



TEXAS A&M **INTERNATIONAL** UNIVERSITY

Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Student Handbook

Department of Social Sciences

College of Arts and Sciences

Texas A&M International University

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I. Introduction

The Ph.D. in Criminal Justice (CJ) Student Handbook is a resource for policies that pertain to doctoral students in the Criminal Justice Program at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU). This handbook outlines the requirements and procedures of the Ph.D. in Criminal Justice program. This program-specific handbook supplements the TAMIU graduate student handbook and the TAMIU student handbook. (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/studenthandbooks.shtml>). The requirements and procedures contained in this doctoral student handbook are subject to revision. The handbook will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

If you have any questions about the handbook or the Ph.D. in CJ program, please contact Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors Dr. Fei Luo (fei.luo@tamtu.edu, 956-326-2622, AIC 354) and Dr. Daniel Scott (daniel.scott@tamtu.edu, 956-326-2626, AIC 345).

II. Orientation

The Graduate School at Texas A&M International University hosts an online Graduate Student Orientation event for all incoming graduate students (<https://www.tamtu.edu/cees/arc/orientation.shtml>). Graduate Student Orientation was initiated to assist newly enrolled TAMIU students learn about the different resources on campus. Participating in this orientation will not only make students aware of the resources and tools available to them but also act as a catalyst for them to begin planning for their academic success in the various fields. TAMIU Graduate School aims to provide assistance to ensure our graduate students go beyond and successfully complete their degrees.

The criminal justice program hosts an in-person orientation for all incoming doctoral students at the beginning of the Fall semester. All new students are expected to attend the orientation and meet with other doctoral students and faculty members. Details about the criminal justice program orientation will be sent via email.

III. Program Descriptions

The Doctorate of Philosophy in Criminal Justice at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is a comprehensive program designed to guide students through an advanced, supervised course of study in criminal justice. The program provides opportunities to study a variety of criminal justice topics with a unique focus on border and homeland security issues.

Students are provided the opportunity to take courses through a hybrid format where they participate in person for their first semester and then switch to online synchronous delivery for the remainder of their coursework. This unique hybrid feature allows for a diverse group of both traditional and non-traditional students to participate.

The Ph.D. program capitalizes on TAMIU's geographic location by closely studying various salient border and homeland security issues such as human trafficking, immigration, and counter-terrorism practices. It provides students and faculty with quality research and collaboration opportunities with local, state, and federal organizations involved in border and homeland security issues that are not emphasized in other regional programs.

It also emphasizes the diverse real-world criminal justice cases, issues, and perspectives afforded by its unique geographic location on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Ph.D. program aims to produce doctoral graduates who possess the theoretical knowledge, actual and practical experience, and marketable skills to assume high-level leadership roles in various areas of criminal justice practice such as in academia, government, and the private sector.

Ph.D. Program Admission

Admission to the Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice degree program requires prospective students to meet specified standards provided by the Graduate School at TAMIU. The Ph.D. in Criminal Justice degree program faculty will review all applications and determine admissibility to the program. TAMIU's Ph.D. in Criminal Justice degree program requires the following materials to be submitted by an applicant to the [Graduate School](#):

1. Official Texas A&M International University online doctoral degree application and an application fee of \$35.00.
2. A master's degree in criminal justice or a closely related field. Students with a master's degree in a discipline other than Criminal Justice/Criminology or closely related disciplines will be reviewed and determined on a case-by-case basis.
3. Official transcripts from each post-secondary school attended. If the applicant has completed a master's degree, then a final official transcript must show evidence of degree completion. A minimum 3.0 GPA is required in the last 60 hours of graduate/undergraduate coursework.
4. Official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores. Applicants with a

- completed Juris Doctorate (J.D.) may use an official LSAT report in lieu of the GRE if this was taken within the past five years and the applicant scored 155 or higher. (Applicants with only a J.D. will be required to complete and pass with at least a “B” in a master’s level statistics course.)
5. Two letters of recommendation from university faculty members familiar with the applicant’s academic work; if the applicant desires, a third letter of recommendation may be submitted from another person qualified to evaluate the applicant’s potential for doctoral study.
 6. Applicants must submit a personal statement, limited to 1,000 words (12-point font, double-spaced). An applicant will need to address the following questions in his/her personal statement: [1] What are your research interests and discuss some of your research experiences. [2] Which faculty member(s) in the Ph.D. program would you most likely work with? Why? [3] What are your career goals and how do you see our Ph.D. program helping you to achieve those goals? [4] What personal assets (talent, skills, experiences, etc.) can you bring to our program? Note that only a few students will be admitted each year and applicants are unlikely to be successful if there is no suitable supervisor available within the program.
 7. A resume or curriculum vita. Please limit this to no more than 10 pages.
 8. A writing sample that illustrates the applicant’s ability to synthesize information and think critically. Examples of acceptable writing samples are a thesis or graduate-level class research paper, a peer-reviewed publication, or a technical report written by the applicant. For a multi-authored peer-reviewed publication, the applicant should be the first or the primary author.
 9. International students must comply with all admission requirements set by the Graduate School at TAMIU, including TOEFL requirements (<https://www.tamtu.edu/admissions/Internat.shtml>).
 10. Upon acceptance, students are expected to complete the graduate school online orientation.

Note: We offer Fall admission only. Those who meet minimum academic requirements are not guaranteed admission.

Ph.D. Courses

TAMIU’s 49-credit-hour doctoral degree includes 22 credit hours of required coursework and 12 portfolio and dissertation hours. All required courses are provided in Table 1. The remaining credit hours are elective courses selected from the doctoral program’s offerings. Students can choose electives from a list of homeland security-centered courses in addition to traditional criminal justice courses. To complete the degree of study, 15 credit hours of elective coursework must be taken in any combination. All course electives are provided in Table 2.

Table 1. Course of Study

Year	Semester	Course Prefix/number	Course Title	Course Hours
1	1*	CRIJ 6101	Proseminar in Criminal Justice	1
	1*	CRIJ 6302	Advanced Research Methods in Criminal Justice	3
	1*	CRIJ 6303	Advanced Statistics I	3
	1*	CRIJ 6340	Seminar in Criminological Theory	3
1	2	CRIJ 6304	Advanced Qualitative Methods	3
	2	CRIJ 6361	Program and Policy Evaluation in Criminal Justice	3
	2	CRIJ 6390	Teaching Seminar	3
2	3	CRIJ 6351	Criminal Law and Procedure	3
	3	Elective 1	Elective—see Table 2	3
	3	Elective 2	Elective—see Table 2	3
2	4	Elective 3	Elective—see Table 2	3
	4	Elective 4	Elective—see Table 2	3
	4	Elective 5	Elective—see Table 2	3
3	5**	CRIJ 6396	Research Portfolio I	3
	6**	CRIJ 6397	Research Portfolio II	3
4	7**	CRIJ 6398	Dissertation I	3
	8**	CRIJ 6399	Dissertation II	3
Total				49

*The first semester is entirely face-to-face; classes are held in the evenings on weekdays. Students are highly encouraged to take all four in-person classes in the first semester, otherwise, they will need to return to campus the following fall to take pending classes in person.

**Students must meet with faculty advisors regularly each semester to ensure continued progress toward the degree.

Note. Starting in the second semester, students from multiple cohorts will take classes together so the order of spring semester courses students take may be different. For example, you may take electives in the second semester and take CRIJ 6304, CRIJ 6361, and CRIJ 6390 in the spring semester of the second year (fourth semester).

Table 2. Total Ph.D. Course Electives

Course Prefix/Number	Course Title
CRIJ 6305	Advanced Statistics II
CRIJ 6306	Advanced Mixed Methods
CRIJ 6307	Seminar in Corrections
CRIJ 6308	Contemporary Criminal Justice Issues
CRIJ 6309	Seminar in Law Enforcement
CRIJ 6311	Neighborhoods, Crime, and Mapping
CRIJ 6320	Homeland Security
CRIJ 6321	Human Trafficking and Smuggling
CRIJ 6325	Cybercrime
CRIJ 6330	Immigration and Crime
CRIJ 6335	Advanced Topics in Victimology
CRIJ 6355	Intelligence Gathering
CRIJ 6356	Terrorism
CRIJ 6357	International Criminal Court
CRIJ 6365	Criminal Justice Management
CRIJ 6391	Special Topics in Criminal Justice

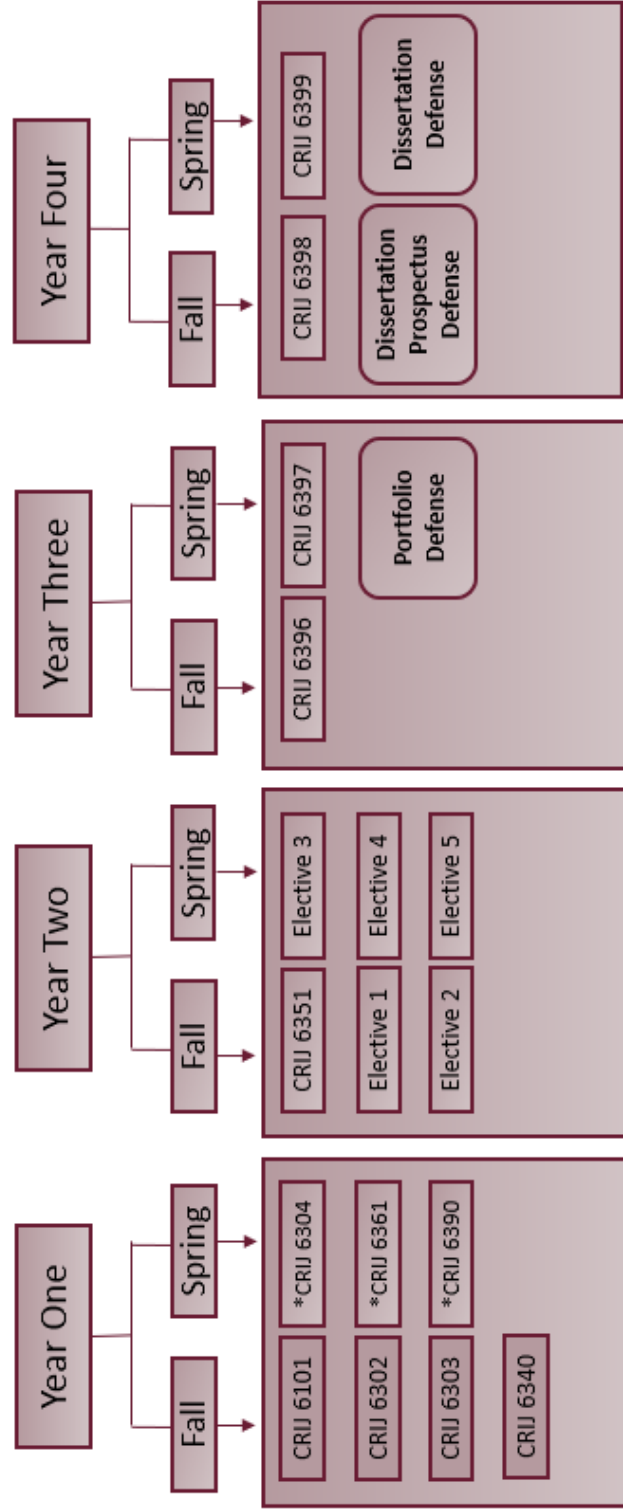
Summer Statistics Bootcamp

All incoming doctoral students will be enrolled in a summer Statistics Bootcamp in the summer prior to the first semester. Students will not earn credit hours toward their degree from this summer Bootcamp and do not need to pay tuition. If you have taken a master-level statistics course within the past three years, you can withdraw from this Summer Statistics Bootcamp.

Transferring Policy

The Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Program at TAMIU accepts students transferring from other criminal justice/criminology or closely related Ph.D. programs. Any students seeking to transfer credits will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Any transfer credit is contingent on prior coursework aligning with the program of study in TAMIU's criminal justice Ph.D. program. A maximum of twelve (12) semester credit hours with a minimum grade of 3.0 ("B") on a 4.0 scale can be transferred into the Ph.D. program with the consent of the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and Department Chair. Transferred courses must also comply with the graduate school's expired coursework policy.

College of Arts and Sciences
Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Ideal Student Schedule



- Note:**
1. First semester is entirely face-to-face; classes are held in the evenings on weekdays. Students are highly encouraged to take all four in-person classes in the first semester, otherwise, they will need to return to campus the following fall to take pending classes in person.
 2. For the research portfolio and dissertation, students must meet with faculty advisors regularly to ensure continued progress toward the degree.
 3. * Starting in the second semester, students from multiple cohorts will take classes together so the order of spring semester courses students take may be different. For example, you may take electives in the second semester and take CRIJ 6304, CRIJ 6361, and CRIJ 6390 in the spring semester of the second year (fourth semester).

IV. Research Portfolio

Ph.D. in Criminal Justice students are required to demonstrate competence to proceed to a dissertation. Admission to doctoral candidacy is granted upon successful completion of stipulated coursework, followed by a defense of the Research Portfolio (Portfolio).

Students need to form a *Research Portfolio Committee* upon completion of their first year of coursework and defend their portfolio after completion of all portfolio courses. The portfolio committee should consist of a chair and two committee members. The chair and committee members must be core criminal justice faculty at TAMIU. All faculty must be members of the graduate faculty. The students are suggested to meet with multiple faculty members who have expertise in their area of research interest and identify a chair. If a faculty is willing to serve as the portfolio chair, the student should discuss with the chair to identify potential faculty members who can serve on the portfolio committee. The student should meet with these faculty members to ascertain if they are willing to serve on the committee.

The “Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee” form should be submitted to the Criminal Justice Program director/s and graduate school if all faculty agree to serve on the portfolio committee. The chair should facilitate a formal meeting with all committee members to discuss expectations and materials to be included in the portfolio.

The portfolio will include materials demonstrating the student’s: [1] sophisticated understanding of the research literature in their areas of specialization; [2] the ability to critically assess key issues/policies in the areas of interest; and [3] proficiency in writing and analytical skills.

The portfolio will consist of a minimum of two publishable manuscripts that can be submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals. The manuscripts may be co-authored, but the student needs to be the lead author on at least one of the manuscripts (the second or third author on another one). The student should specify their role and contribution to co-authored manuscripts. The portfolio committee can decide what other documents and materials should be accepted and included. All committee members carry equal weight in the assessment process and need to participate fully in the assessment.

Successful completion of the portfolio will require an oral defense (formal presentation). The committee will assess the competence of the candidate and decide if a student has either “passed”, “revised and resubmitted”, or “failed” the portfolio. The committee vote must be unanimous. Students who successfully defend the portfolio become doctoral candidates in the Ph.D. program and can begin their dissertations in earnest. Students are provided two attempts to orally defend their portfolio. If they fail both times they will be dismissed from the program. If a student fails the oral defense and wants to change their committee, he/she has to obtain approval from the Criminal Justice Program Director/s.

V. Dissertation

Upon reaching doctoral candidacy status (successfully defended their portfolio), students may enroll in dissertation hours and begin work on the dissertation. The dissertation will be guided by the student's dissertation advisory committee. The four-person dissertation advisory committee will be composed of a chair and two committee members from the criminal justice program (all three committee members should be criminal Justice core faculty), and an external faculty member from a different graduate program at TAMIU. All faculty must be members of the graduate faculty. If the student desires, a fifth committee member from another institution can be included as long as the faculty is approved by the dissertation committee chair and the graduate council. The students are encouraged to discuss with several faculty members before selecting a chair and work with the chair to identify other committee members. The student should communicate with all potential committee members to ascertain if they are willing to serve on the dissertation committee.

The research portfolio committee and the dissertation committee may consist of the same or different faculty members. A student can request a modification of the portfolio and/or dissertation committee to change a chair or committee member/s. Requests should be sent to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and be accompanied by a letter describing the reasons for the modification.

The "Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee" form should be submitted to the Criminal Justice Program director/s and graduate school if all faculty agree to serve on the dissertation committee. The student should communicate with the dissertation chair and committee members regularly to identify the topic area and develop the literature and proper methodology for the dissertation.

Successful completion of the dissertation will require: [1] an oral proposal defense (dissertation prospectus defense) when the student defends his/her topic, theoretical and methodological approaches, including ethical aspects; and [2] a final defense when the student defends the entire dissertation including his/her introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, as well as findings and conclusions in the completed dissertation. Policies and procedures for passing, failing, and repeating the dissertation defense should be in compliance with the Graduate School Policy at TAMIU (<https://www.tamiu.edu/gradschool/ThesisHomepage.shtml>). The Criminal Justice Program allows two attempts at a final dissertation defense, if the student is unsuccessful they will be dismissed from the program.

The portfolio and two dissertation defenses should be formally scheduled at least two weeks in advance. The portfolio and final dissertation defense should be public and open to all members of the university community. The committee chair has the discretion to share the dissertation prospectus defense announcement to the appropriate audience. Each committee member should have a completed copy to review at least seven working days before the defenses.

Ph.D. students in criminal justice are expected to complete all doctoral work including dissertation defense within eight (8) years. Students who fail to defend their dissertation within this timeframe may be separated from the program.

Portfolio and dissertation guidelines

Portfolio

1. Identify your main area of research interest and discuss it with the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and faculty members who have expertise in the related area.
2. Identify a portfolio chair and ask if he/she is willing to serve as your chair.
3. Work with your portfolio chair to identify potential committee members. Discuss your research topic with all potential faculty members and ask if they are willing and available to serve on the committee.
4. Meet with all portfolio committee members formally to discuss expectations and materials to be included in the portfolio.
5. Submit the [Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee](#) form to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.
6. Enroll in the portfolio courses.
7. Work closely with all committee members to prepare portfolio materials.
8. Defend your portfolio.
9. Submit the [Research Portfolio Approval Form](#) to the Criminal Justice Program director/s and graduate school. Additional documents may be attached to the form.

Dissertation

1. Identify your main area of research interest and discuss it with the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and faculty members who have expertise in the related area.
2. Identify a dissertation chair and ask if he/she is willing to serve as your chair.
3. Work with your dissertation chair to identify potential committee members. Discuss your research topic with all potential faculty members and ask if they are willing and available to serve on the dissertation committee. Your dissertation committee can be the same or different from your portfolio committee.
4. Meet with all portfolio committee members to discuss expectations and timelines of the proposal and dissertation defense.
5. Submit the [Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee](#) form to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.
6. Enroll in Dissertation I.
7. Defend your dissertation proposal (prospectus).
8. Submit the [Dissertation Proposal Coversheet](#) and your written proposal to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.
9. Enroll in Dissertation II.

10. Follow the graduate school Dissertation Timeline and Formatting Manual (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/ThesisHomepage.shtml>).
11. Defend your dissertation.
12. Submit [the Dissertation \(Ph.D.\) Approval Form](#) to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and graduate school.

Portfolio and Dissertation committees

The Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors will serve as mentors to all newly enrolled doctoral students. The co-directors will facilitate students in selecting their portfolio and dissertation chairs. First-year doctoral students need to meet with the program directors at least once during their first year to discuss their degree progress. Students are encouraged to discuss with the program directors and select a portfolio chair by the end of their second year of course study. Once the students have identified faculty members as potential chairs, they should approach the faculty members and ask if they are willing to serve as the chair. Students should then work with the chair to select other committee members and talk to these faculty members to ascertain if they are willing to be committee members. After selecting all committee members, the [Request for Service on a Graduate Advisory Committee form](#) should be submitted to the Criminal Justice Program Director/s and the graduate school. The portfolio and dissertation committee must be formally established before students are eligible to enroll in portfolio and dissertation courses.

VI. Core Faculty

Please see the Ph.D. in Criminal Justice website for a list of core and support faculty members (<https://www.tamtu.edu/coas/dss/phd-criminal-justice/facultystaff.shtml>).

VII. Academic Expectations

Students enrolled in the Ph.D. in Criminal Justice Program are required to complete 49 credit hours of coursework and successfully defend their research portfolio and dissertation to fulfill the requirements for their Ph.D. degrees. To meet degree requirements, students must achieve a final grade of "B" or higher in all courses. Portfolio and dissertation courses are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Effective Fall 2022, any doctoral student in the Criminal Justice Program who receives a grade of "C" in any doctoral course must retake the course and attain a grade of "B" or above. Only one retake of a course is permitted. Immediate guidance from the program director/s should also be sought in such cases.

Doctoral students who receive a grade of "D" or "F," or a second grade of "C," will face dismissal from the program. A doctoral student may only retake one course; if a second "C" is received in any course, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Regular attendance ensures students' active participation and engagement and promotes academic success. Students are expected to attend all scheduled course sessions and no more than two absences are permitted in a semester. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the loss of funding opportunities (including but not limited to assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, and travel funding) or failure of a course. Excused absences should be communicated to the course instructors in advance and obtain their approval. If you have extenuating circumstances for extended absences, you should also submit a written request to the program director, providing detailed information and supporting documentation for consideration.

VIII. Summer Research Fellowship

The Criminal Justice Doctoral Student Summer Research Fellowship provides summer funding to support selected doctoral students to conduct research on criminal justice related issues with a preference given to students examining border issues. Example research topics include but are not limited to human trafficking, immigration and crime, border security, policing at the border, and terrorism.

Eligibility: A Criminal Justice Ph.D. student and a full-time CJ faculty member will collaborate during the summer on the proposed research project. Funding will be limited to projects in which data has been collected. New data collection efforts will not be supported under this fellowship. Upon completion, a research manuscript will be submitted to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal by October 15. The complete manuscript and a submission confirmation from the journal need to be submitted to the directors of the CJ program. **Applications will not be reviewed for the following 2 years for failing to comply with this requirement.** Multiple authors may work on the same research project, but multiple students will not receive funding for the same research project. Students awarded the summer fellowship may not receive other funding. An award of up to \$3,000 is anticipated but is contingent upon funding availability. All eligible students are encouraged to apply. **Preference will be given to research projects that are related to border issues and 1st and 2nd year doctoral students.**

To apply, please complete the application form and submit the following documents:

- 1) A research proposal. The research proposal includes a title page with an abstract, a brief literature review, a complete methods section (e.g., data, variables,

research questions/hypotheses), and the analytic strategy. The proposal should be double-spaced and use Times New Roman and 12-point font. The proposal length should be limited to 8 pages maximum (not including the title page and references).

- 2) A tentative timeline. The timeline should outline when each component of the research project will be completed.
- 3) An updated Curriculum Vitae.

Note: Applications not following these guidelines will not be considered. All Fellowship applications will be reviewed by the Summer Research Fellowship Committee and ranked on scientific and methodological merit.

Please submit the application form and all required documents to the criminal justice program director/s by the deadline specified in the application. If the program director is submitting an application with students, an alternative faculty member will be assigned to receive the application submissions.

IX. Financial Assistance

Scholarships and fellowships/assistantships are available to qualified applicants. Full-time students admitted into the doctoral program can apply for scholarships/fellowships/assistantships through the **graduate school** (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/fellowships.shtml>):

Assistantship Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must be a fully admitted graduate student who is working towards a master's or doctoral degree.
2. Must maintain good academic standing with a minimum overall GPA of 3.25.
3. Must enroll in 9 graduate hours each Fall and Spring semester.

Fellowship and Scholarship Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must be a fully admitted graduate student who is working towards a master's or doctoral degree.
2. Must maintain good academic standing with a minimum overall GPA of 3.5.
3. Must enroll in 6 graduate hours each Fall and Spring semester.

Full-time doctoral students in Criminal Justice may receive up to \$15,000 in assistantships (part-time work/20 hours per week) or a \$5,000 scholarship per academic year. All students need to reapply for these awards every year. Please note that all awards are competitive and contingent on funding availability.

X. Student Resources

Graduate Student Travel Funds

TAMIU is committed to encouraging students to engage in academic conferences to promote scholarly activities and professional development. Travel reimbursements are available for students attending conferences for professional development related to their advanced degrees.

College of Arts and Sciences Travel Reimbursement. The College of Arts and Sciences provides up to \$800 per academic year to support students who present at professional conferences. Requests for travel funds can be submitted through <https://www.tamtu.edu/coas/StudentTravelForm.shtml>.

Graduate Student Travel Reimbursement. The graduate school funds up to an additional \$1,000 to support student travel. It's available for students who have actively participated in a conference/meeting for professional development related to their academic pursuits at TAMIU. Must submit a complete Student Travel Form through [TAMIU Trailblazers](#) and meet all University travel requirements before traveling.

Students requesting travel funds to attend academic conferences must present their research findings at the conferences, which may include oral presentations, poster presentations, or participation in discussion panels. Additionally, a practice presentation is required prior to attending the conference.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the Texas A&M International University committee that reviews and approves protocols that use human subjects in research. All research involving human subjects must be approved by the IRB before commencing the research.

The IRB reviews research protocols to ensure that the rights and welfare of subjects are protected and that the proposed use of human subjects is in compliance with federal, state, and university regulations. The criteria are established in accordance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations. Researchers must submit a Protocol for Human Subjects in Research application to the IRB and receive approval prior to commencing the research. Please visit the IRB website for more details (<https://www.tamtu.edu/irb/>).

Major Conferences in Criminal Justice and Criminology

American Society of Criminology (ASC): <https://asc41.com/>

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS): <https://www.acjs.org/>

Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS):
<https://www.neacjs.org/>

Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA): <https://www.southerncj.org/>

Midwestern Criminal Justice Association (MCJA): <https://www.mcja.org/#/>

Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice (SWACJ): <https://www.swacj.org/>

Western Association of Criminal Justice (WACJ): www.wacj.org

Western Society of Criminology (WSC): <https://westerncriminology.org/>

European Society of Criminology (ESC): <https://www.esc-eurocrim.org/>

Asian Criminology Society (ACS): <https://www.acs002.com/index.php>

Law & Society (LSA): <https://www.lawandsociety.org/>

Other useful links

The Graduate School: <https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/index.shtml>

Library: <https://www.tamtu.edu/library/>

Writing Center: <https://www.tamtu.edu/uc/ace/tutoring.shtml>

Student Counseling Center: <https://www.tamtu.edu/counseling/>

Thesis and dissertation policy/formatting manuals:
<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/ThesisHomepage.shtml>

Tuition and Fees: <https://www.tamtu.edu/fixeditution/index.shtml>

International student services: <https://www.tamtu.edu/international/isshome.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions after reading this handbook, please feel free to contact the

Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors Dr. Fei Luo (fei.luo@tamiu.edu, 956-326-2622, AIC 354) and Dr. Daniel Scott (daniel.scott@tamiu.edu, 956-326-2626, AIC 345).

What is the minimum number of courses I have to take each semester?

Students need to take a minimum of six (6) credit hours each semester. All students are required to take CRIJ 6101 Proseminar in Criminal Justice in the first semester.

I am not a local student; can I attend the first semester online?

No. This is a hybrid program and students are required to take courses on campus during the first semester.

Is on-campus housing available for doctoral students during the first semester?

Yes, it is available, but not provided. Here is a link for more details:

<https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/tx/laredo/tamiu-housing-res-life#amenities>

Is it possible for students to work full-time while completing the doctoral program?

Yes. All courses are offered in the evenings. Students are responsible for arranging their schedules properly to complete all coursework.

Does the University provide funding, scholarships, or fellowships for students?

Yes, the university offers a variety of fellowships, assistantships, and scholarships to qualified students. Please check the graduate school financial aid website for more details (<https://www.tamiu.edu/gradschool/fellowships.shtml>).

What kinds of funding are available for TAMIU employees who pursue the TAMIU CJ Ph.D. Program?

The Texas A&M University System recognizes the value of graduate education for the personal and professional development of its employees and has thus committed under certain conditions to paying the tuition and fees for employees pursuing a doctorate. Please check the ([SAP](#)) [31.99.01.L0.02](#) Tuition & Fee Payments for Employees Pursuing Doctorates for more details

(<https://www.tamiu.edu/compliance/documents/Rules%20and%20SAPs/31.99.01.10.02tuitionandfeepaymentsforemployeespursuingdoctorates.pdf>).

How many academic papers do I need to publish before graduation aside from the dissertation?

There is no standard requirement for the number of peer-reviewed publications when seeking employment. You are suggested to be as productive as possible.

Tell us about opportunities students have to present at academic conferences here and abroad.

There are a variety of academic conferences that students can participate in. Please see the Major Conferences in Criminal Justice and Criminology section in this handbook for a detailed list.

Are doctoral students assigned an advisor?

Yes. The Criminal Justice Program Co-Directors serve as mentors/advisors to all newly enrolled doctoral students. The co-directors will facilitate students in selecting their portfolio and dissertation chairs.

How many years does it generally take to graduate from the CJ Ph.D. Program?

The Program is designed to be four years.

What do portfolio classes entail? How many of them must doctoral students take?

Students should work with their portfolio committee chair and members to develop research manuscripts and other documents needed for the portfolio. It is recommended that students take two portfolio courses starting in the third year and produce at least one research manuscript for each portfolio course. The portfolio committee chair will decide if a student passes the portfolio courses. The portfolio committee will make a decision about the portfolio defense.

What are some of the career prospects for CJ Ph.D. graduates?

The program aims to produce graduates who have the theoretical knowledge, actual and practical experience, and marketable skills to assume high-level leadership roles in various areas of criminal justice practice such as those found in academia, government, and the private sector.

Are CJ Ph.D. graduates considered for employment at TAMIU upon graduation?

It depends on the job position and department policies.

How do I appeal a grade?

In registering grievances and filing appeals, TAMIU students must follow the procedures established in the TAMIU student handbook. Please see the student handbook Appendix C: Student Grievance Process for details on the informal process and formal process (<https://www.tamtu.edu/gradschool/studenthandbooks.shtml>).