

Criminal Justice FAQ's

Where do graduates of the program get employment?

A number of our Masters students are already employed in the criminal justice field. Our graduates include a detective in the Philadelphia Police Department and the warden of a local jail. Post- graduation, our students have secured positions in local, state, and federal law enforcement and criminal justice agencies such as the New Jersey Juvenile Justice commission and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, while still others have gone on to pursue further graduate study.

We are also extremely proud of the placement record of our recent PhD graduates. These have included tenure-track assistant professorships at institutions such as Drexel University, LaSalle University, University of Ottawa, Louisiana State University, Towson University, University of Louisville, and American University. In addition to those embarking on academic careers, a number of our PhD graduates have secured research positions with various federal, state, and local agencies including the National Institute of Justice, Justice Research and Statistics Association, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies at the University of Delaware, the Police Department of Redlands, California, and Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole.

What if I did not get a 3.0 (B average) GPA in my undergraduate studies? Is there any exemption?

The rules are set in place by the Graduate School of Temple University. However the Dean of the Graduate School considers exceptions to the admissions requirement if the student meets at least one of these criteria:

- Achieved a 3.25 cumulative grade point average in a least 9 credits of graduate work at an accredited university in the United States or equivalent academic performance in a university outside the United States.
- Scored above the 65th percentile on the verbal and quantitative portions of the Graduate Record Exam
- Earned a 3.5 grade point average during her/his final two years of undergraduate work.

When should I get started on my application?

Temple University Criminal Justice is one of the top ranked graduate programs in the United States. As such, we attract a highly competitive applicant pool. Because of this, we begin our review of applications immediately following the deadline of December 15, and make our decisions fairly soon after that. We review complete applications only. For this reason, it is important that applicants do their best to make sure that we receive all materials by the deadline. Transcripts can often take three to four weeks to arrive after an applicant makes arrangements for these to be sent, letters of recommendation are usually coming from busy

professors, and GRE scores can also take several weeks to arrive (taking the GRE any time after the first week of November may be too late- the first week of November could be too late). For this reason, it is recommended that applicants begin the process of gathering application materials, particularly when those are dependent on other people, like letters and transcripts, well in advance of the deadline.

How accessible is financial assistance?

Students requiring financial assistance should be aware that the department has a good track record of supporting a significant number of students through a variety of ways. The best way to maximize the chances of financial support is to achieve as high a score as possible in the GRE examinations. Students with combined GRE verbal and quantitative scores in excess of the 85th percentile have an opportunity to attract university fellowships that guarantee four years of funding, while many other students are considered for teaching assistant positions in our department which we guarantee for three years. Please read the financial assistance page.

How much funding is available?

Funding is highly competitive, however the department does have a strong track record of funding success. If offered a TA or RA position in the first year, we will generally cover three further years of funding, for a guarantee of four years. This includes full tuition costs and a complete (12 months) year of health insurance per year. Thereafter, subsequent funding is dependent on the availability of research or teaching resources - a situation that changes from year to year as it does in any academic department. University fellowships come with a four year funding guarantee.

Is there a graduate student association?

Yes there is! We consider a strong graduate student body to be a vital part of the student experience. The graduate student association is involved in a combination of vocational and recreational activities.

I already have a Master's degree. Must I take the GRE?

Yes, you must. The GRE (Graduate Record Exam) is required for all applications. We do not allow substitution of other exams such as the Miller Analogies Test (MAT), Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). We accept the GRE only. While they are not a perfect testing tool and while we recognize that they are not an ideal indication of a student's ability, they do represent a fairly reliable indication of likelihood that a student will succeed in our program. Furthermore they are one basis for national comparisons of graduate programs so we are always on the lookout for the best students. To give you an indication of the standard, the average incoming GRE score (combined quantitative and verbal) for our program is more than 305 (1100 on the old scoring system). This does not guarantee acceptance; see the next FAQ below. The GRE must have been taken within the past

5 years or appear on the official Temple University record of a student who has been previously enrolled. The code for Temple University is 2906 and the field code for Criminal Justice is 2202. Applications lacking an official score report by the application deadline will not be considered.

Are there any particular parts of the application that are more important than others?

Generally not, though GRE score is one criterion that is particularly scrutinized. Bear in mind that getting in excess of 1100 does not guarantee acceptance, because as a small collegial program we seek students that are a good fit for our research-active faculty. Therefore some students score highly but their research interests and aims do not gel with our faculty. On occasion, the right student may score slightly lower but their research interests, experience and letters of support from academics are all in areas in which we are a strong department and we look positively on their application.

Do graduate students publish academically?

Yes they do, and there is an expectation of this as well. Many of our students work with faculty to develop publications either independently, or in collaboration with faculty or other students. Many of the faculty publications are co-authored with our current or former graduate students, and can be seen from our graduate student publications page.

I have criminal justice work experience. Does that get me extra credit?

We are always supportive of students with experience in the criminal justice field. That experience is often valuable in class and in bringing a real world touch to the research programs. That being said, we have an international reputation for being a strong academic research department and one of the leading quantitative PhD programs in the country. Therefore while we always welcome students with experience in the field, the entry criteria are the same.

In what way can I help my application?

Two particular things help your application. First, try and achieve the best GRE scores that you can. Doctoral programs (such as ours) are ranked on the caliber of our students, and one measure of that is the GRE score. While we recognize that it is not an ideal indication of a potential student's worth, it is a national standard in the US, and the basis for entry and funding decisions.

Secondly, pay attention to our list of faculty and their interests, and try and identify faculty members that you would potentially like to work with on a thesis or research project. Then, include this information and why you would like to work with that person in your statement of goals. We endeavor to keep our student numbers fairly low and thus provide a better education for our students, but in turn this means that we pay particular attention to ensuring that you are a good fit with our faculty.

Are there opportunities for practical research?

Very much so. Our faculty are involved in research projects and oversight bodies for local jails, correctional facilities, the courts and local police departments. Read the faculty biographies to get a better flavor of the many programs that we are involved with.

*****HOW AND WHEN SHOULD I APPLY FOR ADVANCE STANDING?****

As long as you have a Masters degree from an accredited institution with grades of B or better, you are eligible for advance standing. If you have any classes with less than a B, then we do not give advance standing for just those classes, but you will receive credit for the parts of your transcript that are B or better. Applications for advance standing are received internally once you have completed one full semester with us as a student.

Where do students live?

A number of our students are already residents of the area. New students to the University either live on, or near our vibrant main campus, or in various neighborhoods around the city. Graduate students have the opportunity to take advantage of a variety of University accommodations, while many choose to live in either the leafy suburbs of Mount Airy or in the vibrant center of Philadelphia, Center City. Both are a short distance from the main campus and the campus has its own regional rail and subway stops.

Can I visit the department?

We think it is great that people want to visit us and completely understand that prospective students want to see where they will be working and studying for the next few years. In an average year we get inquiries and expressions of interest from hundreds of potential students, and over 50 full applications, so the potential for disruption to staff, students and faculty in the department is quite considerable. We therefore tend to limit visitors to potential doctoral students that have submitted full applications and that are likely to attain our admittance criteria. Visits for future PhD students usually take place in early- to-mid March and include an interview with faculty in the student's area of interest, as well as a campus tour with some of our graduate students.

Who do I contact if I have specific questions about the program?

Please e-mail Joseph DelMastro, Sr. Manager of Administration at cjgrads@temple.edu