

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminology and Criminal Justice (PhD)

Vanessa Panfil, Graduate Program Director

The Ph.D. in Criminology and Criminal Justice is a sociological criminology program that highlights social inequality and public policy in the study of crime and justice issues. The program produces scholars with strong backgrounds in the substantive areas of criminology, criminal justice, theory, inequality, and policy as well as in research methods and statistics. Designed primarily for students who are interested in pursuing careers in higher education, the course offerings also provide students the education and skills needed to be employed as researchers in public and private agencies. Graduates are prepared as scholars able to conduct research, teach college and university courses in their areas of specialization, and to provide service to the discipline and community.

Regular Admission Requirements

1. A completed master's degree (or its equivalent) in criminology, criminal justice, or in an appropriate field (e.g., administration of justice, sociology, or political science) from a regionally accredited institution of higher education – a thesis is generally expected;
2. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 (on a 4.0 scale) overall for the master's degree;
3. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required of all applicants;
4. Successful completion of prior coursework in research methods and statistics at least equivalent to that required by the ODU B.A. in sociology/criminal justice and M.A. degree in applied sociology (research methods, statistics, computer and data analysis);
5. Three letters of reference from sources capable of commenting on the applicant's readiness for advanced graduate study in criminology & criminal justice;
6. A writing sample of at least 20 double-spaced pages on a topic related to the applicant's expertise or area of interest;
7. A typed statement of approximately 1,000 words summarizing the individual's motivation for applying to the program as well as the professional contributions s/he intends to make assuming successful completion of the degree;
8. If the applicant's native language is not English, a current score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) of at least 540 and/or an interview in which the applicant's comprehension and fluency in English can be assessed.

Provisional Admission

Provisional admission may be granted on rare occasions when an applicant's credentials suggest aptitude for doctoral study but do not meet the criteria outlined above. Admission under this standard requires a variable amount of preliminary coursework in addition to that which is normally required for the degree. The amount and content of additional coursework required for conditional admissions is determined by the Ph.D. Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Students who have an appropriate undergraduate degree and a law degree (J.D.) but lack graduate work in the social sciences will normally be required to complete 18 hours of graduate work as follows: 12 hours in theory, research methods, social statistics, computer statistical applications, and 6 hours of substantive courses.

International Students

Graduate international students on non-immigrant visas whose native language is not English or who have not lived in the U.S. ten years must provide evidence of English language proficiency through one of the following:

1. Submission of a minimum required TOEFL score or successful completion of Old Dominion University's Graduate Bridge Program,
2. Possession of an American Bachelor's or Master's degree equivalent from an accredited institution located in a country where English is the native language,
3. GRE verbal score of 480.

Non-degree seeking students must secure permission from the GPD prior to registering for doctoral classes in the program.

Application Deadlines

January 15 – Students applying for funding (Graduate Assistantship) and fall admission; there is no spring admission. All students must submit all original application materials directly to Old Dominion University's Graduate Admissions Office. Students requesting funding (Graduate Assistantship) must submit the Application for Graduate Financial Assistance to the Program Director.

Curriculum Requirements

The Ph.D. in Criminology & Criminal Justice requires a minimum of 48 credit hours at the post-master's level (i.e., courses at the 700 to 800 level) as detailed below. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25. In addition, each of the core courses must be completed with a grade of B or better. The core courses may be taken a maximum of two times. Students who receive two grades of B- or below in any course, or whose grade point average falls below a 3.25 will be dismissed from the program.

Coursework

Core Courses		
CRIM 800	Proseminar in Criminology and Criminal Justice	3
CRIM 801	Criminology and Public Policy	3
CRIM 802	Advanced Criminological Theory	3
CRIM 803	Inequality, Crime and Justice	3
CRIM 890	Professional Development and Dissertation Seminar	3
Research Skills		
CRIM 805	Multivariate Statistics in Criminological Research	3
CRIM 810	Qualitative Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice	3
CRIM 815	Advanced Quantitative Techniques in Criminology & Criminal Justice	3
CRIM 820	Advanced Research Methods in Criminology & Criminal Justice	3
Electives		
Elective Hours		12
Dissertation Credits		
CRIM 899	Dissertation	9
Total Credit Hours		48

Additional Requirements

Comprehensive Examinations

The comprehensive exam assesses a student's expertise of the literature in criminology and criminal justice (in terms of both breadth and depth) in theory, research methods and statistics, inequality and policy as applied to questions of criminological interest; and her/his ability to think broadly and critically and to present her/himself as a sophisticated intellectual thinker. Preparation for the comprehensive exam gives students the opportunity to organize their knowledge of the field as gained from coursework, their own independent readings, teachings, and research.

The written comprehensive exam is taken by students following completion of all coursework except the dissertation seminar; students may petition the Ph.D. Committee to take the exam prior to the completion of all coursework.

The written exam will be in a take-home format distributed during August. Details about the structure of the exam will be announced to students by the end of the spring semester before the exam. Student names will be removed from the exams for grading. No more than three faculty members will grade each section of the exam as “pass” or “fail” and more than one negative vote from the exam committee will result in a failure of the section. Students may pass or fail the exam in whole or in part. Students need to retake only those sections that are failed. Students who fail any section of the exam may register for fall classes but must retake the failed section in accordance with the directions stipulated by the comprehensive exam committee, generally in late November/early December of that same year. Students who do not successfully pass the written comprehensive exam following the retake will be dismissed from the program; they may complete the classes they are enrolled in that semester for credit if they wish. Students may not defend a dissertation proposal until they have passed the written comprehensive exam.

Admission to Candidacy

Students are admitted to candidacy for the degree once the following criteria are satisfied:

- They have completed all Ph.D. coursework (excepting dissertation hours) with a GPA of at least 3.25;
- They have successfully passed the comprehensive examinations;
- They have successfully defended a dissertation prospectus.

The Dissertation

The dissertation is a scholarly work investigating a problem of significance and should constitute a meaningful contribution to the body of existing knowledge regarding matters of criminology and criminal justice policy or practice. It is the culmination of a program of advanced study leading to a doctoral degree and, as such, is expected to demonstrate a high level of scholarly competence. It must show that the candidate is capable of conceptualizing and conducting sophisticated original research, as well as analysis and reporting on an approved topic related to crime and justice by use of accepted scientific methods. Complete information about the dissertation is found on the program's website.

For more information relating to this program and its requirements, please visit <http://www.odu.edu/sociology/academics/graduate/doctoral> (<http://www.odu.edu/sociology/academics/graduate/doctoral/>)