## SPA Contact List

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1. **Purpose of Handbook**

Welcome to the MCJ program at the School of Public Affairs! This Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) handbook will acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the School of Public Affairs (SPA) and facilitate your progress toward applying for the program and earning the degree of MCJ. Read this MCJ handbook carefully and consult your student services coordinator or advisor (if applicable) whenever you have questions.

Be aware that the policies and procedures described here are subject to change and can be affected by changes in the policies of the University of Colorado. University-wide policies have priority over the policies of SPA. Check the campus catalog, SPA’s website, and the graduate school for the most up-to-date information.

2. **Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver**

The MCJ program falls under the Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver. For more information about the Graduate School, please see: http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/Graduate-School/current/Pages/resources.aspx.

3. **School of Public Affairs**

The University of Colorado’s School of Public Affairs, established in 1973, offers five degree programs: Master of Criminal Justice, Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, Master of Public Administration, Bachelor of Public Service and Ph.D. in Public Affairs. The Ph.D. program is offered only on the Denver campus.

As the #34 ranked school of public affairs in America, 13th most innovative school of public affairs in the nation, and the #9 ranked online graduate program in Criminal Justice (5th among public universities), we take pride in our programs and feel a responsibility to train tomorrow’s leaders. Our motto is Lead.Solve.Change., and we take that very seriously. From innovative MCJ and MPA concentrations in emergency management and gender-based violence to the highly successful growth of our first undergraduate degree (Bachelor in Criminal Justice), our many community events, and the timely research of our Institute and CCJRI, we are a school committed to making a real impact.

As an academic program, Criminology and Criminal Justice explores all aspects of crime, criminal behavior and criminal victimization by relying on interdisciplinary study within the fields of sociology, psychology, economics, political science, statistics, anthropology, and criminology to provide students with a well-rounded liberal arts education. The course work will prepare students and professionals for careers in criminal analysis, forensics, public policy, social work, victim advocacy, policing at the local, state and federal level, and much more.
4. Master of Criminal Justice Program

Criminal justice began as an area of concentration in SPA’s Master of Public Administration program in 1974. The Master of Criminal Justice program was established in 1980 as a separate degree program within SPA upon recommendation of the University of Colorado Board of Regents and approval by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

The MCJ program is designed for students interested in comprehensive professional graduate education in the discipline of criminology and criminal justice. The MCJ program addresses management, policy, and research issues involving the administration of the American criminal justice system, including law enforcement, judicial and correctional subsystems, as well as the legislative component through which substantive and procedural codes are established. The program emphasizes critical decision-making in the development, implementation, and assessment of criminal justice policies and procedures. The MCJ program seeks to prepare men and women not only to administer the system as it presently exists, but also to analyze, to evaluate, and to change its design and processes in effecting a more responsive and equitable system of justice.

4.1 Mission

The mission of the MCJ program is:

(a) to provide an intellectually stimulating academic and professional environment in which students and faculty may grow and develop to their full potential;

(b) to educate students who are preparing for or pursuing a career in criminal justice, giving each a realistic preparation for practical success in his or her chosen work, and facilitating the development of skills and capabilities necessary to become a catalyst within the profession so as to enhance the viability and growth of the discipline in an ethical and just manner; and

(c) to make continuing significant contributions to knowledge and excellence of practice in the fields of criminal justice and allied social and behavioral sciences through teaching, research, dissemination of knowledge to the public, and direct service to local, state and national constituent communities and criminal justice agencies.

The MCJ program at the School of Public Affairs is dedicated to an applied education, which enhances academic and professional skills through partnerships with agencies in related fields and sub-specialties. The programs aim to develop lifetime learning for professionals as well as high moral and ethical standards, analytical and intellectual skills that seek to promote efficiency and effectiveness throughout the criminal justice system. In addition, SPA’s MCJ degree prepares graduate students with effective communication and critical thinking skills. Students graduate prepared to deal with future career challenges and ever-changing professional standards.
The MCJ program serves three major categories of students: those ultimately interested in teaching and research in criminal justice and related fields; those who desire entry to various criminal justice positions; and those already employed in criminal justice agencies who need graduate-level education for career development and advancement.

4.2 Curriculum Objectives

Objectives for students in the MCJ program are:

a) to provide students with a broad-based knowledge of theory and practice concerning criminal justice administration, management and policy;

b) to provide students with decision-making and problem-solving skills required in criminal justice administration, management and policy;

c) to provide students with substantive expertise required for positions in police administration, judicial administration or correctional administration or in private sector organizations concerned with criminal justice administration;

d) to provide theoretical, analytical and research skills necessary for criminal justice administration, management and policy analysis and/or as preparation for doctoral-level graduate study; and

e) to provide students with a comprehensive, integrated model of criminal justice administration theory and practice, stressing conceptual, methodological and contextual knowledge development and application.

4.3 Administration

The MCJ program is administered by the Graduate School at UC Denver. Forms and information are available from the SPA office or on the SPA website. The MCJ Program Director is the key administrative officer for the program. The Director serves as the central contact for questions regarding MCJ policies, and chairs the CJ Committee, which develops and approves overall MCJ policies. SPA’s Director of Student Recruiting and Career Services provide information to prospective students regarding the program and its policies and procedures. SPA’s Student Services Coordinators provide information on applying to the program, registration, financial aid, and related issues, and also serve as advisors for students concerning basic degree planning.
5. **Admissions**

### 5.1 Application Requirements

Students who wish to apply for admission to the MCJ program should go to the SPA website for detailed information and instructions. All application materials, including letters of recommendation, transcripts, and test scores, should be sent directly to SPA at the Denver Campus. Transcripts and examination scores issued by the student cannot be accepted.

Applicants must submit the following materials:

1. **Part I and Part II of The University of Colorado Graduate Admission Application.**

2. Two sets of official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work are required. The transcript must show a baccalaureate degree from a college or university of accredited standing, preferably with a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (where 4.0 = A).

3. A $50 application fee ($75 for international students). A check for this amount made out to the University of Colorado Denver must accompany the completed admission application.

4. Three letters of reference, two of which should be from academic sources. Recommendations may come from professors, employers, or others who are acquainted with the prospective student’s scholarly abilities and/or professional work.

5. Official reports of scores on a scholastic aptitude test, either the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) including the written portion, or the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT). These aptitude test scores should be no more than 5 years old. Information about examinations and the registration forms may be obtained from the UC Denver Assessment and Testing Center. If an applicant plans to take the GRE examination in the future, he/she should specify that his/her graduate major at the University of Colorado will be Criminal Justice (Institution Code R-4875 on the GRE application form). Students must take the verbal and quantitative portions of the test.

6. A resume.

7. A statement of intent.

The MCJ Program Director will weigh all the materials described above in making admissions decisions. At times, the criminal justice faculty will be asked to provide recommendations regarding particular admissions. Admission to the MCJ program is based upon the candidate’s standardized test scores, formal academic record (undergraduate and, if
Admission Calendar

Admission to the MCJ program is made on a rolling basis, and applicants are admitted for each semester. The calendar for submission of admission materials is as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>August 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>December 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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The MCJ Director may consider graduate applications at any time, which means that files may be reviewed as soon as they are completed. Students are notified by letter regarding whether they have been admitted or denied entrance into the program. The University processes admissions on the schedule shown above; please note that only students officially admitted by the University are eligible for financial aid.

5.2 Provisional Admission

In exceptional cases, students who do not meet the minimum qualifications for admission may be admitted to the MCJ program on provisional status if elements of their graduate application suggest they may be able to perform successfully in the program. Those admitted on provisional status are required to take two required MCJ core graduate courses in their first semester and earn at least a B in each MCJ core course.

Students admitted to the MCJ program provisionally should take these required graduate courses in a traditional classroom format unless the online format is the only feasible option or the student is planning to take all graduate courses online through the online MCJ option. At the conclusion of their first semester, students’ performance in these graduate courses will be reviewed to determine if they should be admitted to the MCJ program. Provisionally admitted students may take no other SPA MCJ graduate courses until they have been formally admitted into the program.
5.3 Non-Degree Admission

Students need not be admitted as degree-seeking students to the MCJ program in order to take graduate classes in the MCJ program. Students may attend graduate classes as non-degree students by completing an Application for Non-Degree Admission. These applications are available from the UC Denver Office of Admissions. Nine credit hours of MCJ graduate course work taken under this status may be applied to the MCJ program IF a student is later admitted as a degree-seeking MCJ student.

Taking MCJ graduate courses as a non-degree student contains an element of risk because admission to the MCJ program is not a certainty. Therefore, we encourage students to apply as soon as possible to the formal MCJ program. The non-degree status is most useful when students want to explore the field and/or when their graduate application is not complete (e.g., test scores and/or reference letters have not been received).

5.4 Readmission of Inactive, Withdrawn, and Suspended Students

Students who have been admitted to SPA must complete their course work within seven years from the start of their coursework. Occasionally students find it necessary to interrupt their course work for one or more semesters. An extended interruption, however, may result in the student being placed on inactive or withdrawn status.

Students who do not enroll in any graduate classes during the semester for which they were admitted, and students who have not registered for graduate classes for three consecutive semesters (including summer semesters), are placed on inactive status. Inactive graduate students who want to continue their graduate coursework will be required to resubmit a Part I application. Contact your Student Services Coordinator for more information.

Students who have not enrolled in graduate classes for more than twelve consecutive semesters (including summer semesters) will be considered to have withdrawn from the MCJ program. Readmission for these students will require repeating the full graduate application process. Readmission is not guaranteed.

A graduate student who has been suspended from the program is not allowed to register for graduate classes in the MCJ Program. Suspended graduate students may apply for readmission no sooner than one year after the suspension by submitting a new Part I Application. Approval or rejection of this application rests jointly with the Graduate School Dean and the MCJ Director.
6. Advising and Student Support

Advising at the School of Public Affairs is a joint responsibility of faculty and the Student Services Coordinators. In general, questions about program logistics are best addressed by the Student Services Coordinators. International students are advised by the International Coordinator, who also assists them with other issues specific to international students such as visa requirements.

Upon admission to the MCJ program, students should set up a meeting with their Student Services Coordinator. The Student Services Coordinators will assist with registration, understanding program requirements, preliminary degree planning, and selecting a faculty advisor.

Students may request that they be assigned a faculty advisor with particular expertise in a field in which they are interested. In order to secure a faculty advisor, the student is encouraged to review faculty biographies on the SPA website and contact the faculty member about that possibility directly. Students who have declared concentrations or who are enrolled in dual degree programs will be assigned the director of the concentration or dual degree program as their faculty advisor.

6.1 Academic Support

SPA graduate students who believe they need academic support are encouraged to reach out to their instructors. Some graduate classes have teaching assistants who are available to tutor students. Additional support is available through the university, SPA as well as the University’s Writing Center.

6.2 Career Resources

SPA is committed to helping students find meaningful work upon graduation. The School maintains a Job and Professional Experience Portal on its website. The Director of Student Recruiting and Career Services is available to provide career counseling. SPA offers many events each year designed to provide networking opportunities with professionals in various fields, and students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.
7. Degree and Program Options

7.1 Online MCJ Degree

Graduate students may complete the MCJ degree entirely through online graduate classes, an option which may be attractive for students living outside of the Denver metro area, or for those who require more flexibility in taking graduate courses. Online graduate courses are offered by SPA faculty and lecturers, and are identical in rigor and content to graduate courses offered in the traditional classroom format.

7.2 Dual Degrees

A dual degree program allows a student to complete two degrees in less time and with less expense than it would take to earn each degree separately. Currently, SPA offers the following dual degree options related to the MCJ degree:

- **BA CJ/MCJ:** This five-year program allows high-performing undergraduates to begin taking graduate-level MCJ graduate classes during their senior year. See the SPA website for more information about this option.

- **MCJ/MPA:** This program allows a student to earn both a master degree in criminal justice and a master degree in public administration, both through SPA. See the SPA website for more information about this option.

7.3 Gender-Based Violence Concentration

The concentration in Gender-Based Violence is a cohort-based program that requires four core concentration graduate courses, which would apply as graduate elective credits for the MCJ degree. Contact the Gender-Based Violence Program Director or visit the SPA website for more information.

7.4 Emergency Management and Homeland Security Concentration

The concentration in emergency management and homeland security requires students take two core concentration graduate courses from a list of four. The remaining concentration graduate courses may be selected from a recommended list of graduate courses, or with the approval of the director of the concentration. Contact the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program Director or visit the SPA website for more information.

7.5 Crime Analyst Concentration
The Crime Analyst concentration requires three core concentration graduate courses, which would apply as graduate elective credits for the MCJ degree. Contact the Crime Analyst Program Director or visit the SPA website for more information.

8. MCJ Degree Requirements

8.1 Course Load

The normal course load for a full-time MCJ student is 6 to 9 graduate credit hours per semester; full-time status for MCJ graduate students is 5 graduate credit hours per semester for financial aid determination. A student who is employed full-time is strongly advised not to carry more than 6 graduate semester hours in the MCJ program. Students who wish to carry a graduate course load above 9 hours per semester must consult their advisor and/or student service coordinator first.

8.2 General Requirements

The minimum requirements for the MCJ degree are as follows:

1. The completion of a minimum of 36 semester hours of graduate work with a grade-point average of B (3.0) or better; the 36 graduate credit hours includes 6 required MCJ graduate courses and 6 elective graduate courses.

2. Students must receive a grade of B- or better in all graduate courses. Grades below B- (2.7) are not accepted for credit towards the MCJ degree requirements (see Graduate School Rules Section 6), but all earned grades are applied to the student’s grade point average.

3. Pre-service students (those who have not had the equivalent of at least one year of professional practical experience in the field of criminal justice) must take 3 semester graduate credit hours of field study by enrolling in CRJU 6910, Field Study in Criminal Justice.

8.3 Time Requirements

Although the MCJ program requires intensive commitment, it does not require full-time study. All graduate MCJ core courses are offered either online or in person during late afternoon or evening hours each spring and fall semester. Generally several MCJ electives are offered in the summer in either online or in-person. Summer scheduling – number of courses and mode of instruction – is dependent on student demand. Students should expect to complete the MCJ graduate degree in no less than one and no more than seven calendar years (the average is about two and one-half years).
With the approval of the MCJ Director, students who are making steady progress toward the graduate degree may be allowed to extend the seven-year limit by one or two additional graduate level semesters. Such approval should be sought as far as possible in advance of the student’s planned graduation date. Approval is not guaranteed.
8.4 Coursework Requirements

Core Graduate courses and CRJU 5361 Capstone Seminar

All MCJ students must complete the following six required MCJ core graduate courses, representing 18 credit hours:

- CRJU 5001 CJ Systems, Policies & Practices
- CRJU 5002 Criminological Theory
- CRJU 5003 Research Methods
- CRJU 5004 Statistics
- CRJU 5005 Law & Society
- CRJU 5361 Capstone OR CRJU 6950 Master’s Thesis

Graduate course descriptions can be found in the graduate course catalog. Students must receive a B- or better in all graduate courses. Students who receive a lower grade may retake the graduate class once; students who fail to receive a B- or better the second time will be dropped from the MCJ program.

All MCJ students, except those pursuing the thesis option, are required to complete CRJU 5361, Capstone Seminar. (Students admitted prior to Spring 2009 may opt to take the comprehensive exam (see Section 5.5)). The graduate MCJ Capstone Seminar is taken during the last semester of the student’s MCJ degree program. All core graduate courses should be completed before the Capstone Seminar is taken. The graduate Capstone cannot be taken during the summer semester.

For their graduate capstone projects, students work with a client in a public, private, or nonprofit agency to identify a problem and then, using the knowledge and skills they have gained in the program, carry out a project that results in a final paper and presentation. Capstone projects take many different forms including statistical analysis, business plans, marketing plans, surveys and interviews, salary studies, etc. All students in the Capstone are required to pose a research question and propose methodology used to answer that question. Capstone topics, research questions and methodology must approved by the Capstone professor. The principle of the course is that it provides students with an opportunity to integrate what they have learned in graduate school and apply their knowledge and skills to a real-world problem. Further, the Capstone provides the faculty with an opportunity to judge the graduate student’s ability to perform such work.

For important details about the capstone course requirements, please consult the MCJ Capstone website and the course syllabus for that semester from the capstone professor.
Elective Graduate courses

Students must complete a minimum of six elective graduate courses (18 semester graduates hours) in graduate CRJU courses. Students should discuss graduate elective options with their Student Services Coordinator and faculty advisor. All elective graduate courses are three credit hours. Please consult the University of Colorado Denver Catalog for a complete description of elective graduate courses: http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/index.php. Given that internet links can change over time, please be sure that this link has directed you to the “Graduate Course Catalogue.” Elective graduate courses must be taken from graduate courses within CRJU 5006-6600 (but see below).

Other Elective Graduate Courses

With pre-approval of one’s faculty advisor, a student may have up to nine semester graduate credit hours of non-criminal justice course work at the 5000 or greater level apply toward the MCJ degree. Students may take these 5000 or greater level elective courses in SPA’s MPA program, as well as graduate-level courses in other schools and colleges within UC Denver and the University of Colorado system or at other accredited universities and colleges.

Transfer Credits

Students who have taken graduate-level criminal justice course work at institutions other than the University of Colorado Denver may be able to transfer some portion of that graduate work into the UCD SPA MCJ program. A maximum of nine graduate level semester hours may be transferred. Transfer of credits is not guaranteed.

Students should request transfer of graduate credits immediately after successfully completing one semester of MCJ graduate course work as a regularly admitted degree MCJ graduate student. In order to request a transfer of graduate credit, students need to complete the Transfer of Credit Form available through the Graduate School and attach official transcripts to the form. Following a review of this form, the Student Services Coordinator will notify the student of acceptance or rejection of his/her transfer of credit request.

Independent Study

Students who are interested in pursuing a specific line of study or inquiry which is not covered through the regular course offerings may elect to establish a program of graduate independent study with one of the faculty. The student needs first to consider what area of study she/he would like to pursue and discuss the topic with a willing faculty supervisor. The student and the faculty member will then develop a course of graduate-level study which meets the requirements of the University of Colorado Denver, SPA and the needs of the student. The student must then complete a UC Denver Special Processing Form (available from the SPA office) and request approval by the supervising faculty member. The form must be submitted and approved by the posted add/drop period. Upon completing this process, the student will then be registered for CRJU 6840 Independent Study.
Independent study graduate courses are subject to the following conditions. Participating students must be fully admitted to the MCJ program. Students must have completed a minimum of 12 semester graduate-level credit hours in criminal justice course work with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. The graduate credit hours for any one independent study course may vary from one to three for a semester; the exact graduate credit hours are determined by the faculty supervisor and will be appropriate with the degree of complexity and difficulty of the project. No more than six graduate credit hours of Independent Study may be applied toward the MCJ degree.

**Internship**

Students who have not had the equivalent of at least one year of professional experience in the field of criminal justice following the awarding of a Bachelor degree are required to enroll in Field Study in Criminal Justice (CRJU 6910).

Students who must complete an Internship will work part-time or full-time as interns for local, state, or federal criminal justice or juvenile justice agencies. The internships may be paid or unpaid, depending upon the agency involved. The objectives of the internship are:

(a) to expose MCJ students to the challenging career opportunities that exist in the criminal justice system;

(b) to enable criminal justice agencies and organizations to attract good MCJ students to government, thereby improving the overall quality of the criminal justice system;

(c) to provide pre-service MCJ students with practical work experiences that allow them to link classroom training with praxis in the criminal justice system; and

(d) to enhance MCJ students’ experiences which will allow them to make informed career decisions.

**Internship requirements and procedures**

In their internships, students must meet both the requirements of their employing agency, those of the School of Public Affairs and those of the Graduate School. The requirements of the employer are established before actually beginning work through a written agreement. The work period can be for an academic semester or during the summer, and work schedules are arranged with the student’s employing agency. In addition, both the employer and the student will complete an evaluation of the internship experience upon completion of the hours.

In addition to performing work for the internship supervisor, students also write a paper to describe the nature of the field experience, how they used the knowledge and skills they gained
through their course work, and the knowledge and skills they gained in the internship. Portions of this paper should compare and contrast the learning in the organization with learning from the scholarly literature and classroom instruction. The field study instructor will advise the student on the paper, read and provide feedback, and give a final grade for the paper and the internship.

Students should contact their Student Services Coordinator to obtain more detailed policies on internships. (These policies can also be obtained from the SPA website in the form of a handbook.) The next step is for the student to find an internship. Requests for interns from agencies and organizations are posted on the SPA Job and Professional Experience Portal. Students use the file to identify potential positions. Alternatively, students may initiate contact with agencies not included on the Job Portal to seek internships. Students should also contact their advisors and other faculty who may have expertise and contacts in the specific area of interest for suggestions concerning internships. Students are responsible for identifying potential internships, contacting the agencies and arranging for interviews. The SPA office is able to facilitate this process, but the final responsibility lies with the student.

When the student has initially established an internship relationship with an agency or organization, the intern’s supervisor at the agency will need to complete a short form outlining the agreement between the organization and the student and the tasks in which the intern will be involved. The field study instructor must approve the agreement before the student begins work.

During their internships, students should meet periodically with their field study instructors to discuss the internship work, how it is building on course work, the knowledge and skills being acquired, and the paper to be produced. Additionally, a site visit by the instructor is scheduled upon completion of 50% of the intern’s field hours whenever possible. The paper must be completed one week prior to the end of the semester in order for a grade to be assigned and credit obtained for the course.

Upon completion of the internship program, both the intern and the supervisor will complete an evaluation report. These forms and other internship information are available on the SPA website in the Internship Handbook. All products required by the internship must be submitted to the field study instructor.

_Request To Waive Internship Requirement_

The Director of the MCJ program examines each student’s application to the program and determines whether an internship is appropriate or should be waived, and students are notified of this decision in their admission letter. Students who believe vital experiences have been overlooked may ask the MCJ Director to reconsider the decision by submitting a Request to Waive the Internship Requirement form, available from the SPA office or the SPA website.
Some graduate students who are initially required to take the graduates internship later obtain employment that would merit a waiver while still a student in the MCJ program. In such circumstances, the student can apply for a waiver of the internship requirement.

8.5 Comprehensive Examination

MCJ students admitted before Spring 2009 may opt to take a written comprehensive exam in lieu of CRJU 5361 Capstone Seminar or CRJU 6950 Master’s Thesis. The graduate-level comprehensive exam will cover the entire field of criminal justice, including the system components of police, courts, and corrections. The exam questions will be derived in general from the literature included in the MCJ core graduate classes, plus literature in two criminal justice graduate elective courses taken in the MCJ graduate program. Thus, a total of six mandatory, essay-based questions—four covering each of the core graduate courses and two covering graduate elective courses—comprise the exam. Students are expected to take the comprehensive exam in the last semester of completing all required graduate course work. No student will be permitted to take the comprehensive exam that has not successfully completed all MCJ core graduate courses and a minimum of 15 semester credit hours in criminal justice elective graduate courses with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

Administration

The comprehensive exam will be offered mid-November during the fall semester and mid-April during spring semester. It comprises a four-day, written take-home exam that is designed and graded by faculty members in the MCJ program. The administration of the exam is subject to the academic honesty provisions contained in the UC Denver Student Academic Honor Code (see University Catalog).

Grading

There are two possible grades for the comprehensive exam: pass or fail. A pass grade is given to students who demonstrate proficiency on all six exam questions. A fail grade is given to students who demonstrate deficiency on three or more of the exam questions. A contingent pass is given to students who demonstrate proficiency on at least four of the six questions. Students failing either one or two questions will be given the opportunity to address their deficiencies in a subsequent re-write of these questions before the end of the semester in which the exam is taken. If the re-write demonstrates proficiency, then the student is given a pass on the exam; if the re-write is deficient, the student receives a fail on the exam. Students who fail the exam will have a second opportunity to retake the exam the following semester. If a student fails the comprehensive exam a second time, he/she will be required to leave the program.
8.6 Thesis Option

The thesis option is available for MCJ students who are interested in undertaking a research project, pursuing careers in research, or entering the Ph.D. program. Students must select a thesis advisor from the faculty to oversee their work. A thesis may be completed in one semester, but often requires a two-semester, six-credit hour time frame. The student conducts a comprehensive review of the theoretical and research literature in the subject area of their thesis and collects original data or analyzes existing data in new ways.

Minimum eligibility requirements for pursuing a thesis include:
1. Successful completion of all core graduate courses;
2. Overall GPA of 3.50 in the MCJ program and permission of faculty advisor;
3. Preliminary identification of a thesis topic or area of interest; and
4. Agreement of two SPA faculty members to serve on the thesis committee (one as Thesis Advisor).

A student wishing to undertake the thesis option applies formally through her/his faculty academic advisor, first, to establish eligibility with respect to the above criteria, and second, to identify appropriate faculty members to serve on the student’s thesis committee. The thesis committee consists of three people: a major advisor who is a full-time SPA faculty member, a second faculty member, and a third person who is an expert in the subject area of the thesis. This person may be either from the community or another school or department.

Thesis Process

Eligible graduate students will be expected to follow a prescribed process in completing the requirements of the thesis option. An overview of the process is provided below.

Before the MCJ graduate student will be allowed to enroll for thesis credit, the thesis committee must formally approve a written thesis prospectus or proposal, which includes a thesis plan, a preliminary literature review, problem statement, and a timetable for completion. Upon approval of the prospectus, the student will be allowed to enroll in CRJU 6950, Master’s Thesis. The grade “In Progress” (IP) will be awarded until the thesis has been completed and approved. During this time, the student will work with the thesis committee in pursuing the thesis plan.

The thesis document will be prepared in accordance with “Directions for Preparing Masters’ and Doctoral Thesis,” available from the SPA Student Coordinators, or the UC Denver Graduate School.
9. Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to support those students who would not be able to attend SPA without aid. The primary source of information about student financial assistance is the University’s Financial Aid Office. Students interested in learning about available scholarships should contact the Scholarship Resource Office at UCD.

The School of Public Affairs offers several types of financial assistance to students. This includes graduate assistantships that are paid out at an hourly rate for student to work with faculty and staff as well as a limited number of scholarships. To apply for a graduate assistantship or a scholarship, visit the SPA website. Applications for the next academic year fall semester are due back to the SPA office by March 1. All applications offered through the University and SPA can be applied for through the online Scholarship Application in the UCDAccess portal. Applying for a graduate assistantship is no guarantee that a graduate assistantship will be awarded.

SPA has entered into agreements for reduced tuition for a limited number of entering students who have served in the Peace Corps, City Year, and AmeriCorps. For information about these programs, visit the SPA website or contact the Director of Recruitment and Career Services.

10. Graduation

Graduate students who have completed all the requirements for the MCJ degree can apply for candidacy and graduation in the fall, spring, or summer semesters. (Students who graduate in the summer may participate in graduation ceremonies in the fall. No ceremonies are held in the summer.) There are, however, deadlines for the submission of graduation materials. Should students not be able to meet the deadlines, or if they are unable to complete all the degree requirements by the end of the term in which they seek to graduate, they can reapply for graduation in a subsequent semester.

In order to graduate, graduate students must submit to SPA an approved Application for Admission to Candidacy no later than the add/drop deadline of the semester in which they plan to graduate. In addition, students are also required to notify the Registrar’s Office of their intent to graduate by completing the Graduation Application in the UCDAccess portal.

Students who have completed the Application for Admission to Candidacy and are on the graduation list but find that they will not be able to complete the program requirements before graduation should notify the SPA office as quickly as possible. Any questions regarding graduation procedures should be directed to the Student Service Coordinators.
11. Academic Policies

11.1 Grading Scale

Grades assigned in SPA graduate courses (except thesis) are based on an A to F scale, with each letter grade representing the following standard narrative description:

**A** = Excellent performance in all aspects of the work of the graduate course; significant intellectual contributions to class based on assigned reading and personal background. (*A* = 4.0 grade points; *A-* = 3.7 grade points.)

**B** = Excellent performance in some aspects of the work of the graduate course, good performance in other aspects; ability to make contributions on the basis of reading and personal background. (*B+* = 3.3 grade points; *B* = 3.0 grade points; *B-* = 2.7 grade points.)

**C** = Good performance in some aspects of the work of the graduate course, but below the standard expected of graduate students in other aspects; identifiable weaknesses in comprehension of some of the assigned reading material. (*C+* = 2.3 grade points; *C* = 2.0 grade points; *C-* = 1.7 grade points.)

**D** = Substandard performance in all aspects of the work of the graduate course; inadequate comprehension of assigned reading material. (*D+* = 1.3 grade points; *D* = 1.0 grade point; *D-* = 0.7 grade point.)

**F** = Level of performance demonstrably below that expected of a graduate student; little or no indication, based on performance, that the student can succeed in a graduate program. (*F* = 0.0 grade points.)

11.2 Probation/Suspension

The calculation of cumulative graduate GPA shall be based on all graduate course work applied to the MCJ degree, including any graduate courses taken as a non-degree student. (Note: Graduate courses taken in non-degree status are not included in the overall calculation of GPA on the official transcript, but are included in the overall calculation of GPA within SPA for graduation purposes.)

A graduate student who fails to maintain an overall “B” (3.0) grade-point average will be placed on academic probation.

Probationary status shall not be allowed to extend beyond two semesters (including summer session) during which the graduate student is enrolled. Failure on the part of the graduate student to remove himself/herself from probation by achieving an overall GPA of at least 3.0 during this time interval will result in automatic suspension from SPA. Students may appeal this decision. A suspended graduate student is eligible to apply for readmission after one year. Approval or rejection of this application rests jointly with the MCJ director.
11.3 Course Completion Policies

Retaking Graduate courses

An MCJ graduate student may retake no more than two graduate courses during the course of the MCJ degree program, regardless of whether the need for a retake resulted from a low grade, an incomplete, or a course withdrawal. Discretion is considered by the MCJ Director for exceptional, documented circumstances (i.e., military deployment, major medical emergency).

A graduate student who receives a letter grade for a graduate course that is too low to qualify for graduate credit may retake the graduate course once. Both grades will be used to calculate the student’s overall graduate GPA. To retake a graduate course, the student must re-enroll and pay tuition and fees for the graduate course again.

Incomplete Grades

An “Incomplete” may be granted when the student has successfully completed 75 percent or more of the graduate course and is prevented from completing the graduate class by circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor has discretion as to whether to grant an “Incomplete,” and students should be aware that faculty are not required to grant “Incompletes.” In addition, students in online graduate courses should be aware that they will not have access to the course shell after the ending date of the graduate course, and so incompletes are not available for work that must be completed using the graduate course shell.

If the instructor agrees to grant an Incomplete, the student must make arrangements to complete the remaining graduate coursework with the original instructor within one year by completing an “Incomplete Contract.” The student may not “sit in” on the graduate class in subsequent semesters.

Once the graduate coursework is completed, the instructor will change the incomplete grade to a letter grade. The Incomplete notation will appear along with the final grade on the student’s transcript. If the coursework is not completed within a year, the Incomplete will automatically change to an F unless the student and the instructor have agreed in writing to an extension.

A student may be granted no more than two Incompletes during the course of the graduate degree program, absent documented exceptional circumstances and approval by the Director of the MCJ program. No Incompletes may be granted in capstone graduate courses.
Course Revalidation Policy

The graduate course revalidation process is required by university policy for graduate courses that were taken more than seven years ago. The objective of course revalidation is to ensure that the student’s understanding of coursework is not dated and obsolete and that the student has the information needed to successfully complete the graduate capstone.

To revalidate a graduate course, the student must submit a one-page review of what they learned in the graduate class being revalidated, how the coursework will apply (or applies) to the student’s profession, and what has changed in the field of criminology and criminal justice since the student took the course (i.e., new literature, findings, issues of interest, etc.). The student must dedicate equal space to each of those three parts of the revalidation document.

The student should submit the forms to your Student Service Coordinator and the Director of the MCJ Program. The documentation submitted by the student for revalidation will be reviewed, and a phone conversation about the graduate course material may be scheduled. In addition, a face-to-face meeting of the graduate student with the MCJ Program Director and relevant faculty will be scheduled. Following this process, the MCJ Program Director will make a determination about revalidating the course(s). Graduate courses not revalidated must be retaken.

Drops/Withdrawals

Deadlines for dropping a graduate course are set by the Office of the Registrar and posted on the Academic Calendar each semester. Students are responsible for knowing these deadlines. Students can drop a course during the first week of the semester without being assessed full tuition and without having the course appear on their transcript. Graduate students who drop a graduate course after the first week but before census date may drop in the UCDAccess portal, but a drop charge will apply. Students in intensive format graduate classes must drop prior to the third class meeting to be eligible for a tuition adjustment.

After census date (typically the third Wednesday of the semester), the student may withdraw from the graduate course by submitting a Schedule Adjustment Form with the signature of the instructor. A “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.

If the request to withdraw is made after the 10th week of graduate classes, the student must file a late drop petition, in addition to a completed Schedule Adjustment Form, in order to obtain special approval from the MCJ Program Director and the Graduate School Dean’s office. Students will not be allowed to drop after the 10th week of graduate classes simply because they are failing the course; it is the student’s responsibility to work with the instructor to determine if the graduate course should be dropped due to failing grades prior to the 10th week of graduate classes. If the student is permitted to withdraw, a “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.
No tuition reimbursements are available for withdrawals made after census date, and students may be required to repay financial aid received. Students who believe their circumstances justify an exception to financial obligations may appeal to the University's Tuition Appeals Coordinator.

Students must initiate a drop or withdrawal and follow the appropriate procedures. Students who fail to do this and do not complete the coursework will be issued a letter grade of “F” for the graduate course.

A student is allowed to withdraw from no more than two graduate courses during the course of the MCJ degree program, absent documented exceptional circumstances and approval by the Program Director.

Grade Changes

Students are not permitted to request grade changes for graduate courses in which a final letter grade (other than an incomplete) has been received except as a result of instructor error or as otherwise warranted through the academic grievance process. A student may not enter into an agreement with an instructor to retroactively change a final letter grade based on work completed by the student after the course has ended.

12. Academic Grievance and Appeals Process – Suspension, Termination/Dismissal, or Denial of Progression

The following procedures address those student appeals and grievances arising from suspension, termination/dismissal, or denial of progression based on unsatisfactory academic performances from the Graduate School or its programs.

The intent of the academic appeal procedure is to assure fairness and due process to all involved parties. Good faith efforts should always be made by students, faculty, and administration to settle all appeals, complaints, and grievances on an informal basis. These efforts will include conferences between the persons directly involved and others whom these persons believe to be able to help solve the problems.

Definitions

Students may find themselves terminated from a graduate program for a number of reasons. Sometimes the language and policies behind the termination can be confusing. These definitions are provided to shed some light on the nuances between terms.

Suspension – Removal of the student from the graduate program for a defined period of time and/or the specification that a student must fulfill certain requirements before re-admission or
re-instatement will be considered. While suspended the student is not entitled to attend classes, use University facilities, participate in University activities, or be employed by the University. Special conditions may be stipulated for reinstatement at the conclusion of the period of reinstatement of the period of suspension. The student is not in good standing with the University during the term of the suspension.

Termination/dismissal – Terms used synonymously to refer to a student being withdrawn from a graduate program and Graduate School. Official notification is sent to students by email and US mail. Students terminated have the right to appeal their dismissal in writing within one week per this policy. As with a suspension, the student is no longer entitled to attend classes, use University facilities, participate in University activities, or be employed by the University as a student.

Denial of Progress – Students failing to meet program progression criteria, with course failures, too many incomplete grades, or some other programmatic issue, would fall into this category. Students in this category are may be suspended or terminated/dismissed and be defined by the corresponding criteria above.

Graduate programs and students should have an open communication with one another. Graduate programs have developed programmatic handbooks to assist students through their graduate studies. Students are responsible for following the policies and procedures as outlined in the Graduate School and program handbooks and Rules. Ignorance of the guidelines and procedures will not constitute an affirmative defense in an appeals process.

General Procedures

1. The student should be informed in writing by the relevant instructor, faculty committee, Program Director, or administrator (e.g., Dean or Assistant Dean) that he/she is not meeting the academic requirements to continue in the graduate program. Written notices of course failures, unsatisfactory program progress, and intent to request dismissal or suspension from the Graduate School are distributed to the involved student, the student's academic advisor, the Program Director, the program progression’s committee (if present), and the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.

2. Should the student disagree with the decision made by the faculty, committee, Program Director, or administrator regarding course failure or intent to terminate progression in the program based on unsatisfactory academic performance, the student should initiate a conference with the involved person(s) to determine if the disagreement can be resolved within 2 weeks.

3. If the results of the first conference are not acceptable to the student, the student informs the involved faculty within 1 week and requests a conference with the involved faculty and Program Director or school administrator. NOTE: This step is required only in situations in which
the Program Director and/or school administrator have not already approved or concurred with the initial notice of failure or intent to terminate.

4. If the consensus of the program is still that the student should be terminated/dismissed or suspended, the Program Director or Chairperson notifies the Graduate School Assistant Dean and recommends the student’s dismissal or suspension. The email or letter outlines the reason for the dismissal or suspension and steps taken to date. If suspension is recommended, the recommendation also includes specific criteria for term of the suspension and requirements for reinstatement.

5. The Assistant Dean will review the student’s academic record and submitted information from the program to ensure that the student has received due process. If the student’s academic record and/or submitted information support termination/dismissal, the student will be dismissed from the program and the Graduate School. If suspension is recommended and supported by the academic record and submitted information, the student will be suspended per the request. The student will be notified by email and US mail. The program will be notified by email.

Written Appeal Procedures

1. Should the student wish to appeal the Assistant Dean’s decision, the student should submit a written response to the Dean within one week of receiving the written notice of suspension or termination/dismissal. The appeal should include rationale for the appeal and desired outcome. The student also may request a personal interview with the Dean to discuss the situation after they have submitted their written appeal.

2. The final decision rests with the Dean of the Graduate School. At the Dean’s discretion, he/she may discuss the Assistant Dean’s decision with the involved faculty and student’s program, as well as any other persons affected by the recommended resolutions.

3. The Dean will notify the student of her/his decision by email and certified U.S. mail within 5 working days of submission of the appeal or interview with the student (whichever falls last). The decision of the Dean is final.

4. If the student is suspended, terminated/dismissed, or otherwise unable to continue his or her academic studies either temporarily or permanently because of disciplinary or other action, the Dean shall notify the appropriate CU Registrar of the change in the student’s academic status and order the Registrar to suspend the student’s registration.

13. Academic Grievance and Appeals Process – Academic Grievances

The following procedures address challenges to academic actions or decisions, including but not limited to actions such as an academic grade or evaluation of a student’s work in a course,
seminar, or other academic forum; a decision with respect to a student’s academic standing in a program or at the School; unjust treatment by a faculty member in a class; actions related to dissertation or capstone procedures.

This policy refers to academic grievances within the MCJ program in the School of Public Affairs. The University has established mechanisms for non-academic grievances such as claims of sexual harassment, complaints against university administrative employees, policies, or procedures, interpersonal conflict resolution, and issues relating to student employment, and students should use those mechanisms for non-academic grievances. Grievances involving claims of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty are subject to the Graduate School’s Discipline policy.

The intent of the academic appeal procedure is to assure fairness and due process to all involved parties. Good faith efforts should always be made by students, faculty, and administration to settle all appeals, complaints, and grievances on an informal basis. These efforts will include conferences between the persons directly involved and others whom these persons believe to be able to help solve the problems.

**General Procedures**

1. **Informal Resolution.** The student is strongly encouraged to first attempt to informally resolve the grievance through discussion with the faculty member(s) involved.

2. **Filing the Grievance.** If the student is unable to resolve the dispute with the faculty member(s), he or she should file a written grievance with the Director of the MCJ Program, with a copy to the Dean of the UCD Graduate School. Absent unusual circumstances, the grievance should be filed within 30 days after the student learns of the event giving rise to the grievance.

The written grievance may be filed via e-mail or delivered to the MCJ Director and the UCD Graduate School Dean. The grievance should clearly state the basis for the complaint and the remedy requested, and should include any evidence that supports the grievance, such as graduate class syllabi, assignments, and statements from other graduate students.

Students should be aware that grades and other evaluations of student work are traditionally within the jurisdiction of individual instructors, and are not likely to be changed absent evidence that the faculty member (1) determined the grade based on considerations other than student performance; (2) substantially differed from previously announced criteria or procedures in determining the grade; or (3) violated university or school policy in determining the grade. The student bears the burden of proof on these allegations.

3. **Investigating the Grievance.** The MCJ Director will acknowledge receipt of the grievance, forward a copy to the faculty member(s) involved, and begin the investigation of the circumstances of the grievance. He/she may request additional information from the graduate
student. The faculty member(s) involved may submit a written response to the grievance, including any evidence in opposition to the grievance, within 21 days of receipt of the grievance.

If the grievance involves the need for substantial academic expertise in a particular field in order to assess whether there is a basis for the grievance, the MCJ Director may appoint a panel of faculty members with expertise in the area to investigate the grievance. In the event that the MCJ Director is involved in the grievance, the UCD Graduate School Dean shall directly address the grievance.

4. **Decision by the MCJ Director.** Within 30 days of the filing of the grievance, the MCJ Director (or the members of the faculty panel, or UCD Graduate Dean, if applicable) shall create a written report containing the disposition of the grievance, together with the reasons for the conclusions contained in the report. The MCJ Director shall forward the report to the student and the faculty member(s), together with his/her decision on the disposition of the grievance.

**Appealing the Decision of the MCJ Director.** If the student is not satisfied with the MCJ Director’s decision, he or she may make a written request to the UCD Graduate School Dean within five days. The UCD Graduate School Dean will then consider all evidence and decide whether to uphold or deny the appeal, and shall notify the student and faculty member(s) within two weeks.

The decision of the UCD Graduate School Dean is final with respect to students in the MCJ degree program.

Any deadline in this policy may be waived with the agreement of the student and the School if needed to ensure that all relevant information is considered.

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**14. Academic Discipline Policy and Procedure**

According to the Laws of the Regents of the University of Colorado, all matters of academic policy and degree program administration, including academic dishonesty, are under the jurisdiction of the University's schools and colleges. Likewise, matters of student conduct resulting in disruption of the learning environment are also subject to disciplinary action by administrators of the schools and colleges, as well as by campus administrators and campus-wide adjudicative panels.

While definitions and examples of what comprises the substance of academic dishonesty and disruptive behavior subject to disciplinary action are to be found in the catalogs of the University of Colorado at Denver, the purpose of this document is to specify what procedures the MCJ program will follow in the handling of potential disciplinary infractions. Authority for final action on any matter concerning potential disciplinary infractions lies with the Graduate School Dean.
Identification of Potential Disciplinary Infraction and Initial Action by SPA Faculty and Administration. It is the responsibility of students at the University of Colorado to be aware of what the expected standards of academic integrity and student conduct are on the campus at which they are enrolled. It is also the responsibility of students to report incidents of academic dishonesty or disruptive conduct in the learning environment to either the faculty member in charge of the course in which the alleged conduct occurred, or to school administrators (dean, associate deans, or degree program directors).

Whether through direct experience or information provided by a student, if a faculty member discovers an incident of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism or cheating; see catalog for list of infractions), s/he has the discretion of imposing grade penalties ranging from a point reduction on the assignment, to a grade of F for the assignment, to a grade of F for the course.

Whether through direct experience or information provided by a student, if a faculty member discovers student behavior disruptive of the educational environment, s/he may temporarily suspend the student from further classroom participation for a period of no longer than two weeks, pending an inquiry into the incident by the faculty member and/or the Graduate School Dean and campus authorities. If the faculty member determines that the infraction is serious enough to warrant administrative dismissal from the class, s/he may file such a request with the Graduate School Dean. The administration of the school may also determine to take such action on its own initiative, subsequent to inquiry into the matter and after affording the student an opportunity to apprise school administrators of his or her version of the circumstances of the alleged infraction.

If a faculty member assigns a grade of F to coursework or as a course grade for reasons of academic dishonesty, s/he shall so inform the student of this action in writing; and shall maintain a record of any evidence documenting the infraction. If the Graduate School Dean determines that a student should be administratively dropped from a course for disruptive behavior, the student will also be informed in writing. Such a determination will constitute final action on the matter, appealable to appropriate authorities in the UCD Graduate School.

Record Keeping and Repeat Offenses. Written notice to a student of the award of an F grade by a faculty member for reasons of academic dishonesty or of Administrative Disenrollment in a class by the Graduate School Dean for reasons of disruptive behavior will be kept on file in the office of the Graduate School Dean of the campus at which the disciplinary infraction occurred. If there are no repeated disciplinary infractions by the student, upon successful completion of a degree program the written notice will be removed from the files of the Dean and destroyed. If, however, during a student's continued matriculation in a degree program s/he is found to have committed another disciplinary infraction, such written notice of prior infractions and penalties assigned will be used in determining the severity of the penalty that should be levied for a repeat offense, including recommendation to the Graduate School Dean that the student should be dismissed from the degree program for disciplinary reasons. If the recommendation is for permanent dismissal from the program, the student has the right to an immediate review by a Disciplinary Appeals Committee (DAC, described below), as well as to representation. If
counsel represents a student, the Office of University Counsel will advise the DAC in the discharge of its mission.

**Appeals.** If a student subject to suspension or permanent dismissal as described above decides to appeal such action, s/he must do so within 10 working days of receiving notification in writing from the Dean. The appeal must take the form of a letter to the Dean, stating why such action should not be taken, and requesting review by a Disciplinary Appeals Committee (DAC). Within ten working days of the receipt of such an appeal, the Dean shall empanel a DAC, comprised of three tenured or tenure-track SPA faculty with no prior involvement in the matter subject to appeal. If the student so desires, s/he may provide a list of no more than three SPA faculty to the Dean, from among whom the Dean may choose one of the three faculty members to serve on the committee.

The Dean shall designate one member of the committee to act as chair. The DAC will review all relevant documentation during the course of inquiry into the alleged disciplinary infraction and action taken by the faculty and/or school administration. The DAC may request additional information from all parties concerned, including interviews, during the course of its inquiry.

When its work is concluded, which must be within 30 working days of its empanelment, the DAC will file a report summarizing its inquiry, stating its findings, and making its recommendations for action to the Dean. The DAC may make recommendations ranging from exoneration of the student’s conduct, to upholding whatever penalty has been assigned below, to suspension from the degree program for an academic term, to permanent dismissal from the program. In making its recommendations, the DAC shall consider the proportionality of the recommended penalty to the nature of the infraction, and shall also take into consideration whether the student has previously committed one or more similar offenses while enrolled at the school.

**Final Action by the Dean.** Within ten working days of receipt of the DAC's report, the Dean will take final action on the appeal. Final action shall take the form of a letter to the student stating the action and the reasons for taking it. The Dean will append a copy of the DAC’s report to the letter. The Dean’s decision shall constitute final action by the School of Public Affairs.

**Appeal to Campus Authorities.** Depending on the nature of the disciplinary infraction (i.e., academic dishonesty or inappropriate student conduct) and the penalty assigned, the student may appeal the school’s final action to the UCD Graduate Council, or to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs.

**Constitutional Rights.** Nothing in this procedure is intended nor should it be construed as abrogating the rights under law accruing to any student at the University of Colorado.