

CRIMINOLOGY

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Students entering the program with the B.A. degree will first earn the M.A. degree. Thirty-eight credits of course work at the 400, 500, 600, or 800 level, with a minimum of 18 credits at the 500 and 600 level, combined, and a master's thesis, including 6 credits of thesis research, are required for the M.A. The course work includes:

- an introduction to graduate studies seminar,
- a sequence of methods and statistics courses;
- a sequence of two criminological theory courses;
- a course in the organization and criminal justice system;
- a teaching seminar
- and additional 500-level substantive criminology courses selected in consultation with a student's faculty committee.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

For the Ph.D., 30 credits beyond the M.A. are required, no more than three of which may be for Individual Studies. All Ph.D. candidates must have completed all courses required for the M.A. degree or their equivalent.

The 30 credits beyond the M.A. must include 6 hours of Criminology seminars and 12 hours of elective seminars, all of which should be selected in consultation with the Ph.D. committee. Seminar requirements are not fulfilled by Individual Studies credits.

Qualifying Examination

A qualifying exam is required of all students seeking the Ph.D., after a master's degree has been earned. Students admitted with a master's degree will stand for this exam in the second semester of full-time study.

Language Requirement

The program in Criminology has no formal foreign language or communication requirement.

Ph.D. Committee Composition

The student's Ph.D. studies are conducted under the supervision of a Ph.D. committee that must meet all Graduate Council requirements (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>). At least two members of the Ph.D. committee must be Criminology tenure-line faculty and one must be from outside the Criminology Program and Sociology Department and must represent a field outside the candidate's major field of study. One Criminology tenure-line faculty member is designated chair of the Ph.D. committee; ordinarily this person also serves as general adviser and director of the dissertation.

Comprehensive Examination

After completing all course work, doctoral students must pass a comprehensive examination that will be administered by the student's

Ph.D. committee. At the discretion of the committee, examination content will include material on:

1. general criminological theory,
2. criminal justice/law,
3. research methods/statistics, and
4. the student's area of specialization.

Dissertation and Dissertation Defense

In order to earn the Ph.D., students are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that reflects their original research and education.