dissertation committee to change a chair or committee member/s. Requests should be sent to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and be accompanied by a letter describing the reasons for the modification.

The “Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee” form should be submitted to the Criminal Justice Program director/s and graduate school if all faculty agree to serve on the dissertation committee. The student should communicate with the dissertation chair and committee members regularly to identify the topic area and develop the literature and proper methodology for the dissertation.

Successful completion of the dissertation will require: [1] an in person oral proposal defense (dissertation prospectus defense) when the student defends his/her topic, theoretical and methodological approaches, including ethical aspects; and [2] an in person final defense when the student defends the entire dissertation including his/her introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, as well as findings and conclusions in the completed dissertation. Policies and procedures for passing, failing, and repeating the dissertation defense should be in compliance with the TAMU Graduate School Policy. The student is allowed two attempts at a prospectus defense, and one attempt at a final dissertation defense, if the student fails, they will be dismissed from the program. The committee must be unanimous in their decision to pass the student.

Portfolio and dissertation guidelines

Portfolio

1. Identify your main area of research interest and discuss it with the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and faculty members who have expertise in the related area.
2. Identify a portfolio chair and ask if he/she is willing to serve as your chair.
3. Work with your portfolio chair to identify potential committee members. Discuss your research topic with all potential faculty members and ask if they are willing and available to serve on the committee.
4. Meet with all portfolio committee members formally to discuss expectations and materials to be included in the portfolio.
5. Submit the [Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee](#) form to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.
6. Enroll in the portfolio courses.
7. Work closely with all committee members to prepare portfolio materials.
8. Defend your portfolio.

9. Submit the [Research Portfolio Approval Form](#) to the Criminal Justice Program director/s and graduate school. Additional documents may be attached to the form.

Dissertation

1. Identify your main area of research interest and discuss it with the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and faculty members who have expertise in the related area.
2. Identify a dissertation chair and ask if he/she is willing to serve as your chair.
3. Work with your dissertation chair to identify potential committee members. Discuss your research topic with all potential faculty members and ask if they are willing and available to serve on the dissertation committee. Your dissertation committee can be the same or different from your portfolio committee.
4. Meet with all portfolio committee members to discuss expectations and timelines of the proposal and dissertation defense.
5. Submit the [Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee](#) form to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.
6. Enroll in Dissertation I.
7. Defend your dissertation proposal (prospectus).
8. Submit the [Dissertation Proposal Coversheet](#) and your written proposal to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.
9. Enroll in Dissertation II.
10. Follow the graduate school Dissertation Timeline and Formatting Manual (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/forms.shtml>).
11. Defend your dissertation.
12. Submit [the Dissertation \(Ph.D.\) Approval Form](#) to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.

Portfolio and Dissertation committees

The Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors will serve as mentors to all newly enrolled doctoral students. The co-directors will facilitate students in selecting their portfolio and dissertation chairs. First-year doctoral students need to meet with the program directors at least once during their first year to discuss their degree progress. In the Spring semester of their first-year students will be assigned a faculty mentor. This is a faculty member that the student will meet with at least once a semester to discuss program progress. This mentor is NOT their portfolio chair unless the student requests it and the faculty mentor agrees. The student and faculty mentor will sign a contract, outlining the expectations for the academic year. Prior to receiving a mentor, PhD student will seek guidance from the Criminal Justice Program Director(s). Students are encouraged to discuss with the program directors and select a portfolio chair by the end of their second year of course study. Once the students have identified faculty members as potential chairs, they should approach the faculty members and ask if they are willing to serve as the chair. Students should then work with the chair to select other committee members and talk to these

faculty members to ascertain if they are willing to be committee members. After selecting all committee members, the Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee form should be submitted to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and the graduate school. The portfolio and dissertation committee must be formally established before students are eligible to enroll in portfolio and dissertation courses.

Portfolio and Dissertation guidelines

The portfolio and two dissertation defenses should be formally scheduled at least two weeks in advance. The portfolio defense should be semi-public and open to all members of the Criminal Justice Program. The final dissertation defense should be public and open to all members of the university community. For the final dissertation defense the student/committee chair needs to get in contact with the media office, so that they can provide a formal announcement to the campus community. The announcement should include the dissertation title, abstract, student name, committee chair name, date, time, and location of the defense. It is also up to the student/committee chair to reserve the room for the defense. The announcement with all the details needs to be sent out at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. The committee chair has the discretion to share the dissertation prospectus defense announcement with the appropriate audience. Each committee member should have a completed copy to review at least ten working days before the defenses.

The students should meet with their faculty mentors regularly each semester to ensure continued progress toward the degree. These meetings can occur via phone, online, or in person. The portfolio defense, dissertation prospectus defense and the dissertation final defense must be completed in person on the TAMIU campus. One, and only one committee member is allowed to attend virtually if the defense occurs during the summer term when faculty are off contract, or the committee member is NOT from TAMIU. All other committee members must attend in person.

While the Graduate School does not set a strict time limit for the defense, it is recommended to schedule at least two hours but not more than three hours. If the questioning is not completed within a reasonable time, the examination may be adjourned and rescheduled within three weeks of the original date.

Dissertations must adhere to specific guidelines regarding structure, sections, formatting, and other elements. Please ensure that you follow the [TAMIU Graduate School dissertation policy and formatting manuals](#).

Ph.D. students in criminal justice are expected to complete all doctoral work, including dissertation defense, within eight (8) years. Students who fail to defend their dissertation within this timeframe may be separated from the program.

VI. Core Faculty

Please see the Ph.D. in Criminal Justice website for a list of core and support faculty members (<https://www.tamtu.edu/coas/dss/phd-criminal-justice/facultystaff.shtml>).

VII. Academic Expectations

Students enrolled in the Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Program are required to complete 49 credit hours of coursework and successfully defend their research portfolio and dissertation to fulfill the requirements for their Ph.D. degrees. To meet degree requirements, students must achieve a final grade of "B" or higher in all courses. Portfolio and dissertation courses are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Students in the PhD in Criminal Justice Program who earn a grade of "C" for the first time in a course can retake the course and must attain a grade of "B" or above. Failure to obtain a grade of "B" or above when retaking a course will result in dismissal from the program. Each student is allowed to retake only one course for which an initial grade of "C" was earned. Immediate guidance from the program director(s) should also be sought in such cases.

Since students are only allowed to retake one course for which he/she earned a "C," a second earned grade of "C" will result in dismissal from the program. Any grades of "D" or "F" will also result in dismissal from the program.

Regular attendance ensures students' active participation and engagement and promotes academic success. Students are expected to attend all scheduled course sessions and no more than two absences are permitted in a semester. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the loss of funding opportunities (including but not limited to assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, and travel funding) or failure of a course. Excused absences should be communicated to the course instructors in advance and obtain their approval. If you have extenuated circumstances for extended absences, you should also submit a written request to the program director(s), providing detailed information and supporting documentation for consideration.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Coursework, Research, and Oral Defenses

As a research and doctoral student, you value:

- Original and innovative research;
- The presentation and interpretation of evidence;
- Reproducible and verifiable research and analysis;
- The human craft of writing;
- Authorship and ownership; and
- AI tools/LLMs can contribute value to scholarly research, including support for data analysis and generating preliminary ideas and bibliographies. And the use of

AI tools/LLMs presents important ethical, methodological, and legal challenges related to authorship, originality, accuracy, and accountability. In light of these opportunities and drawbacks, thus complete transparency (sharing any use of AI with the relevant instructor) is required with respect to the use of AI tools.

Any student using AI must clearly and explicitly disclose any use of AI-based tools in the preparation of their assignments, research, and/or grant writing voluntarily and the outset of their work. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of AI for text generation, data analysis, image generation or modification, and literature review assistance. Disclosures should address the following:

- The specific tool(s) and relevant prompt(s) used;
- The purpose for which the tool was used (such as brainstorming, help with coding or statistics, literature searches, interpreting results or writing; and
- The stage(s) of the research or writing process in which the tool will be used from the beginning of the assignment until the final submission.

Students should provide sufficient detail to allow readers to understand how AI contributed to the work and, where feasible, to reproduce or critically evaluate its role (for example, by providing prompts used). When exact reproduction is not possible, students should clearly state these limitations.

The use of basic editorial aids—such as spelling or grammar checkers—is permitted and does not require disclosure, provided these tools are not used to generate substantive content. When in doubt whether a tool is a standard editorial aid, reach out to a faculty member for clarification.

Failure to disclose generative, unauthorized AI use, or use of AI deceptively will be treated as academic dishonesty. At all times, the program reserves the right to apply penalties as they relate to cheating and plagiarism to any assignment that does not disclose AI use, which may result in minor penalties including a point deduction, reduced grade, course failure, all the way up to program dismissal (to be confirmed by the program director after reviewing the evidence, the student will need to be prepared to provide evidence upon request. This includes but is not limited to the written work that they produced, AI chat logs they used to write/produce their, etc).

Because AI and LLMs are not legal entities and therefore do not qualify as authors, **students remain fully and solely responsible for the content of their assignments.** This includes accuracy of data, analyses, interpretations, citations, conclusions, and all intellectual property considerations.

*If a course instructor's AI statement for a class contradicts anything here, the student will defer to the course expectations instead. But the consequences for violation remain the same.

VIII. Financial Assistance

Scholarships and fellowships/assistantships are available to qualified applicants. Full-time students admitted into the doctoral program can apply for scholarships/fellowships/assistantships through the **graduate school** (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/fellowships.shtml>):

Assistantship Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must be a fully admitted graduate student who is working towards a master's or doctoral degree.
2. Must maintain good academic standing with a minimum overall GPA of 3.25.
3. Must enroll in 9 graduate hours each Fall and Spring semester.

Fellowship and Scholarship Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must be a fully admitted graduate student who is working towards a master's or doctoral degree.
2. Must maintain good academic standing with a minimum overall GPA of 3.5.
3. Must enroll in 6 graduate hours each Fall and Spring semester.

Full-time doctoral students in Criminal Justice may receive up to \$15,000 in assistantships (part-time work/20 hours per week) or a \$5,000 scholarship per academic year. All students need to reapply for these awards every year. Please note that all awards are competitive and contingent on funding availability.

X. Student Resources

Graduate Student Travel Funds

TAMU is committed to encouraging students to engage in academic conferences to promote scholarly activities and professional development. Travel reimbursements are available for students attending conferences for professional development related to their advanced degrees.

College of Arts and Sciences Travel Reimbursement. The College of Arts and Sciences provides up to \$800 (may vary depending on budget) per academic year to support students who present at professional conferences. Requests for travel funds can be submitted using the [COAS Student Request for Travel Funds form](#).

Graduate Student Travel Reimbursement. The graduate school funds up to \$1,000 (may vary depending on budget) to support student travel. It's available for students who

have actively participated in a conference/meeting for professional development related to their academic pursuits at TAMIU. Must submit a complete Student Travel Form through [TAMIU PRESENCE](#) and meet all University travel requirements before traveling.

Students requesting travel funds to attend academic conferences must present their research findings at the conferences, which may include oral presentations, poster presentations, or participation in discussion panels. Additionally, a practice presentation is required prior to attending the conference for the student to receive funding.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the Texas A&M International University committee that reviews and approves protocols that use human subjects in research. All research involving human subjects must be approved by the IRB before commencing the research.

The IRB reviews research protocols to ensure that the rights and welfare of subjects are protected and that the proposed use of human subjects is in compliance with federal, state, and university regulations. The criteria are established in accordance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations. Researchers must submit a Protocol for Human Subjects in Research application to the IRB and receive approval prior to commencing the research. Please visit the IRB website for more details (<https://www.tamiau.edu/irb/>).

Major Conferences in Criminal Justice and Criminology

American Society of Criminology (ASC): <https://asc41.com/>

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS): <https://www.acjs.org/>

Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS):
<https://www.neacjs.org/>

Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA): <https://www.southerncj.org/>

Midwestern Criminal Justice Association (MCJA): <https://www.mcja.org/#/>

Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice (SWACJ): <https://www.swacj.org/>

Western Association of Criminal Justice (WACJ): www.wacj.org

Western Society of Criminology (WSC): <https://westerncriminology.org/>

European Society of Criminology (ESC): <https://www.esc-eurocrim.org/>

Asian Criminology Society (ACS): <https://www.acs002.com/index.php>

Law & Society (LSA): <https://www.lawandsociety.org/>

Other useful links

The Graduate School: <https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/index.shtml>

Library: <https://www.tamtu.edu/library/>

Writing Center: <https://www.tamtu.edu/uc/ace/tutoring.shtml>

Student Counseling Center: <https://www.tamtu.edu/counseling/>

Thesis and dissertation policy/formatting manuals:
<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/ThesisHomepage.shtml>

Tuition and Fees: <https://www.tamtu.edu/fixedtuition/index.shtml>

International student services: <https://www.tamtu.edu/international/isshome.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions after reading this handbook, please feel free to contact the Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors Dr. Daniel Scott (daniel.scott@tamtu.edu, 956-326-2626, AIC 345) and Dr. Brittany Hood (brittany.hood@tamtu.edu, 956-326-2687, AIC 314).

What is the minimum number of courses I have to take each semester?

Students need to take a minimum of six (6) credit hours each semester. All students are required to take CRIJ 6101 Proseminar in Criminal Justice in the first semester.

I am not a local student; can I attend the first semester online?

No. This is a hybrid program and students are required to take courses on campus during the first semester and one Spring semester (for the five in-person courses).

Is on-campus housing available for doctoral students during the first semester?

Yes, it is available, but not provided. Here is a link for more details:
<https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/tx/laredo/tamtu-housing-res-life#amenities>

Is it possible for students to work full-time while completing the doctoral program?

Yes. All courses are offered in the evenings and weekends. Students are responsible for

arranging their schedules properly to complete all coursework.

Does the University provide funding, scholarships, or fellowships for students?

Yes, the university offers a variety of fellowships, assistantships, and scholarships to qualified students. Please check the graduate school financial aid website for more details (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/fellowships.shtml>).

What kinds of funding are available for TAMTU employees who pursue the TAMTU CJ PhD Program?

The Texas A&M University System recognizes the value of graduate education for the personal and professional development of its employees and has thus committed under certain conditions to paying the tuition and fees for employees pursuing a doctorate. Please check the ([SAP](#)) [31.99.01.L0.02](#) Tuition & Fee Payments for Employees Pursuing Doctorates for more details.

How many academic papers do I need to publish before graduation aside from the dissertation?

There is no standard requirement for the number of peer-reviewed publications when seeking employment. You are suggested to be as productive as possible.

Tell us about opportunities students have to present at academic conferences here and abroad.

There are a variety of academic conferences that students can participate in. Please see the Major Conferences in Criminal Justice and Criminology section in this handbook for a detailed list.

Are doctoral students assigned an advisor?

Yes. The Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors serve as mentors/advisors to all newly enrolled doctoral students. First year students will be assigned a faculty mentor in the Spring of their first year. The co-directors will facilitate students in selecting their portfolio and dissertation chairs.

How many years does it generally take to graduate from the CJ PhD Program?

The Program is designed to be four years.

What do portfolio classes entail? How many of them must doctoral students take?

Students should work with their portfolio committee chair and members to develop research manuscripts and other documents needed for the portfolio. It is recommended that students take two portfolio courses starting in the third year and produce at least one research manuscript for each portfolio course. The portfolio committee chair will decide if a student passes the portfolio courses. The portfolio committee will make a decision about the portfolio defense.

What are some of the career prospects for CJ Ph.D. graduates?

The program aims to produce graduates who have the theoretical knowledge, actual and practical experience, and marketable skills to assume high-level leadership roles in

various areas of criminal justice practice, such as those found in academia, government, and the private sector.

Are CJ Ph.D. graduates considered for employment at TAMIU upon graduation?

It depends on the job position and department policies.

How do I appeal a grade?

In registering grievances and filing appeals, TAMIU students must follow the procedures established in the TAMIU student handbook. Please see the student handbook Appendix C: Student Grievance Process for details on the informal process and formal process (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/studenthandtraveldbooks.shtml>).