

What do I need to do right now?

Connect with the field. Look for opportunities to **volunteer** or **ride-along** at various agencies. (These may help narrow one's interest but are not used in the admissions process.) Join **professional societies** and **participate** in your chosen field. Many positions in the field are earned via **networking** with hiring agencies.

Start a binder for future applications.

- Official College Transcripts with degree posted
- Syllabi from all college courses
- Records of any honors or awards
- Record of all extracurricular activity and community service
- List of potential references and any letters of reference
- Employment history:
Name, address, telephone of all employers
Period employed
Any letters of reference from employers
- Residential history, addresses and dates
- Birth certificates, certified
- Military records, DD214

Remember the importance of integrity and honesty, not only in your personal and professional life, but in your academic career.

Many agencies conduct extensive background checks which include interviews with an applicant's former college instructors. Incidences of cheating, plagiarism, rudeness (including use of cell phones during class) and any kind of offensive behavior, are occurrences that will be noted by your professors.

Meet with your major advisor every semester to make sure you are on track to graduate.

(Lift flap for Major Course Planning)

Graduate School

How will Graduate School prepare me for a career in Criminal Justice?

Students who have an interest in looking more deeply into the research on issues concerning crime, punishment, the criminal justice system (corrections, policing, law), and other related social problems might find that graduate school is a path worth considering.

With a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice or another discipline, a student may be eligible to teach at a community or junior college or as a part-time faculty member at a four-year college or university.

For the practitioner-oriented student who is interested in moving up the leadership ranks, a Master's Degree may provide you with an edge: the opportunity to move up as well as an increase in pay.

Students who are interested in pursuing full-time careers in research and/or university teaching should consider a program that offers a doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D.) in their chosen field of study.

What kinds of preparation would I need to pursue an advanced degree?

- A **3.0 GPA** or higher
- **Statistics.** If a student is planning on eventually going into a doctoral (Ph.D.) program, they really need to take one or more Statistics courses in a social science discipline, i.e., Psychology or Sociology. The General Education course in Statistics will not be enough.
- **Get involved in research.** Interested applicants should look for opportunities to do research either with a faculty member or through an agency. This experience will provide an opportunity to develop research skills and prepare the student for what they will see and be expected to do in graduate school.
- **Solid Letters of Recommendation.** Students usually need to submit at least three letters of recommendation from faculty when applying to a graduate program. Believe it or not, these letters are important in the admissions process. It is important for students to establish and maintain relationships with full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty as their letters are considered very credible when committees are trying to determine an applicant's potential to succeed in a graduate program. Full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty are best-equipped to speak to and about the student's abilities to understand research methodology, to do research, and to think critically about issues concerning public policy, law, and social science research processes and findings in general.

(Lift flap to continue)

California State University, Sacramento

Division of Criminal Justice

Main Office

Alpine Hall, Room 137
(916) 278-6487

Criminal Justice Advising

Alpine Hall, Room 133
(916) 278-6485

<http://www.csus.edu/HHS/CJ/>

- **Strong Letter of Intent.** Students are also required to submit what is called a ‘Letter of Intent’. This is the “Why I Want to Go to Graduate School” letter. Interested candidates will need to provide a strong statement of interest which reflects not only good written communication skills but clearly explains the applicant’s interests in post-secondary education and personal and professional goals upon obtaining a Master’s level degree. This letter will provide the candidate’s “first impression” to the school’s admission committee. Candidates should start work on their statement early. It is imperative to work closely with a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member who can help review the letter before the student submits it with their other admission materials.
- **GRE (Graduate Record Examination).** Most graduate programs require students to take the GRE exam; the scores are then submitted to each school to which the student is applying. It is important for the student applicant to read the admissions process for each school to see what the Graduate Admissions Office and the specific program require as far as materials to be submitted, in general, and then what is going to be considered with respect to the GRE. For example, the Criminal Justice Master’s Degree program at Sacramento State uses only the score on the Writing portion of the exam. Other programs might consider all aspects of the test, as well as a Subject Matter exam, so it is important to be sure you know what your intended school requires.

More information about the GRE can be found by visiting :
<http://www.ets.org/gre>

Other helpful skills:

- Strong intellectual curiosity about chosen area of study
- Strong written and communication skills
- Strong critical thinking skills
- Good understanding of research methodology, the use and application of statistics, and familiarity with scholarly articles and research
- Good time-management skills and study habits

Deal-Breakers

Interested applicants will face graduate school admission challenges with the following:

- **Overall GPA below 3.0.** Many graduate schools require their students to maintain a 3.0 GPA during their graduate career and often, certain courses require students to earn a grade of B (3.0) or higher or risk repeating the course or being dismissed from the program. Therefore, it is advised that students interested in attending graduate school have at least a 3.0 GPA.
- **GRE scores below the required minimum** set by the particular school to which the candidate is applying.
- **Incomplete applications.** Applications which are missing required materials are routinely reviewed prior to being denied admission.
- **Weak Letters of Intent.** A statement that contains spelling or grammatical errors, or that does not clearly explain the student’s interests and goals in obtaining a Master’s degree.

Suggested Major Course Sequence

Freshman Year

___ CRJ 001 Intro to CRJ & Society

Suggested GE Electives
 SOC 001/PSYC 001 (Area D)
 HIST 017B (Area D)

Sophomore Year

___ CRJ 002 Law of Crimes
 ___ CRJ 004 Gen. Investigative Techniques
 ___ CRJ 005 Community & the Justice System

Suggested GE Electives
 GOVT 150 (Area D)
 STAT 001 (Area B4)

Junior Year

___ CRJ 101 Intro to CRJ Research Methods
 ___ CRJ 102 Crime & Punishment
 ___ CRJ 121 Struct & Func of American Courts
 ___ CRJ 160 Criminal Justice Administration
 ___ CRJ Elective _____
 ___ CRJ Elective _____
 ___ CRJ Elective _____
 ___ CRJ Elective _____

Senior Year

___ CRJ 123 Law of Arrest, Search, & Seizure
 ___ CRJ 130 Fundamentals of Corrections
 ___ CRJ 141 Police & Society
 ___ CRJ 190 Contemporary Issues in CRJ
 ___ CRJ Elective _____
 ___ CRJ Elective _____
 ___ CRJ Elective _____
 ___ CRJ Elective _____

Note: This is a suggested sequence for a full time (15 units) student. Course sequence may have to be modified for course availability. Students interested in pursuing a minor should seek advice from a CRJ advi-

Suggested Electives

The following is an excerpt. Consult the **Major Planning Worksheet** for the full list of electives.

CRJ 199 Special Problems (Requires Senior status; all UD core) This course is designed for students who have a particular unique focus on a topic that is not listed in available course offerings.

ENGL 120S Writing in the Social Sciences

SOC 101 Introduction to Statistics for Sociologists

SOC 102 Research Design and Analysis

Who can I talk to about graduate education in general?

- Yvette Farmer, Graduate Coordinator, Division of Criminal Justice Master of Science (M.S.) Program
- Dimitri Bogazianos
- Tim Croisdale
- Sue Escobar
- Ryan Getty
- Lynette Lee
- Mary Maguire
- Dan Okada
- Kim Schnurbush
- Jennie Singer