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PennState
College of the Liberal Arts

CRIMINOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Department of Sociology and Criminology
Penn State

2026–2027

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Criminology Program offers the following:

- Master of Arts in Criminology
- Ph.D. in Criminology
- Dual-title Ph.D. in Criminology and Social Data Analytics
- Certificate in Quantitative Methods

Responsible And Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR)

All entering graduate students must fulfill the Responsible and Ethical Conduct for Research (RECR) program. This requirement will be fulfilled through the following courses and activities:

(1) CITI training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR): Students will take the "Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)" course. Information about CITI is at **researchsupport.psu.edu/orp/education/citi/**. All first-year students are responsible for sending their certificates of completion to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Coordinator before the end of the fall semester of their first year. Penn State requires renewal of CITI training every three years.

(2) SOC/CRIM 500 (**3 hours**): This course, which all incoming students are required to take, will devote up to 3 hours of discussion-based training in the responsible conduct of research, covering topics such as assistantships, mentoring, data access and management, IRBs and human subjects, collaboration, authorship norms, professional conferences, and the peer-review process.

(3) SOC/CRIM 591 (**1 hour**): This course, which is required for all students, will devote 1 hour of discussion-based training in the responsible conduct of research.

(4) RCR Modules/Workshops (**1 hour**). Several opportunities are available for students to fulfill this requirement including RCR workshops and other online modules. Students are responsible for identifying, scheduling and documenting the hour of training. RECR workshops: **researchsupport.psu.edu/orp/education/recr/curriculum/**

THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE (M.A.) PROGRAM

Penn State's M.A. program in Criminology is a general program that is designed to enhance students' knowledge of the causes and consequences of crime, society's response to crime, and the research methods and statistical techniques used to study these issues. It is not a stand-alone or terminal M.A. degree program. Instead, it is embedded within the doctoral degree program, with students earning an M.A. on the way to a Ph.D.

Identifying an Adviser

M.A. candidates undertake their first year of study with the assistance of an interim adviser. This will be a faculty member to whom the student is assigned as a graduate assistant, appointed by the Criminology Program's Director of Graduate Studies (or "DGS"). Advisers can be reassigned each year and thus may change over the course of time in the program. M.A. candidates should meet with advisers prior to each registration for the purpose of discussing progress toward degree.

Degree Requirements (See Appendix A for Checklist)

The M.A. in Criminology requires 38 credits, including the following courses:

- CRIM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies – 1 credit
- CRIM 501 Criminal Justice System – 3 credits
- CRIM 512 Criminological Theories – 3 credits
- CRIM 513 Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology – 3 credits
- SOC 513 Sociological Research Methods – 3 credits
- SOC 574 Statistical Methods for Social Research – 3 credits
- SOC 575 Statistical Methods for Nonexperimental Research – 3 credits
- CRIM 591 Teaching Criminology/Sociology – 1 credit
- CRIM 5XX seminars—12 credits
  - (*Examples: CRIM 533 Social Contexts of Criminal Sentencing; CRIM 559 Communities and Crime; CRIM 597 Special Topics in Criminology; CRIM 596 Individual Study does not count for this requirement)*
- CRIM 600 Thesis Research – 6 credits

Note: Required courses in research methods and statistics assume background gained through some combination of undergraduate course work and individual study. Students who are not confident in their basic statistical knowledge are encouraged to take SOC 470 Intermediate Social Statistics or a comparable course in a related department prior to enrollment in SOC 574 Statistical Methods for Social Research.

If a student fails a required course, they are permitted to attempt the course once. Upon repeated failure of the same required course, the student must leave the program. Note that if a student successfully completes the course, they might still be off track with regard to program expectations depending on their location in the program timeline.

Required Course Load

The J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School specifies that students holding twenty hour/week assistantships must carry 9–12 course credits per semester. Thesis credits (CRIM 600) and dissertation credits (CRIM 601) count toward this requirement; there is no limit on the number of these credits that can be taken, and after the first year they are frequently used to meet the required course load. Review the **GCAC-501 Credit Load policy** for additional information.

Satisfactory Scholarship

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required to graduate. However, Criminology faculty expect students' grade-point averages will be 3.50 or above. Students with grade-point averages below 3.25 are considered to be performing below satisfactory level. Review the **GCAC-404 Satisfactory Scholarship policy** for additional information.

Thesis Committee

Before completion of the second semester of study, the student should select and obtain the consent of three graduate faculty members to compose an M.A. committee. At least two of the committee members, including the chair of the committee, must be tenure-line Criminology faculty. One of the criminology faculty is designated by the student to be thesis adviser and committee chair. The role of the chair is to oversee the student's work, provide ongoing feedback, and guide the student through the thesis process. The role of the other members is to consult with, and provide assistance to, the student upon request and to evaluate the final thesis. Typically, M.A. candidates should convene a meeting of their three-member committee at the beginning of their third semester in the graduate program.

M.A. Thesis

The M.A. thesis is the M.A. culminating experience. Students are advised to take advantage of all opportunities during their first year of study to develop an M.A. thesis proposal and then to begin work on the thesis during the first summer. Preparation of the thesis in journal format is encouraged. M.A. candidates are required to submit a thesis acceptable to their M.A. committee and to defend the thesis at a meeting with committee members. Students are expected to defend the thesis before the beginning of the third year. The thesis defense is not public, and there is not a separate required public presentation of the work.

The criteria for the thesis and defense are:

- The thesis forms a criminological research question and addresses that question with appropriate theory and methods.
- The student correctly articulates and defends the thesis's theoretical and methodological choices with evidence and reasoning, in both written and oral modes.

All theses are subject to regulations detailed in the **Office of Theses and**

Dissertations of the University.

Graduate Council Graduation Publication Requirements

The thesis must be made available to the public as an official University record through inclusion in the University Libraries.

Time Limit for the M.A.

Criminology program requirements are such that it should take two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. Not defending the M.A. thesis before the beginning of the third-year Fall semester is considered poor performance, and it places the student at risk of losing department funding and continuation in the program. This limit is shorter than what is described in **GCAC-632 Time Limitation – Research Master's**, but the criminology program has set its own time limit, consistent with GCAC-6

The Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) Program

Identifying an Adviser

Ph.D. students often work with the same faculty who were their advisers during the M.A. degree. Advisers can be reassigned each year and thus may change over the course of time in the program. Students should meet with advisers prior to each registration for the purpose of discussing progress toward degree.

Ph.D. Qualifying Evaluation

A Qualifying Evaluation is required by the Fox Graduate School of all students aspiring to enter a Ph.D. program at Penn State. The purpose of this Evaluation is to assess the student's potential to successfully complete a high-quality Ph.D. program. If approved for qualifying, the student is officially admitted to the Criminology Ph.D. program.

The Qualifying Evaluation, which is conducted by the Graduate Committee, is based on a dossier prepared by the student (prompted by a Form sent to students). The student dossiers will contain: the approved M.A. thesis; an additional academic paper; an up-to-date CV, and a Plan of Doctoral Study supplied by the student. The additional paper must have been written during the course of graduate study at Penn State. The Plan of Doctoral Study must include a checklist of classes already taken, probable course selections for the future, a rationale for the proposed courses, plans for comprehensive exam areas and dissertation, and probable faculty committee members. **In addition, the student must provide a written release allowing the Graduate Committee to examine all violations of academic integrity that have been filed with the Academic Integrity Office during their term of graduate study at Penn State.** After admission to qualifying, Ph.D. students are required to meet with their advisers prior to each subsequent registration for the purpose of discussing the candidates' progress on their plans of study and revising such plans as appropriate.

The criteria for the Qualifying Evaluation are:

- Mastery of criminological scholarship appropriate for their stage in career. This includes, but is not limited to, a demonstrated ability to ask and answer questions based on foundational criminological concepts and the ability to implement methodologically sound research based on these key concepts.
- Strong performance in course work as evidenced by a minimum 3.5 grade-point average in Criminology graduate courses.
- Coherent and concrete plan for a program of research in the dissertation that can be chaired by a faculty member and overseen by a committee at Penn State.

For students who earn the M.A. degree in Criminology at Penn State, the Qualifying Evaluation shall take place no later than the semester following the M.A. thesis defense. For students who are pursuing the Ph.D. at Penn State, the Qualifying Evaluation shall take place by the end of the third semester of graduate work at Penn State.

The Fox Graduate School requires that the student must be registered as a full-time or part-time student for the semester in which the Qualifying Evaluation is held. Appeals of Qualifying decisions can be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies and will be heard by the Criminology graduate faculty. Review the **GCAC-604 Qualifying Evaluation – Research Doctorate policy** for more information.

Students may not resubmit the qualifying evaluation. Students who fail the qualifying examination will be dismissed from the program.

The Qualifying Evaluation has a process to manage conflicts of interest. If the student or any member of the Graduate Committee believes there is a conflict of interest, the DGS (or the Department Head, if the DGS is in conflict) will modify the selection of personnel who will participate in the Qualifying evaluations.

The Ph.D. Committee

The candidate's Ph.D. studies, including Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation, are conducted under the supervision of a Ph.D. committee. The Ph.D. committee is composed of at least four members of the graduate faculty, at least two of whom must be Criminology tenure-line faculty and one of whom must be from outside the Department of Sociology and Criminology. The committee must include faculty members having recognized expertise in the major and minor areas of specialization selected by the student. One Criminology tenure-line faculty member is designated chair of the Ph.D. committee; ordinarily this person also serves as main adviser of the dissertation. The process of Ph.D. committee formation begins with the student obtaining the consent of the faculty members the student would like to have appointed. The student then completes the Fox Graduate School's Research Doctoral Committee Appointment Signature Form. This submission will be reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies. If approved, the proposed committee will be submitted for final approval by the Fox Graduate School. Students must identify and convene their Ph.D. committee **no later than one semester following their Qualifying Evaluation.** Review the **GCAC-602 Ph.D. Committee Formation, Composition, and Review - Research Doctorate policy** for more information.

Degree Requirements (See Appendix A or B for Checklist)

For the Ph.D. in Criminology at Penn State, a minimum of 30 course credits (including thesis credits) are required beyond the M.A. degree. No more than three of these credits may be for Individual Studies (CRIM 596). Please note that the allowed Individual Studies (CRIM 596) credits count toward the 12 elective credits and not the 6 required CRIM seminar credits. *All Ph.D. candidates also must have completed all courses required for the M.A. degree in Criminology at Penn State, or their equivalent*.

The 30+ course credits beyond the M.A. must include:

CRIM Seminars – 6 hours
Elective Seminars (CRIM or others) – 12 hours

*The remaining required hours are filled through thesis credits and/or additional electives. All seminars should be selected in consultation with the Ph.D. committee.

If a student fails a required course, they are permitted to attempt the course once. Upon repeated failure of the same required course, the student must leave the program. Note that successful completion of the course does not necessarily mean that the student is making satisfactory progress toward other program requirements and milestones.

Language/Communication Requirement

The criminology program has no formal foreign language or communication requirement. However, it is highly recommended that the student pursue additional training in statistics, computer science, a foreign language, technical writing, and/or specialized methods or theory, insofar as these will further their research and career plans. Decisions about advanced work in these areas are made by students in consultation with their committees.

The University requires each Ph.D. candidate to demonstrate high-level competence in the use of the English language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Proficiency is expected at the time of admission to the Fox Graduate School and must be formally certified in accordance with departmental policy before admission to Ph.D. qualifying. A comprehensive training program in English as a Second Language is offered to international students through the Department of Speech Communication. Many domestic and international students can benefit from taking courses in technical writing available through the Department of English, the School of Communications, and the Fox Graduate School.

The M.A. thesis defense will serve as the mechanism to assess the student's oral English competence. The MA thesis committee will evaluate whether the student can effectively present ideas, comprehend committee questions, and form and deliver coherent answers. The qualifying evaluation will serve as the mechanism to assess the student's written English competence, by evaluating the written material's grammar and mechanics, organization and cohesion, and adherence to disciplinary written patterns.

Satisfactory Scholarship

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required to graduate with a doctorate. However, the expectation is a grade-point average of 3.50 or above. Review the **GCAC-404 Satisfactory Scholarship policy** for additional information.

Comprehensive Examination

A comprehensive examination will be administered by the student's Ph.D. committee. Candidates are required by the Fox Graduate School to have a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State at the time of the Comprehensive Examination, and they must be registered as full-time or part-time degree students for the semester in which the Examination is taken. A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the committee is required for passing. The Comprehensive Examination shall be placed in the student's departmental file. The purpose of the comprehensive examination in Criminology is to ensure competency in the earlier-described major and minor areas of specialization. At the discretion of the faculty committee, examination content, while focusing on the major and minor areas of specialization, may incorporate aspects of general social theory, research methods, and statistics.

The criteria for evaluation are:

- Ability to demonstrate familiarity with the fundamental knowledge, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches for each of the areas of specialization, in both written and oral modes.
- Ability to defend scholarly ideas with evidence and reasoning, in both written and oral modes.

The Comprehensive Examination consists of written and oral segments. The written closed-book exam will be administered in morning and afternoon sessions on two consecutive days. Effective fall 2027, the comprehensive exam will be administered fully in-person. The Program will provide a non-networked computer and room for the exam.

Native English speakers will have three hours for each session, and non-native speakers will have four hours. The Student Disability Resources (SDR) Office permits reasonable accommodation. The student's exam schedule can be adjusted based on accommodation with an approval letter from SDR.

The oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination occurs in a meeting of the candidate with the Ph.D. committee. This shall be an occasion for feedback and discussion of the student's written examination and often will include an initial discussion of the student's plans for dissertation research. The oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination must be scheduled two weeks in advance with the Fox Graduate School. The oral portion can be held fully in-person (preferred), fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student and adviser must agree on the mode. If the student and adviser cannot agree on the mode, the Graduate Program Head will make the final decision. Either the student or adviser can appeal the decision of the Graduate Program Head to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Timing of the Comprehensive Examination

Students who are pursuing the M.A. and Ph.D. must pass the exam before the end of fall semester of their fourth year to be eligible for continued funding. They are encouraged, however, to take the exam before the beginning of the fall semester of their fourth year. Thus, *encouraged timing* is before their seventh semester; *required timing* is by end of

their seventh semester.

Students who are pursuing only the Ph.D. must pass the exam before the end of fall semester of their third year to be eligible for continued funding, but they are encouraged to take the examination prior to the beginning of the fall semester of their third year. Thus, *encouraged timing* is before their fifth semester; *required timing* is by end of their fifth semester.

Repeating the Comprehensive Examination

Students who fail the Comprehensive Examination may repeat it once, so long as time limits are not exceeded. The student must repeat the exam in the semester following the failure. A second failure will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

Review **the GCAC-606 Comprehensive Examination – Research Doctorate policy** for more information.

Dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation provides evidence that the student can conduct independent scholarship. According to the Penn State **Graduate Bulletin**, "The ability to do independent research and competence in scholarly exposition must be demonstrated by the preparation of a thesis on some topic related to the major subject. It should represent a significant contribution to knowledge, be presented in a scholarly manner, reveal an ability on the part of the candidate to do independent research of high quality, and indicate considerable experience in using a variety of research techniques."

Dissertation Proposal Hearing

The student's dissertation research is conducted under the supervision of the Ph.D. committee. The purpose of the Dissertation Proposal Hearing is to arrive at a detailed, mutually agreeable contract between the student and the committee as to what the Dissertation will include. Ideally, the hearing should be scheduled at a point at which a substantial literature review has been conducted and drafted, and at which methodological questions have been worked out in detail. The hearing also provides the committee with an occasion on which to make any final recommendations for the student's course work. The hearing may be held in combination with the oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination.

Timing of Dissertation Proposal Hearing

Students entering the graduate program in Criminology at Penn State with a B.A. or B.S. degree are advised to hold the formal Dissertation Proposal Hearing during their fourth year. They must have held the hearing before the beginning of their fifth year. Students entering the program with an M.A. degree are advised to hold the formal Dissertation Proposal Hearing during their third year. They must have held the hearing before the beginning of their fourth year.

Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense)

Completion of the requirements for the Ph.D. includes a formal oral defense of the dissertation. A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the committee is required for passing. As stipulated in **GCAC-607**, the dissertation committee chair and the student are responsible for ensuring the completion of a draft of the dissertation and for adequate consultation with members of the thesis committee well in advance of the oral examination (i.e., defense). Major revisions to the thesis should be completed before this examination. The dissertation should be in its final draft, with appropriate notes, bibliography, tables, etc., at the time of the oral examination; both the content and style should be correct and polished by the time this final draft is in the hands of the committee. It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate to provide a copy of the thesis to each member of the doctoral committee at least two weeks before the date of the scheduled examination." **GCAC-608** specifies that the final oral examination, which serves as the defense of the dissertation, shall be "related in large part to the dissertation, but may cover the candidate's whole program of study . . ."

The criteria for evaluation are:

- Ability to demonstrate deep mastery of the research area, identify gaps or limitations in the extant research and articulate theoretical, methodological or substantive contributions that could mitigate some of these limitations.
- Ability to provide novel contributions to this area with significant research questions and/or novel methodological approaches.
- Ability to defend the dissertation's theoretical and methodological choices with evidence and reasoning, in both written and oral modes.

The final oral examination can be held fully in-person (preferred), fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be considered, but the student and adviser must agree on the mode. If the student and adviser cannot agree on the mode, the Graduate Program Head will make the final decision. Either the student or adviser can appeal the decision of the Graduate Program Head to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Timing of the Dissertation Defense

The formal defense of the dissertation shall be scheduled by the Fox Graduate School upon receipt of written notification from the Ph.D. committee chair that the committee judges the dissertation to be satisfactory for a defense. **Two weeks notice** is required by the Fox Graduate School. The deadline for holding the defense is **seven weeks before commencement**. The student must be registered as a full-time or part-time degree student for the semester in which the final oral examination is taken.

Review the **GCAC-608 Final Oral Examination – Research Doctorate policy** for more information.

Graduate Council Graduation Publication Requirements

The dissertation must be made available to the public through inclusion in the University Libraries. See **GCAC-607 - Dissertation - Research Doctorate**.

Time Limit for the Ph.D.

A Ph.D. student is required to complete the program, including acceptance of the doctoral dissertation, within eight years after the date of successful completion of the qualifying evaluation, not including approved leaves of absence as outlined in **GCAC-610 - Time Limitation - Research Doctorate**.

ASSISTANTSHIPS

All criminology graduate students receive teaching or research assistantships. The program makes every effort to continue from year to year the assistantship of each graduate student who: (1) maintains a satisfactory level of academic performance; (2) fulfills duties associated with the assistantship; (3) completes degree requirements and milestones in a timely fashion; and (4) demonstrates satisfactory departmental citizenship and professionalism. One of the most important of these time requirements is completion of the M.A. thesis before the first day of the third year of graduate study. Continuation of funding is, of course, subject to the availability of funds.

Graduate students given research or teaching assignments are responsible for carrying out their duties throughout the entire semester. For those with teaching assignments, the semester (or summer session) does not end until grades are computed and posted. If a graduate student is the instructor of record (e.g., teaching their own class or teaching a lab section that has its own course registration), graduate student teachers must be present for each class session. Any absences except for last-minute emergencies must be approved in advance by the Director of Graduate Studies and alternative arrangements for the class, acceptable to the Director of Graduate Studies must be made. It is not acceptable for graduate student teachers to miss class without the consent of the Director of Graduate Studies. Similarly, research assistants are expected to be present for scheduled meetings as well as for any occasions for which they have scheduled duties.

There are requirements before students can teach their own course (the "instructor of record"). All students must successfully complete SOC 591 (Teaching Sociology/Criminology) before teaching their own course. In addition, for students pursuing the M.A. and Ph.D. at Penn State, they must successfully defend the M.A. thesis before teaching their own course. This requirement does not apply to students with a M.A. from another institution and who are pursuing only the Ph.D. at Penn State.

Criminology program requirements are such that it should take two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. degree. Completing the Ph.D. should take three more years for students who earn their M.A. degree at Penn State and four years for students who

enter the Penn State Ph.D. program after earning an M.A. degree elsewhere. Students who take longer to complete the respective degrees and are making good progress *may* be awarded one additional year of funding, following a formal application and review process, but this is not guaranteed. Students will not be awarded more than one additional year of funding from the department. Funding from any University source (College or University assistantship or fellowship; faculty grant or other funds) is limited to a maximum of six years of total funding, regardless of source.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Annual Evaluation

At the end of each academic year, students receive written feedback on their performance from the Director of Graduate Studies, based on faculty discussion at the annual review meeting that is held at the end of the spring semester. Information for this performance evaluation is obtained from all faculty who have had a particular student in a course, supervised an independent study course for the student, or served on the student's M.A. or Ph.D. committee. Course grades and assistantship evaluations are also reviewed for each student.

As part of the annual evaluation, students are assessed on their progress toward program milestones, performance expectations, and timelines. Students who are not making satisfactory progress will receive guidance on what they must do to meet program expectations.

Residency Requirements

There are additional Fox Graduate School requirements that apply to Ph.D. candidates: Over some twelve-month period after admission to Ph.D. qualifying, the candidate must spend at least two semesters (which may include the semester in which the Qualifying Evaluation is taken) as a registered full-time student engaged in academic work at the University Park campus. After the residency requirement is met and the Comprehensive Examination passed, status as a student must be maintained by continued registration for credit or noncredit dissertation research courses for at least two semesters of each calendar year until the dissertation is accepted by the doctoral committee. See the Penn State **Graduate Bulletin** for further information about all Fox Graduate School requirements.

Graduation

At the beginning of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students are responsible for informing the Fox Graduate School of their intent via LionPATH (effective fall 2016), filing a diploma card, and paying the thesis and/or dissertation fee. If the student does not graduate until some subsequent semester, it is necessary to inform the Fox Graduate School again of the intention to graduate at the beginning of the actual semester of graduation. **See graduation deadlines**.

Format details for both M.A. and Ph.D. theses' are provided in the Thesis and Dissertation Handbook. Ph.D. candidates must submit a final copy of the thesis to the Fox Graduate School Office of Theses and Dissertations by the announced submission deadline for the semester or summer session in which the degree will be conferred.

Program Standards and Expectations

a. Academic standards
   - Students are expected to maintain a grade point average at or above the minimum required for their degree, as listed in the appropriate section above.
   - Students are expected to make satisfactory progress in achieving program milestones. As part of their annual review, students receive an assessment of their performance.

b. Integrity standards
   - Graduate students are expected to conform to the highest standards of professional conduct.
   - Students must follow all relevant policies regarding human subjects, IRB protocols, data use agreements, data management procedures, and financial reimbursements.
   - The Criminology Program does not have specific rules regarding the use of artificial intelligence tools. Criminology Program instructors and committees may set their own rules for the use of artificial intelligence tools in courses and milestones.
   - The Criminology Program follows the College of the Liberal Arts Graduate Student Academic Integrity Interim Policy available at **la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/** and Fox Graduate School **GCAC-805 - Academic Integrity**. All students in the program are subject to these policies. In the case of a conflict between these two policies, the Fox Graduate School policy will apply.

The following is from the College of the Liberal Arts Graduate Student Academic Integrity Interim Policy:

What is an Academic Integrity Violation?

An academic integrity violation is an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage, or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically. The following actions reflect the most common types of academic misconduct and therefore are prohibited behaviors in any academic context unless specified by the instructor, including both courses and academic assessments that are not associated with credit-bearing courses such as qualifying exams, comprehensive exams, dissertations, other milestone assessments, and SARI [RECR] training. These descriptions illustrate the range of academic misconduct; there may be academic misconduct that falls outside these categories.

(1) Unauthorized collaboration and/or accessing or using prohibited materials,

tools, information, technologies, or study aids. This includes allowing another person to submit work or participate in academic requirements on one's behalf (sometimes called 'ghosting') or assisting another to engage in any form of academic misconduct.

(2) Misrepresenting another's words, results, processes, or ideas in whole or in part without giving appropriate attribution, citation, or credit. Includes submitting another person's work as one's own (e.g., plagiarism). Other categorical examples include copying and tampering with another student's work.

(3) Providing false information in fulfillment of an academic assignment, exercise, publication, or another requirement, including making up data, sources, efforts, events, or results, and recording, reporting, or using them as authentic. Also includes altering or adjusting graded work to receive a favorable regrade.

(4) Using the same academic work, in part or entirely, for credit more than once, unless specifically authorized by the instructor receiving the reused work.

(5) Retaining, recording and/or disseminating instructional content when prohibited, including course exams, or other intellectual property, without the express written permission of the instructor(s) or intellectual property owner, or as permitted by their Campus Disability Coordinator.

Given the nature of graduate education, a determination must be made as to whether an action involves *research misconduct, academic misconduct*, or *both* as described below.

(1) The following fall under the purview of academic misconduct policies: Alleged plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification in a thesis or dissertation in draft form or in work completed for a course (other than a finalized and submitted thesis or dissertation) or a non-course-based assessment that is not published.

(2) The following fall under the purview of RP02: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct (**policy.psu.edu/policies/rp02**).

- Plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification in a thesis or dissertation which has been finalized, signed, and submitted to a school or college to fulfill a degree requirement.
- Alleged plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification in a research report, manuscript, or other scholarly work not related to a thesis, dissertation, or other work undertaken in fulfillment of a course requirement.
- Allegations of plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification related to

sponsored research.

Mentoring standards

We recommend that students and faculty set expectations for mentoring to guide clear and transparent communication between graduate students and their faculty mentors and assistantship supervisors. The following questions should be considered at the outset of new assignments and reviewed at least annually for ongoing assignments. Each person (student and faculty) should express their preferences, and "final decisions" should be documented. Section 1 pertains to assistantships and Section 2 pertains to advising. Students and faculty may skip either if not applicable to their current arrangement (e.g., assistantship only, advising only).

Section 1. Assistantships

1.1. Work Process and Communication Expectations

- How often will we meet? In person or remotely? (Note: Typical pattern is weekly or bi-weekly.)
- Who will be responsible for setting the agenda? (e.g., "Student will set meeting agenda based on progress made and advice or guidance needed for next steps." Or "Faculty will set the agenda, with a joint discussion of next steps."
- When should progress or deliverables be provided? (e.g., "Student will share updated as soon as progress is made" or "All updates on progress during meeting times.")
- Is student expected to track/report their hours? If so, how? (e.g., "Student will not be asked to formally record hours until there are concerns about time management or completion of tasks." or "Student will record their hours each week in a Google Spreadsheet.")
- How should challenges related to the assistantship tasks be communicated, such as when a student is getting errors in a particular section of code? (e.g., "Student will attempt to work through these challenges independently, even if it delays completion of tasks"; "Student should consult others before asking Faculty"; or "Students to reach out to faculty with issues after 1-2 hours of unsuccessful efforts").
- What are our expectations for communication, both medium and timeliness? (e.g., "We will do our best to answer mails within 2 business days"; "There is no expectation of participation in weekend e-mails or phone calls.").
- What amount of flexibility is there on work hours? (e.g., "With advance notice, student may shift work from one week to the next based on other school/work demands, vacation/travel, etc.") Note: Please **review paid leave policy for emergencies, special circumstances, and longer-term issues**.

1.2. Work Tasks

- What types of tasks should the student expect to work on over the semester? (e.g., coding, writing, guest lecturing, developing class assignments)?
- Are there opportunities for co-authorship or lead authorship on any projects? If so, what level/type of contribution merits authorship or a particular author ordering? If

not yet, what can the student do to work toward an authorship contribution in the future?
- How does the faculty plan to provide feedback on progress/quality of work? What would the student prefer? (Note: the annual evaluation letter should not be a "surprise". Students should receive routine feedback on strengths and areas for improvement throughout their assistantship, either verbally or in writing.)

Section 2. Advising and Mentorship

2.1. Skill-Building Areas

What type of guidance does the student want from the faculty mentor? Select up to 3 areas that the student would like to work on over this semester/year.
- Networking (e.g., identifying new collaborators or mentors)
- Time management, work-life balance, goal setting
- Finding funding and/or grant writing/planning
- Identifying research topics, questions, or data sources
- Technical skills (e.g., coding, interviewing)
- Modeling/analytic skills (e.g., causal inference; thematic coding)
- Writing/publishing research
- Public speaking/presenting at conferences
- Teaching skills and experience
- Career pathways or job market guidance
- Meeting departmental milestones (e.g., comps, thesis, courses)
- Other

2.2. Detailed Goals
- What departmental milestones is the student expected to begin or complete this year? (e.g., Master's Thesis, Qualifying Exam, Comprehensive Exam, Dissertation). What support does the student want toward those goals?
- For each additional skill-building area above, what specific opportunities and strategies can the mentor provide (e.g., co-writing a paper to work on publication skills; guest lecture opportunities to build teaching experience)? Opportunities/strategies may also include connecting student to other faculty for co-mentorship or existing programming (e.g., job market committee, working groups).

<u>Change of Adviser Procedures</u>
Students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies if they believe a change of advisor is appropriate. This may occur at any time, but the optimal time for this is when the student is asked for their preference for next academic year's assistantship assignments (late Spring).

<u>Bridge funding (e.g., when a student changes advisers and other unexpected situations)</u>
The program does not link funding to specific advisers, but if a student cannot assemble the

necessary faculty for a milestone (e.g., thesis, comprehensive exam, dissertation), due to the inability to find appropriate faculty or to adapt their research to the expertise of the available faculty, the student's funding will not be continued.

Student Conduct standards

For students to succeed professionally, they must develop the skills for conducting themselves appropriately. Disruptive behaviors in the office, classroom, or professional meetings and activities do not demonstrate the level of professionalism and maturity expected of graduate students. Disruptive behaviors are likely a violation of the **Student Code of Conduct**, which may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action. If a physical or mental health issue is preventing a student from meeting these expectations, they must consult Student Disability Resources (SDR) and discuss whether accommodations may be provided.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Penn State is committed to providing access to students with disabilities to the university's graduate programs. The Office for Student Disability Resources (SDR) offers support specifically tailored to the needs of graduate students. The office considers the need for accommodations in the following areas: 1) graduate assistantship accommodations; 2) coursework accommodations; 3) lab, fieldwork, and clinical work accommodations; 4) qualifying / comprehensive exams accommodations; 5) thesis / dissertation accommodations. **See an overview of disability resources specific to graduate students**.

To be considered for reasonable accommodations, students **are required** to contact the SDR office, participate in an intake interview, provide documentation, and complete the registration process. Students should be aware that it may take time to go through the intake process, and that they may not know in advance whether accommodations will be needed either for their coursework or for their milestone exams. We thus recommend that students register with SDR for any eligible disabilities in advance, ensuring that all documentation is in place should accommodations be needed at any point during their graduate program. Students can register with SDR and choose not to request accommodations once registered.

Once registered, students can approach course instructors (for course accommodations) and/or the DGS or PIC (for accommodations to other program requirements, including benchmark examinations) to request accommodations. For milestone examinations, this process is **required** for **each** milestone examination for which you request accommodations. Specific accommodations are determined through an interactive process and tailored to each student's needs with the goals of upholding rigor and disciplinary expectations in each of the distinct components of graduate education.

Students who would like accommodations for academic events (such as non-course-based department colloquia or seminars) that are not covered under the official SDR categories

are encouraged to express these needs to the program leadership (e.g. DGS, PIC, or program head) and/or SDR.

Engagement Expectations

To become professional academics, students should engage in typical academic activities in addition to coursework and milestones. These activities include attending talks (external speakers, internal speakers, and job market candidate practice), meeting with academic visitors and speakers, participating in workshops, presenting at professional meetings, assisting in program recruitment, representing graduate students as a member of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee, and X, Y, Z. Students are not expected to do all of these activities every semester, but it is difficult to be trained to become a professional academic without participating in some of these activities. The Annual Review will provide feedback and guidance if the faculty believe the student's engagement is insufficient.

Additional University Requirements

This Criminology program handbook is supplementary to the University's **Graduate Bulletin**. The student is responsible for knowing the requirements of the Fox Graduate School concerning thesis deadline dates, payment of fees, filing for diplomas, time limitations on degree qualifying, and so on.

Typical Schedule for M.A./Ph.D. Students in Criminology

	Courses	**Requirements**	**Objectives**
Yr 1-FA	CRIM 500 (Intro Grad Studies) CRIM 512 (Crim Theories) SOC 574 (Statistics I) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar		Get oriented to the program
Yr 1-SP	CRIM 501 (Criminal Justice) SOC 575 (Statistics II) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar		
Yr 1-SU			Assemble M.A. Committee
Yr 2-FA	SOC 513 (Research Methods) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Develop M.A. Thesis Proposal
Yr 2-SP	CRIM 513 (Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar CRIM 591 (Teaching Seminar) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Complete and defend M.A. Thesis
Yr 2-SU	CRIM 600 Thesis Credits	Defend M.A. Thesis	Develop/submit Thesis for publication
Yr 3-FA	CRIM XXX Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits	Pass Qualifying Evaluation	Develop/submit papers for publication; Develop dissertation idea
Yr 3-SP	CRIM XXX Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Continue working on research papers; Begin preparing for Comps
Yr 3-SU	CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Prepare for and pass Comps; Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-FA	CRIM or Elective Seminar(s) if needed CRIM 600 or CRIM 601 Thesis/Dissertation Credits	Pass Comps	Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-SP	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits		Complete Dissertation Proposal; Dissertation Research
Yr 4-SU	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Proposal Hearing	Dissertation Research; Job Market Prep
Yr 5-FA	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits		Dissertation Research; Job Search
Yr 5-SP	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Defense	Complete Dissertation; Job Search

Appendix A. Checklists for Students Who Enter the Program with B.A. Degree

M.A. Requirements

Course Requirements		Course name (if elective)	Course Num	Sem/Yr
CRIM 500	Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
CRIM 501	Criminal Justice System (3 credits)			
CRIM 512	Criminological Theories (3 credits)			
CRIM 513	Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology (3 credits)			
SOC 513	Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 574	Statistical Methods (3 credits + 1 credit lab option)			
SOC 575	Statistical Models for NonExp Research (3 credits)			
CRIM 600	MA thesis (6 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 591	Teaching Criminology-Sociology (1 credit)			

M.A. Thesis Title:	
Committee Chair, Criminology (name)	
*Other Committee Members	1)
	2)
Thesis approved by all committee members (date)	
Semester/year degree conferred	

*Committee must include three members, at least two in criminology.

Ph.D. Requirements

Course Requirements (30+ credits total)		**Course Name**	**Course Num**	**Sem/Yr**
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Thesis credits (12 credits) and other elective seminars to total 30+			

Qualifying Exam (date passed)	
Ph.D. Committee Chair (name)	
Ph.D. Committee Members	1)
	2)
	3)
Comprehensive exam and proposal defense (date approved)	
Final dissertation defense (date approved)	
Dissertation Title:	
Semester/year degree conferred	

Appendix B. Checklist for Students Who Enter Program with M.A. Degree

Core Courses (required if no equivalent from student's M.A. program)		**Requirement waived? (yes/no)**	**Penn State course if not waived**	
			Course Num	**Sem/Yr**
CRIM 500	Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
CRIM 501	The Criminal Justice System (3 credits)			
CRIM 512	Criminological Theories (3 credits)			
CRIM 513	Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology			
SOC 513	Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 574	Statistical Methods (3 credits + 1 credit lab option)			
SOC 575	Statistical Models for NonExp Research (3 credits)			
SOC 591	Teaching Crim/Soc (1 credit)			

Ph.D. Course Requirements (30+ credits total, must include the following)		**Course Name**	**Course Num**	**Sem/Yr**
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective credits (12 thesis credits and other elective seminars for 30+)			

Qualifying Exam (date passed)	
Ph.D. Committee Chair (name)	
Ph.D. Committee Members	1)
	2)
	3)
Comprehensive exam and proposal defense (date approved)	

Final dissertation defense (date approved)	
Dissertation Title:	
Semester/year degree conferred	

Appendix C. Dual-Title Degrees

Dual-Title in Criminology and Social Data Analytics (SoDA)

The full detailed requirements for students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in Criminology and Social Data Analytics (SoDA) are available at **soda.la.psu.edu/programs/graduate-program/**. In addition to completion of the requirements of Criminology, dual-title Ph.D. students must complete additional coursework to meet requirements as indicated by the SoDA dual-title program. Due to overlap with Criminology program requirements, these coursework requirements often overlap.

Students must pass the qualifying evaluation in both Criminology and SoDA. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must be on the qualifying evaluation committee. Students must pass a comprehensive exam (as defined by Criminology) assessing mastery of Criminology and SoDA, as well as preparation for dissertation research. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must serve as chair or co-chair of the dissertation committee. Finally, the student must defend a dissertation with substantial content in SoDA.

Appendix D. Certificates

Quantitative Methods Certificate

The Penn State sociology and criminology programs have exceptional strength in quantitative research methods and statistical analysis techniques, both in their graduate faculty and in their consequent course offerings. Capitalizing on these strengths, students in sociology and criminology can earn a certificate in Quantitative Methods (QM) in place of a minor (with approval from their program's Graduate Committee). To earn a QM certificate, students must (1) complete three approved methods/statistics courses (9 hours) beyond SOC 513, 574, and 575 (see below); (2) include a quantitative methodologist on the Ph.D. dissertation committee and have one of the areas covered in the comprehensive exam be in quantitative methods; and (3) complete a practicum in which the student demonstrates proficiency in the application or teaching of methods/statistics (e.g., by teaching a statistics/methods course, lab or workshop; authoring or co-authoring a paper on methods/statistics; or completing an internship at an applied research agency such as the U.S. Census Bureau).

A quantitative methodologist is defined as a faculty member who teaches graduate level quantitative methods and/or who has a publication record in quantitative methods. The Department's Directors of Graduate Studies will determine which faculty meet this criterion. Committee members outside of the Department of Sociology and Criminology may also meet the qualifications to serve as the quantitative methodologist on the Ph.D. dissertation committee. The Director of Graduate Studies from the for the student's program must approve any outside members who are requested to serve in this role.

Courses listed below can be used to meet the three-course requirement mentioned above. Additional courses will also be considered, and new ones will be added as they become available. Institute for Social Research Summer Institute courses can also be used upon the approval of the student's Director of Graduate Studies (one-week workshops are excluded).
week workshops are excluded).

ECON 500 Mathematical Economics
ECON 501 Econometrics
ECON 502 Microeconomic Analysis
ECON 503 Macroeconomic Analysis

STAT 500 Applied Statistics
STAT 501 Regression Methods
STAT 502 Analysis of Variance and Design of Experiments

STAT 503 Design of Experiments
STAT 504 Analysis of Discrete Data
STAT 505 Applied Multivariate Statistical Analysis
STAT 506 Sampling Theory
STAT 509 Design and Analysis of Clinical Trials
STAT 510 Time Series Analysis

SOC 518 Survey Methods I: Survey Design
SOC 519 Survey Methods II: Analysis of Survey Data
SOC 572 Foundations of Causal Analysis in the Social Sciences
SOC 573 Demographic Techniques
SOC 576 Applied Mathematical Demography
SOC 577 Event History Analysis
SOC 578 Multilevel Regression Models
SOC 579 Spatial Demography
SOC 597 Advanced Structural Equation Models
SOC 597 Categorical Data Analysis
SOC 597 Measurement Issues in Social Data

HDFS 517 Multivariate Study of Change and Human Development
HDFS/PSY 526 Measurement in Human Development

Other courses not listed above may be approved to meet the QMC course requirement by the student's Director of Graduate Studies. To promote consistency across programs, the sociology and criminology Directors of Graduate Studies are urged to have identical approvals and processes, as much as possible.

A student who has met the requirements for the QM certificate must write a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies specifying how they have been met and requesting the award of the certificate. Students who are approved will receive a letter confirming the completion of all requirements.

Appendix E. Guidelines for Criminology Students Pursuing Degrees in Sociology

The sociology and the criminology programs offer parallel, and partially integrated, courses of study. Occasionally students will decide, after receiving the M.A. degree in Criminology to complete the Ph.D. in Sociology. The two programs have developed a process for expediting such transfers.

Criminology students who wish to receive sociology degrees will be transferred to the sociology program. This requires the signature of the Sociology Director of Graduate Studies, who has the discretion to decline the request if they judge that the student's performance is not up to standards or that the student's interests are not appropriate to the sociology program.

Course Requirements

A student who completes the Criminology M.A. and Ph.D. requirements can complete the sociology Ph.D. course requirements by adding the sociological theory course (SOC 502), Writing For Publications (SOC592 or an equivalent criminology course), and at least one substantive sociology course. Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

Criminology students pursuing the sociology Ph.D. will be reviewed by both the sociology and criminology qualifying committees. The criminology committee will assess the student's potential to successfully complete the program and produce a high-quality dissertation. The sociology committee will review the student to assess the extent and breadth of their coursework in sociology.

Comprehensive Exam Requirements

The comprehensive exam requirements of both programs have the same basic form, which is two days of in-house exams, followed by an oral exam. Doctoral committees are responsible for writing the exam questions and evaluating the written and oral answers. In both programs the doctoral committee is free to determine the content covered by the comprehensive exam, though in criminology there are recommended areas of coverage: criminology, criminal justice, methods and statistics, and specialization area. Thus, a single exam can satisfy the comprehensive exam requirements of both programs. The exam questions for criminology students seeking sociology degrees would not be limited to the study of crime. At a minimum, they should also include noncriminological themes from their area of specialization in sociology.

Doctoral or Master's Thesis Committee

The doctoral or master's committees of criminology students earning sociology

degrees should be chaired by (or cochaired by) a criminology faculty member with a joint title in Sociology. Doctoral and master's committees should include at least one criminology faculty member (typically the chair) and at least one non-criminology member of the sociology faculty.

Graduate committee oversight of students' programs:
The Criminology Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Committee will take primary responsibility for the oversight of all Criminology students regardless of which degree they seek. This includes functions such as conducting annual reviews and judging whether students are making satisfactory progress to warrant continued funding. For criminology students who are seeking sociology degrees, the Sociology Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Committee will have secondary oversight with authority to overrule their criminology counterparts on all matters except funding from the criminology budget. (In other words, the sociology graduate committee will delegate direct oversight to the criminology graduate committee, which will act in the capacity of the criminology specialty area of sociology. But "final authority" will still reside in the Sociology graduate committee since these will officially be sociology students.)

Appendix F. Guidelines for Sociology Students Pursuing Degrees in Criminology

All sociology students are eligible to choose Criminology as their major or minor area, even if they were not originally admitted as criminology students. Any students originally admitted to sociology who complete the requirements of the criminology program will have the option of earning either degree. The Criminology Director of Graduate Studies will have signature authority and discretion for students transferring to the Criminology degree program. For students transferring from sociology to criminology, the two Directors of Graduate Studies and department head will negotiate funding and oversight on an individual basis.

Appendix G. Links to Program resources

a. **General information**
b. **Program professional staff**
c. **Students in need**
d. **Professional development opportunities**
e. **Career development opportunities**
f. **Conflict Resolution**
g. **Grievance/Appeal**

Appendix H. Links to College-Specific Resources for Graduate Students

h. Student organizations
   - **https://la.psu.edu/beyond-the-classroom/student-organizations/**
   - **https://la.psu.edu/graduate-students/graduate-alliance-for-diversity-and-inclusion/**
i. **Financial aid**
j. Research and Conference Travel Funding Opportunities
   - **la.psu.edu/graduate-students/graduate-funding/**

Appendix I. Links to Fox Graduate School and University resources

a. General
   - **Graduate student resource library**
   - **University Libraries**
   - **Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Fox Graduate School**
b. Academic Resources
   - **Fox Graduate School Academic resources**
   - **Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Requirements**
   - **Graduate Writing Center**
   - **Fox Graduate School Ombudsperson Office**
   - **Avenues for addressing graduate student concerns**
c. Career and Professional Development

- **Graduate Exhibition**
- **Three-Minute Thesis**

d. Funding
   - **Financial aid including Office of Student Aid**
   - Research and Conference Travel Funding Opportunities
     - **International Travel Grants**

e. Health and Well-being
   - **Health Insurance / SHIP**
   - **Graduate Student Parental Leave**
   - **Mental health support**
   - **Child Care at Penn State**
   - **Students in crisis**

f. Special Populations
   - **Adult Learner Programs and Services**
   - **Student Disability Services**
   - International Students
     - **Penn State Global ISSA**
     - **English for Professional Purposes Intercultural Center (EPPIC)** - *support for language skills*
   - **Military students**

g. Clubs and Organizations
   - **Graduate and Professional Student Association**
   - **Discover** – for finding graduate student organizations

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