

Criminal Justice Policy

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.

What can I do with a degree in criminal justice?

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.



Faculty

Graduate Program Director
Erin Heil, PhD

2008, University of Illinois at Chicago

P. Ann Dirks-Linhorst, PhD, JD

2003, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Ekaterina Gorislavsky, PhD

2014, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Kevin D. Cannon, PhD

2001, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Dennis Mares, PhD

2004, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Trish Oberweis, PhD

1999, Arizona State University

Matthew Petrocelli, PhD

1997, Arizona State University

Admission Requirements cont.

Applications are reviewed by an Admissions Committee composed of graduate faculty in criminal justice studies. Admission is competitive and the committee will evaluate each applicant based on the above criteria and GPA in prior coursework in criminal justice or criminology. The statement of purpose should describe the student's reasons for applying and expectations upon graduation as well as any current or prior employment in criminal justice.

Program application materials may be uploaded during the application process, but official transcripts must be sent directly from the school attended and test scores must be verifiable with the appropriate testing service. Please contact the Graduate Admissions Office with questions regarding the application submission process at graduateadmissions@siue.edu.

Graduation Requirements

Students must choose one of the below exit requirements to complete the degree. All students must have a minimum of 30 credit hours in the program to graduate.

1. **Capstone Option:** The capstone project option is geared toward 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 program. This proposal must 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, 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. The capstone project option may be taken for 3 hours or 6 hours. If the student selects the 3 hour option, they will take 27 hours of other programs courses. If they select the 6 hour option, they will take 24 hours of other program courses.
2. **Thesis Option:** The thesis project option is envisioned to be a traditional research paper. The topic of the thesis must be approved by a committee of three faculty members. The final thesis will be uploaded and defended to the committee of three faculty members online via Skype, Zoom, or other appropriate technology. The thesis must be uploaded to ProQuest and have formatting approved by the Graduate School by the posted deadlines. The thesis option may be taken for 3 hours or 6 hours. If the student selects the 3 hour option, they will take 27 hours of other program courses. If they select the 6 hour option, they will take 24 hours of other program courses.
3. **General Exit Exam Option:** To complete the program using the exit exam option, students must receive a passing grade on a comprehensive exit examination. Students must submit two papers written during their course work as evidence of their writing skills and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the criminal justice policy core courses in order to qualify to take the final comprehensive examination. If the student chooses to take the general exam, the student may do so with 30 credit hours of other program courses.

4. **Directed Exit Exam Option:** To complete the program using the exit exam option, students must receive a passing grade on a comprehensive exit examination. Students must submit two papers written during their course work as evidence of their writing skills and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the criminal justice policy core courses in order to qualify to take the final comprehensive examination. If the student selects the directed exit exam option, they will take 3 hours of CJ 596, Readings in Criminal Justice, and 27 hours of other program courses. The exam topics will be directed by working with a Criminal Justice faculty member.

Required Credit Hours/Tuition and Fees

- 30
- Visit siue.edu/graduate-tuition for detailed tuition information

Curriculum

The two-year program offers six consecutive semesters of classes, including summers. The one-year program offers four consecutive semesters of classes, including summers. Students receiving Prior Learning Assessment credit will reduce the program by one summer semester. Each cohort would begin in the fall semester.

The program requires 30 credit hours. Students are required to take 15 credits of required core credits, 0-6 hours of exit requirement coursework (6 hours for the thesis or capstone option or 0-3 hours for the exam option, depending on the exam option chosen), and 9-15 hours of electives, for a total of 30 hours. All 500-level courses are eight weeks in duration. All 400-level elective courses are 16 weeks in duration and may be offered online or in a physical classroom. Offerings of elective courses rotate.

For a full listing of courses, please visit siue.edu/grad/criminal-justice.

Contact the Graduate Program Director to determine elective availability.