Degrees Available at SIUE
- Master of Science

Program Format
The program can be completed through fully online courses or a mix of online courses and traditional daytime courses.

Please note that international students are ineligible to receive a student visa for this program.

Criminal Justice Policy at SIUE
This unique, fully online program focuses on the advanced study of criminal justice policy and practice, including:
- Analysis of controversial issues
- Examination of possible future practices
- Collaborating with criminal justice professionals in the courts, corrections and law enforcement areas

A strong foundation in theory and methods will be combined with innovative criminal justice initiatives and focus areas. The program offers real-world experience with a capstone project option targeting the needs of the student’s home agency, and recognizes the value of such experience with the option of prior learning assessment.

Prior Learning Assessment
The program will incorporate Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to provide up to three credit hours based on previous experience. Courses to consider for PLA credit include policy analysis, planning and budgeting, civil liability, correctional theory and practice, special topics, and readings in criminal justice. Students interested in applying for PLA credit will submit a portfolio project to the graduate program director to determine if credit will be awarded.

Career Opportunities
Graduates of the online criminal justice policy master’s program use their degree as a stepping stone to new careers or for advancement in professional positions that serve the criminal justice community and the public at large.

During development of the graduate program, faculty in the SIUE Department of Criminal Justice Studies surveyed 81 criminal justice agencies. A majority of respondents (63.3%) indicated the completion of a master’s degree in criminal justice policy would provide enhanced promotional opportunities within their agency. There are a wide range of other positions that include working to prevent crime and delinquency, working to repair lives that are touched by crime, and so much more. You can see a partial listing of the variety of jobs open to you below.
- Law Enforcement
- Courts/Law
- Corrections
- Federal Agencies
- State and Local Agencies

Hands-on Learning
The capstone project option is geared toward the working professional. Students propose a policy, procedure or program development that would benefit their home agency, while incorporating the knowledge learned in the criminal justice policy master’s program.

Admission Requirements
- Graduate School application and $40 fee
- Submission of all postsecondary academic transcripts
- Successful completion of a bachelor’s degree prior to enrollment
- Minimum GPA of 2.50
- Two letters of recommendation (can both be from undergraduate faculty or one can be from a current employer)
- Statement of purpose
- GRE score (optional)
- Accelerated Combined Degrees: Current SIUE undergraduate students may apply for the accelerated option to earn graduate-level credit for courses taken their senior year.
Elective Courses
- CJ 508 Disparate Treatment in the Criminal Justice System
- CJ 527 Cybercrime
- CJ 528 Civil Liability
- CJ 529 Human Trafficking
- CJ 535 Seminar in Juvenile Justice
- CJ 540 Seminar in Correctional Theory and Practice
- CJ 590 Special Topics
- CJ 596 Readings in Criminal Justice Policy

Elective Senior Level Courses for Graduate Credit
- CJ 408 Critical Issues in Law Enforcement
- CJ 410 Judicial Process in Criminal Cases
- CJ 420 United States Drug Policy
- CJ 464 Criminal Justice and the Mental Health System
- CJ 465 Theories of a Just Society

Two-Year Track
One-Year Track

Graduation Requirements
The six-hour capstone project or thesis project culminates in one of the following two exit alternatives:

1. The capstone project option is geared towards the working professional. The student would propose a policy, procedure, or program development that would benefit his/her home agency, while incorporating the knowledge learned in the online master’s program. This proposal would need to be approved by a committee composed of three faculty members. Once the capstone project is completed, the student would record and upload a presentation to Blackboard collaborate or similar software in use at the time, and then the presentation would be placed on a streaming server. The committee of three faculty members would then be able to view the presentation in the capstone course shell via the link housed on the streaming server.

2. The thesis project option is envisioned to be a traditional research paper. The topic of the thesis would be approved by a committee of three faculty members, and the title of your thesis must be filed in Graduate Records using the “Registration of Title Form.” This form can be found in Graduate Records and is due by the first day of the graduation term. The final thesis would be uploaded and defended to the committee of three faculty members online via Skype or other appropriate technology. The thesis would be uploaded to ProQuest and have formatting approved by the Graduate School.

Curriculum
The two-year program offers six consecutive semesters of classes. The one-year program offers four consecutive semesters of classes. Students receiving Prior Learning Assessment credit will reduce the program by one summer semester. Each cohort would begin in the fall semester. Students are required to take 15 credits of required core courses, 15 credits of electives, and six thesis or capstone credit hours, for a total of 36 hours. All 400-level courses are eight weeks in duration. Electives rotate. Contact the Graduate Program Director to determine elective availability.

Required Core Courses
- CJ 502 Applied Research in Criminal Justice
- CJ 505 Criminological Theory
- CJ 513 Criminal Justice Statistics
- CJ 515 Criminal Justice Planning and Budgeting
- CJ 517 Policy Analysis
- CJ 598 Capstone I and II OR CJ 599 Thesis I and II

This information is concurrent with the 2020-2021 Academic Catalog. Courses are subject to change at any time.