What can I do with a degree in... CRIMINAL JUSTICE?

What is **CRIMINAL JUSTICE?**

Students in the Criminal Justice Program complete a course of study that includes the examination of crime, criminals, courts, policing, corrections, and victims. The program is concerned with both theory and practice, and gives students ample opportunity to apply knowledge in the classroom to "real-world" applications via internships, research opportunities, and through the Student Association of Criminal Justice Affairs (SACJA)

The goal of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is to provide students with a strong interdisciplinary foundation. Graduates are prepared to respond appropriately and ethically in challenging situations as they move on to careers in criminal justice, emergency and disaster management or for further education.

In conjunction with the goals of the University, the College, and the Department, our programs are based on the philosophy of a liberal arts education, grounded in social science methodologies. The focus for undergraduate students is to achieve mastery of fundamental academic competencies and a basic level of expertise in the fields of criminal justice and emergency and disaster management.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Criminal Justice

Minor in Criminal Justice

What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Student declare a Criminal Justice major with the Advising Center, located in Killian Annex. Please make an appointment with your advisor or with a faculty member in the department.

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Depending on qualifications, our graduates are prepared to become a variety of professionals including correctional officers, FBI agents, juvenile court counselors, media criminologists, law clerks, Secret Service agents, private detectives, coroners, social workers, probation officers, drug enforcement agents, substance abuse counselors, correctional treatment specialists, military officers, security guards, deportation officers, paralegals, gaming surveillance officers, loss prevention, wardens, airport security professionals, U.S. Marshals, bailiffs, customs agents, penologists, and more. **NOTE:** Advanced degrees may be required for some of the listed professions. Please see a career counselor or an advisor for more information.

Who employs **CRIMINAL JUSTICE** graduates?

Our graduates gain employment with a variety of employers including local, state, and federal government agencies such as the State Bureau of Investigations and the Federal Bureau of Investigations, courthouses, police stations, security agencies, businesses, airports, and prison systems. |

MAJOR MAP

How to use this map: Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

	1st YEAR	2nd YEAR
EXCEL IN ACADEMICS	Many first-year students in the Criminal Justice major will focus on the liberal studies requirements as well as introductory communication courses. **Check out the course requirements** and make an appointment with your advisor.	Students in their second year will likely continue with liberal studies electives, continued topics related to Criminal Justice, as well as introductory courses with their minor (a minor is encouraged). **Check out the course requirements** and make an appointment with your advisor.
GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE	Check out **WCU's DegreePlus program** and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness. Consider joining the Criminal Justice Club. See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.	Consider getting involved with the Student Association of Criminal Justice Affairs (SACJA) or Alpha Phi Sigma (invite only), the honor society for Criminal Justice. If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions.
BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY	Connect with the **Center for Service Learning** and ask about the **Spark Award,** a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.	Job shadow with professionals in the career area you wish to pursue. Volunteer with area non-profits or organizations which interest you. Consider the **study abroad programs related to criminal justice.** Talk with a study abroad advisor about targeted experience for your areas of interest.
PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE	Further explore your career options or career interests using the **Center for Career and Professional Development's** online resources, **Focus 2,** and **Onet Online.** Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.	Check out **CCPD's list of career-building activities** and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus. Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years with their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Biology
Chemistry
Communication
Computer Information Systems
Emergency Disaster Management
Forensic Anthropology
Management
Political Science
Psychology
Social Justice
Sociology
Spanish

3rd YEAR

Third level courses focus on upper-level CJ courses and special topics relating to your chosen minor. **Check out the course requirements** and make an appointment with your advisor.

Consider internship experiences such as CJ-483 that will give you practical and hands-on experience to put on a resume.

Consider applying for the Korean National Police University exchange program in Yougin, South Korea. Speak with the Criminal Justice Department Head for more details.

Present at research conferences such as the WCU Research and Scholarship conference or the North Carolina Criminal Justice Association Conference.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Connect with alumni in your field through **LinkedIn**

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Utilize the **Writing and Learning Commons** for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions.Use **Big Interview** to learn more about professional interviews.

4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will complete the major coursework requirements, as well as your chosen minor electives. Make sure to take CJ-495 Senior Seminar. Be sure to **Check out the course requirements,** make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and **apply for graduation!**

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each October and February.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by vising the **CCPD.**

DID YOU KNOW? Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 50,000 employers)

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP Information

At Western Carolina University there are numerous internship opportunities for students. In some cases internships are established through a faculty member in the student's major. Oftentimes students find part-time jobs in an area related to their field of study. When this happens, students should discuss with their academic advisor the possibility of receiving college credit. Generally, three hours of general elective credit can be earned for a minimum of 200 hours of experience.

Western Carolina University has an internship opportunity for the advanced student (juniors and above) to gain experience in various agencies in the criminal justice system. It is a chance for students to both learn about their chosen field and to clarify their plans for the future. Most importantly, it is a time for students to learn something about themselves. Students are placed in state, federal and local agencies, as well as in publicly-funded counseling and consulting firms. If you are interested in this internship please contact the Criminal Justice department.

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- information handling and organization
- curiosity and creativity
- critical thinking and evaluation
- problem solving
- written and oral communication
- professional teamwork

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- be knowledgeable of a diverse range of explanations for criminal and deviant behavior.
- use sound working knowledge of principles at the foundation of criminal law, important case precedents and historical knowledge of the evolution of criminal law in America.
- demonstrate a familiarity with the history and nature of the major components of the criminal justice system (police, courts, and corrections).
- understand and apply the principles of research methods, including how to locate relevant information, operationalize concepts, collect data, conduct basic statistical analyses, interpret findings, and present information in a professional manner.
- hone critical and original thinking to evaluate problems and issues concerning criminal behavior and the criminal justice system.
- integrate personal and professional values as evidenced by the ability to write and speak about ethical arguments regarding criminal justice policy.

Professional **RESOURCES**

- American Correctional Association: www.aca.org
- American Jail Association: www.americanjail.org
- American Probation and Parole Association: www.appa-net.org/eweb/
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers: www.fletc.gov

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Criminal Justice program at 828-227-7464 or visit cj.wcu.edu

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.

Western Carolina UNIVERSITY