

# Criminal Justice and Criminology MA

## Methodological and Statistical Competency

### Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's methodological and statistical abilities.

**Providing Department:** Criminal Justice and Criminology MA

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### Competency In Employing Elements Of Qualitative And/or Quantitative Research Methods

#### Learning Objective Description:

Competency in employing elements of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods to design scientific-based projects in the field of criminal justice and criminology.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Successful Execution Of Study And Statistics

#### Indicator Description:

Students will successfully execute the methodology and statistical analyses needed for their thesis. They will also recognize the assumptions and limitations underlying the research methods and statistical techniques used and accurately interpret the results.

Attached Files

 [Thesis Evaluation Rubric \(2\).docx](#)

#### Criterion Description:

Students will score at least an 80% on each section of the methodological and statistical sections of the thesis rubric. These include 1. mode of inquiry, 2. execution of study, 3. interpretation of results, and 4. analysis.

#### Findings Description:

In AY 2023-2024, 6 MA students defended their thesis. Of these 6 students, 2 students scored at least an 80% on each of the methodological and statistical sections of the thesis rubric and 4 students scored below an 80% on these sections of the thesis rubric. The following provides more details on the scores of the students who scored below an 80% on these sections of the thesis rubric:

Student 1: Scored an 80% on 1. mode of inquiry and scored a 60% on 2. execution of study, 3. interpretation of results, 4. analysis; Student 2: Scored an 80% on 1. mode of inquiry, 3. interpretation of results, 4. analysis, and scored a 60% on 2. execution of study; Student 3: Scored an 80% on 1. mode of inquiry, 2. execution of study, 3. interpretation of results, and scored a 60% on 4. analysis; Student 4: Scored a 100% on 1. mode of inquiry, scored a 60% on 2. execution of study and 3. interpretation of results, and scored an 80% on 4. analysis.

As such, this criterion was not met.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### Successful Execution Of Study and Statistics

#### Action Description:

The program will continue to assess successful execution of study and statistics using the thesis evaluation rubric. Specifically, the following sections of the thesis evaluation rubric are used for this assessment: 1. mode of inquiry, 2. execution of study, 3. interpretation of results, and 4. analysis.

Attached Files

## Research Competence

### Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's ability to conceptualize and deliver an original research paper.

**Providing Department:** Criminal Justice and Criminology MA

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### Competency In Conducting Original Criminal Justice And Criminology Research

#### Learning Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to conduct original research in criminal justice and criminology.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Conceptualization And Delivery Of The Thesis

#### Indicator Description:

Successful conceptualization and delivery of an original research study as demonstrated by the defense of a Thesis using a faculty-developed rubric. The rubric uses a 1 (insignificant) to 5 (critically significant) rating of specific criteria pertaining to conceptualization and delivery of an original research paper. These elements include: choice of problem, theoretical framework, written presentation, originality of idea and/or approach, and contribution to the field.

#### Attached Files

[Thesis Evaluation Rubric \(2\)\\_ \(2\).docx](#)

#### Criterion Description:

Students will demonstrate their ability to conceptualize and write an original research study within the field of criminal justice or criminology by completing a thesis. Students will score at least an 80% on each of the related elements of the faculty developed rubric.

#### Findings Description:

In AY 2023-2024, 6 MA students defended their thesis. Of these 6 students, 2 students scored at least an 80% on all sections of the thesis rubric and 4 students failed to score above an 80% on all sections of the thesis rubric. The following provides more details on the scores of the students who scored below an 80% on all sections:

Student 1: Scored at least an 80% on 3 sections of the rubric (choice of problem, mode of inquiry, originality of idea) and scored below an 80% on 6 sections of the rubric (theoretical framework, execution of study, interpretation of results, analysis, written presentation, contribution to the field);

Student 2: Scored at least an 80% on 4 sections of the rubric (choice of problem, mode of inquiry, interpretation of results, analysis) and scored below an 80% on 5 sections of the rubric (theoretical framework, execution of study, written presentation, originality of idea, contribution to the field).

Student 3: Scored at least an 80% on 7 sections of the rubric (choice of problem, mode of inquiry, execution of study, interpretation of results, written presentation, originality of idea, contribution to the field) and scored below an 80% on 2 sections of the rubric (theoretical framework, analysis);

Student 4: Scored at least an 80% on 6 sections of the rubric (choice of problem, theoretical framework, mode of inquiry, analysis, written presentation, originality of idea) and below an 80% on 3 sections of the rubric (execution of the study, interpretation of results, contribution to the field).

As such, this criterion was not met.

## Conceptualization And Delivery Of The Thesis

### Action Description:

The program will continue to assess students ability to conceptualize and write an original research study within the field of criminal justice or criminology by completing a thesis using the attached rubric. Students will also continue to be provided a "Thesis Step by Step Guide" to help them navigate the thesis process.

Attached Files

[Thesis Evaluation Rubric.docx](#)

## Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

### Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

#### Closing Summary

1. GSAC will continue to closely monitor MA student competencies in statistics and research methodology.
2. GSAC will continue to work with media and other marketing entities to create ways to attract more interest in our nationally ranked doctoral program.
3. Program will incorporate external review feedback into assessment plan.

#### Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The program continued to collect data about MA theses completion and student competencies in statistics and research methodology using the Thesis Evaluation Rubric. Starting AY 2023-2024 MA students were provided with a "Thesis Step by Step Guide" to help them navigate the thesis process. Additionally, in Summer 2023 and Summer 2024 MA students had the option to take a summer course called "Academic Writing" which discussed the steps involved in writing a thesis and/or publishable article, as well as the proper formatting for a thesis/research article.

The program continued to recruit highly qualified MA students into the PhD program. For example, 4 of the MA students who graduated in Spring or Summer 2024 have joined our new PhD cohort.

In AY 2023-2024, an external program review of the MA program was conducted. The program received excellent feedback from 2 external reviewers. Additionally, a student satisfaction survey was conducted in Fall 2023 among current MA students. Below are the results of the MA student poll. Program administration and GSAC has begun discussing how to implement the feedback received from the external reviewers and current students in order to improve the MA program.

*Overall Program Satisfaction*

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
How satisfied are you with your overall experience in this master's program?	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	44% 4	56% 5	100% 9
How satisfied are you with the performance of the current Graduate Director?	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	22% 2	78% 7	100% 9

*Curriculum*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
Required courses are available in a manner that allows students to complete their education on time.	0% 0	0% 0	22% 2	78% 7	0% 0	100% 9
Courses offered are reasonably rigorous.	0% 0	0% 0	33% 3	67% 6	0% 0	100% 9

There are enough elective courses that interest me.	22% 2	33% 3	45% 4	0% 0	0% 0	100% 9
My coursework has laid a good foundation for doing independent research.	0% 0	33% 3	11% 1	56% 5	0% 0	100% 9
I understand the requirements to complete this degree program.	0% 0	0% 0	11% 1	89% 8	0% 0	100% 9

*Research/Publication*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
Ample opportunities exist to work with faculty members on research projects.	0% 0	0% 0	22% 2	78% 7	0% 0	100% 9
Faculty members encourage students to publish in journals and similar outlets.	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	100% 9	0% 0	100% 9
Faculty members mentor students on publication opportunities.	0% 0	0% 0	22% 2	78% 7	0% 0	100% 9
On-going faculty member research endeavors at SHSU provide students opportunities for thesis topics/material.	0% 0	0% 0	22% 2	78% 7	0% 0	100% 9
On-going institutional research and development endeavors at SHSU provide students opportunities for thesis topics/material.	0% 0	11% 1	11% 1	78% 7	0% 0	100% 9

*Funding Package*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
The funding package provided to me is adequate.	0% 0	0% 0	33% 3	67% 6	0% 0	100% 9
The funding package is comparable to offers from other universities.	0% 0	0% 0	11% 1	67% 6	22% 2	100% 9
The funding package is distributed fairly among students.	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	89% 8	11% 1	100% 9
Additional scholarship opportunities available to me are adequate.	0% 0	0% 0	33% 3	67% 6	0% 0	100% 9

*Academic Conferences*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
I am strongly encouraged to attend and present at regional and/or national academic conferences (SWACJ, ASC, ACJS, etc.)	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	89% 8	11% 1	100% 9
I am strongly encouraged to attend academic conferences to network with others in the field and make possible contacts for job opportunities.	0% 0	0% 0	11% 1	78% 7	11% 1	100% 9
I have been made aware of what academic conferences have to offer.	0% 0	0% 0	33% 3	67% 6	0% 0	100% 9
Adequate funding resources are available to travel to academic conferences.	0% 0	0% 0	56% 5	33% 3	11% 1	100% 9
I am satisfied with the reimbursement process for travel expenses incurred while attending academic conferences.	0% 0	11% 1	22% 2	56% 5	11% 1	100% 9

*Thesis Process*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
The thesis process was easy to understand.	0% 0	0% 0	67% 6	11% 1	22% 2	100% 9

The location of the thesis forms was easily accessible, and the forms were clear.	0%	0%	33%	45%	22%	100%
	0	0	3	4	2	9
Faculty members are willing to serve on a thesis committee.	0%	0%	11%	67%	22%	100%
	0	0	1	6	2	9
The expectations for my thesis prospectus are clear.	0%	0%	11%	67%	22%	100%
	0	0	1	6	2	9
The expectations for my thesis final defense are clear.	0%	0%	22%	56%	22%	100%
	0	0	2	5	2	9

*College of Criminal Justice Resources*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
I am satisfied with my office.	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%	100%
	0	0	3	6	0	9
Graduate student offices are well equipped.	0%	0%	22%	78%	0%	100%
	0	0	2	7	0	9
I am satisfied with the common spaces available in the CJ building.	0%	0%	44%	56%	0%	100%
	0	0	4	5	0	9

*Professional Development Opportunities*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total
Professional Development opportunities (Beto Lectures, Grant Writing, Brown Bags) that have been offered are of interest to me.	0%	11%	22%	67%	0%	100%
	0	1	2	6	0	9
I would like to see more Professional Development Workshops/Trainings offered.	0%	0%	44%	56%	0%	100%
	0	0	4	5	0	9
Professional Development Workshops are offered at a time that is convenient for me.	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%	100%
	0	0	3	6	0	9

Additionally, students were asked to provide qualitative feedback on the types of professional development workshops that they were interested in, the strengths of the MA program, the weaknesses of the MA program, specific suggestions to strength the program overall, and policies or practices that should be changed or terminated.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Closing Summary:**

1. GSAC will continue to assess successful completion of MA student theses and competencies in statistics and research methodology. This will be executed via the thesis evaluation rubric that thesis committees complete after an MA students' final thesis defense. Additionally, the Graduate Program Director will ask the faculty who teach MA and PhD statistics courses to come up with a detailed sequence of the topics covered in each individual statistics course to ensure that there is no overlap between the statistics courses and that students are exposed to all necessary topics.
2. GSAC will continue to recruit students to our MA program. This will be executed in various ways. First, GSAC (and other program faculty) will encourage our highly qualified undergraduate students to apply for our MA program. Second, GSAC will reach out to institutions in Texas (particularly those that are geographically close by) that do not have master's programs and ask them to provide information to their students about our MA program. Third, GSAC will work with media and other marketing entities to create ways to attract more interest in our MA program.
3. The program will use the feedback received from our recent external program review to improve the MA program. GSAC will review the external reviewer report and create a plan of proposed changes to the MA program. Faculty will also have an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes.