CRIMINAL JUSTICE, A.S. (ALTOONA)

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Altoona

End Campus: Altoona

Program Description

Students receiving an associate degree in criminal justice should understand each of the three main components of the criminal justice system and their interrelationships. This program includes study in law enforcement, courts, and corrections individually and as components of a system, plus work in theories of crime causation, and crime control policy. Students should expect reading, writing, and critical thinking skills to be rigorously applied and developed throughout the degree program. The Associate in Science degree in Criminal Justice prepares students for entry-level positions in criminal justice or for study at the baccalaureate level.

What is Criminal Justice?

Criminal justice is the study of the adult and juvenile justice systems, including law enforcement, the courts, and corrections. It is interdisciplinary and includes understanding the intersections of law, public policy, and behavioral science, in an effort to understand crime as a social problem and improve these systems for the good of society.

You Might Like This Program If...

You have an interest in working in corrections, courts, court administration, law enforcement, or probation and parole. Students completing this course of study are prepared for entry level positions in the criminal justice system or to complete the baccalaureate level.

Entrance to Major

Students must have a minimum 2.0 GPA to change to this Associate degree after admission to the University.

Degree Requirements

For the Associate in Science in Criminal Justice, a minimum of 64 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	21
Electives	26
Requirements for the Major	29

12 of the 21 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3 credits of GH courses; 3 credits of GQ courses; 6 credits of GS courses.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better		
CRIMJ 100	Introduction to Criminal Justice	3
CRIMJ 210	Policing in America	3
CRIMJ 220	Courts and the Prosecution Process	3
CRIMJ 230	Corrections in America	3
PHIL 103	Ethics	3
SOC 12	Criminology	3
SOC 119N	Race, Ethnicity and Culture	4
STAT 200	Elementary Statistics	4
Additional Courses		
Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better		
CRIMJ 250		3
or SOC 207	Research Methods in Sociology	

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all associate degree students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/associate-degree-general-education-program/) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 3 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 3 credits

Knowledge Domains

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Note: Up to six credits of Inter-Domain courses may be used for any Knowledge Domain requirement, but when a course may be used to satisfy more than one requirement, the credits from the course can be counted only once.

Exploration

- **Any General Education course (including GHW and Inter-Domain):** 3 credits

University Degree Requirements

Cultures Requirement

3 credits of United States (US) or International (IL) cultures coursework are required and may satisfy other requirements

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 60 degree credits must be earned for a associates degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 60 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Program Learning Objectives

- **Knowledge Base in Criminal Justice:** Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the major components of the criminal justice system and juvenile justice system as well as how these components interact. Student understanding of the criminal justice process will be enhanced through targeted courses in courts, corrections, and policing that highlight the unique needs, challenges, and operation of these components. Across the curriculum, students will be exposed to criminological theories that help to explain the role of gender, race/ ethnicity, and other background characteristics on offending, victimization, and criminal justice processing.
  - Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in criminal justice
  - Develop a working knowledge of criminal justice content domains
  - Describe applications of criminological theory
- **Research Methods:** Students will understand the importance and practical use of social science research methods and the role these play in criminal justice policy.
  - Use scientific reasoning to interpret criminal justice policy
  - Demonstrate criminal justice information literacy
  - Engage in innovative and integrative thinking and problem solving
  - Interpret, design, and conduct basic criminological research
- **Professional Writing and Critical Thinking:** Students will practice writing and critical thinking skills through writing assignments across the curriculum and the completion of at least one writing intensive course.
  - Demonstrate effective writing for different purposes
  - Exhibit effective presentation skills for different purposes
  - Interact effectively with others
  - Demonstrate critical thinking skills concerning issues in criminal justice
- **Ethics:** Students will understand the role of ethics in criminal justice.
  - Apply ethical standards to evaluate criminal justice research and policy
  - Build and enhance interpersonal relationships
  - Adopt values that build community at local, national, and global levels
- **Placement:** Students will be prepared for placement in the criminal justice field through an internship experience.
  - Apply criminal justice content and skills to career goals
  - Exhibit self-efficacy and self-regulation
  - Refine project and time-management skills
  - Enhance teamwork capacity
  - Develop meaningful professional direction for life after graduation

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/)

Altoona

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https://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/criminal-justice

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https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-criminal-justice-associate-in-science-degree