

# Criminal Justice PhD

## Conduct Scientific Research

### Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's ability to conduct scientific research that adds to the current body of knowledge in criminal justice and criminology.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### Doctoral Students Will Be Able To Conduct Original Criminal Justice And Criminology Research

#### Learning Objective Description:

Students completing the Ph.D. program will demonstrate the ability to produce original research by integrating knowledge, skills, and abilities learned throughout the program.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Successful Completion Of The Dissertation

#### Indicator Description:

Successful completion of an original research study as demonstrated by the defense of a Dissertation using a faculty-developed rubric. The rubric uses a 1 (insignificant) to 5 (critically significant) rating of specific criteria each dissertation should address. These criteria include: choice of problem, theoretical framework, mode of inquiry, execution of study, interpretation of results, analysis, written presentation, originality of idea and/or approach, and contribution to the field.

Attached Files

[📄Dissertation Rubric](#)

#### Criterion Description:

Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in an original research study within the field of criminal justice and criminology. At minimum, a dissertation prospectus will include a literature review of relevant empirical literature and a well defined and defensible methodology. The final dissertation will include the statistical analysis appropriate to the methodology described, and the contextualization of the study results within the existing literature. Students defending their final dissertation will receive a score of 80% or above on each of the 9 elements outlined in the dissertation rubric.

#### Findings Description:

Overall, the majority of the students demonstrated competency in conducting original criminal justice and criminological research. Our findings revealed that two of the 8 students fell below the 80% threshold for various indicators including choice of problem (1/2), theoretical framework (2/2), mode of inquiry (1/2), execution of study (2/2), interpretation of results (2/2), analysis (1/2), and written presentation (1/2). All other students (6/8) scored at least a 4/5 (80%) or above on the nine indicators. The average was highest for written presentation (4.63), followed by originality (4.38) and contribution to the field (4.38), then mode of inquiry (4.25) and interpretation of the results (4.25), then choice of problem (4.13), theoretical framework (4.13), and execution of study (4.13).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### Encourage students to submit their research for publication and strengthen their research and statistical skills

#### Action Description:

The findings from our dissertation rubric suggest that the Department needs to continue focusing on strengthening students' research abilities. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities, 4. encouraging and funding students to attend ICPSR statistical workshops over the summer, as well as 5. encouraging and funding students to attend preconference statistical workshops.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Successful Defense Of A Research Portfolio

Indicator Description:

Doctoral students are required to submit and orally defend a portfolio of selected written research products that were developed during their tenure in the doctoral program to a panel of faculty members. The current policy states that the portfolio must contain at least two research articles that are deemed by the committee members as acceptable for submission for publication to a peer reviewed journal.

Criterion Description:

While the current policy states that the minimum requirement for a portfolio defense is two publishable articles, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee would like to start seeing Ph.D. students who are defending their portfolio have at least one paper either published or under review at a peer-reviewed journal at the time of the defense.

Findings Description:

A review of the CVs of Ph.D. students who defended their portfolio in AY16/17 revealed that 100% (4/4) of them had at least 1 peer reviewed paper published at the time of their defense and 75% (3/4) had at least 1 paper under review at a peer reviewed journal. On average, students had 2 articles under review (range from 0-3) and 3.5 articles published in a peer-reviewed journal (range from 2-5) at the time of their portfolio defense.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Encourage students to submit their research for publication and strengthen their research and statistical skills

Action Description:

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Doctoral Teaching Fellows Provide Quality Classroom Teaching

Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's ability to demonstrate high levels of teaching effectiveness.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Provide Effective Undergraduate Classroom Instruction

Learning Objective Description:

Advanced doctoral students will develop and demonstrate their aptitude for providing high quality classroom instruction for undergraduate students.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Faculty Observations

Indicator Description:

Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching face-to-face for the first time will be observed in the classroom by a faculty member using a faculty-developed full rubric. Elements being evaluated include Preparation for Lecture, such as organization, content, subject knowledge, and use of Powerpoint as well as Delivery of Lecture, such as professionalism, eye contact, enthusiasm, vocal properties, classroom management, body language, and length of presentation. Experienced Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching face-to-face will be observed in the classroom by a faculty member using a faculty-developed condensed rubric. Elements being evaluated include quality of preparation for class, communication of course material, interaction with students, and appropriateness of teaching method.

Attached Files

 [DTF Observation Long Form](#)

 [DTF Observation Short Form](#)

Criterion Description:

Faculty observations of a DTF led lecture will be conducted using the faculty developed full or condensed version rubric. Students will obtain an average score of 80% or above on the overall rubric and on each of the elements.

Findings Description:

Of the 5 full faculty observations conducted in AY16-17, 4 scored an overall 80% or above on the full faculty teaching observation rubric. The average score was a 88.72% with a range of 76.4% to 100%. A review of the average of each of the elements reveals that students excelled at professionalism in the classroom (9.4/10), length of presentation (9.4/10), and the use of PowerPoint (9.2/10). Areas that may benefit from some improvement include content (8.5/10), subject knowledge (8.6/10), eye contact (8.6/10), organization (8.7/10), classroom management (8.7/10), and body language (8.8/10).

Of the 6 condensed faculty observations conducted in AY16-17, 6 scored an overall of 80% or above on the condensed faculty teaching observation rubric. The average score was a 91.25% with a range of 87.5% to 97.5%. A review of the average of each of the elements reveals that students excelled at quality of preparation for class (9.83/10) and appropriateness of teaching method (9.17/10). Areas that may benefit from some improvement include communication of course material (8.67/10) and interaction with students (8.83/10).

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

##### **Teaching Effectiveness**

###### **Action Description:**

We will continue to focus on improving Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching effectiveness. Prior to being assigned an undergraduate class to teach, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Students will also be encouraged to complete PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series. The Department will also provide a facultyled discussion on setting and meeting objectives in the classroom as well as discuss and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management in CRIJ 7333 (a prerequisite to teaching).

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### **IDEA Evaluation Forms**

###### **Indicator Description:**

Student ratings of Doctoral Teaching Fellows using the Individual Developmental Education Assessment (IDEA) Evaluation forms.

###### **Criterion Description:**

Doctoral Teaching Fellows will perform at or above the similar/middle 40% box on the IDEA evaluation form. Summary Evaluation will be 4.0 or above for teaching evaluations on the following criteria 1. progress on objectives, 2. excellent teacher, and 3. excellent course.

###### **Findings Description:**

10 courses were taught by Doctoral Teaching Fellows in the Fall 2016, with 50% (5/10) of them scoring a 4.0 or above on the IDEA summary evaluation with an average of 4.2. More specifically, 60%, 60%, and 50% of doctoral teaching fellows scored a 4.0 or above on the elements of progress on objectives, excellent teacher, and excellent course, respectively. Furthermore, the average score for progress on relevant objectives was 4.12, for excellent teacher was 4.16, and for excellent course was 4.29.

12 courses were taught by Doctoral Teaching Fellow in the Spring 2017 with 67% (8/12) of them scoring a 4.0 or above on the IDEA summary evaluation with an average of 4.2. More specifically, 75%, 42%, and 58% of doctoral teaching fellows scored a 4.0 or above on the elements of progress on objectives, excellent teacher, and excellent course, respectively. Furthermore, the average score for progress on relevant objectives was 4.18, for excellent teacher was 4.2, and for excellent course was 4.27.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

##### **Teaching Effectiveness**

###### **Action Description:**

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

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

For the 2016-2017 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening doctoral student research and teaching skills with an overall goal of placing our graduates in academic positions.

Based on the results from the external review that occurred in 2015-2016, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will discuss the advantages and disadvantages related to our current portfolio policy vis a vis a comprehensive exam model.

Faculty are asked to encourage students to submit their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio with an increased focus on top-tier publications.

The Department will continue to focus on strengthening students statistical abilities by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities, 4. encouraging and funding students to attend ICPSR's statistical workshop in the summer, as well as 5. encouraging and funding students to attend pre-conference statistical workshops.

Students will be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events. The Department will seek ways to better track Ph.D. student peer-reviewed publications throughout various stages in the program.

The development of our PhD students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research fellowships.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee will continue to provide formal faculty observations of Doctoral Teaching Fellows. The committee has developed a "short-version" of the observation form for students with previous teaching experience. Furthermore, to promote excellence in teaching, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Students will also be encouraged to complete PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series. The instructor of CRIJ7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching) will also discuss setting and meeting objectives in the classroom and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management techniques.

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

The Department's Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee (GSAC) met on three separate occasions during the Fall 2016 semester to discuss the portfolio process relative to a comprehensive exam. The committee also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a potential hybrid model. After lengthy discussions of the merits of each approach, GSAC brought a recommendation to the Department faculty on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 to keep, but update the research portfolio as the qualifying exam for a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice. The committee also provided recommendations for ways to ensure that breadth of knowledge was being achieved.

First, a standardized approach to the Ph.D. research portfolio requirements was approved by a majority affirmative vote among the Department faculty on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2017. The original policy of "at least two manuscripts that, in the Portfolio Committee's view, are suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal" was updated to "at least two empirical (i.e., quantitative and/or qualitative) manuscripts submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal." This sets clear baseline parameters for graduate students in terms of scholarly work that will qualify for a defensible doctoral research portfolio. The current policy also specifies that literature reviews, book reviews, case briefs, theoretical pieces, and other related research endeavors be included as part of the research portfolio *in addition* to the two empirical manuscripts required for a successful defense. Again, these updated, approved requirements are intended to be inclusive and provide students with defined guidelines for producing a strong research portfolio as well as to be prepared for the dissertation process.

Second, the updated portfolio now states that "as part of a successful defense, students will be required to demonstrate how their portfolio research fits into the broader literature." This additional requirement was added to further enhance students' breadth and depth of knowledge by having them discuss their specific research within the broader criminal justice and criminological scientific literature. To that end, members of GSAC and GDAC have been working on creating comprehensive reading lists for various criminological and criminal justice topics.

Third, Graduate Faculty in the Department met on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016 to discuss additional ways to further enhance breadth of knowledge for doctoral students. The majority of the faculty are in agreement that doctoral course assessments should rely less on research papers and more on comprehensive-type examinations and/or reviews. This assessment strategy is already being implemented in doctoral level Criminological Theory, Research Methods, Statistics, and Victimology where the midterm and final exams are comprehensive assessments. Changing the way doctoral students are assessed in the classroom will require students to be well-read in the discipline rather than focused on a particular topic within the area.

There has been an increase in students submitting their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio. This will continue to be encouraged with a focus on top-tier publications.

The Department continued to focus on strengthening students statistical abilities by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation (e.g., GIS, qualitative methods), 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities (e.g., GIS, workshop on how to write a portfolio and how to write a dissertation, workshop on applying for grants, workshop on how to publish, IRB workshop), 4. funding students to attend ICPSR's and other statistical workshops in the summer, as well as 5. encouraging and funding students to attend preconference statistical workshops.

The Department is currently keeping track of student publications via 1. our graduate student newsletter, 2. our website, and 3. obtaining the students CV at both the defense of their portfolio and their dissertation defense.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee developed a short-form rubric to assess doctoral teaching fellows with prior teaching experience. Furthermore, incoming DTFs were required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Several CJ doctoral students also completed PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series.

## **Plan for Continuous Improvement**

### **Closing Summary:**

For the 2017-2018 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening doctoral student research and teaching skills.

The Department will continue to focus on strengthening students statistical abilities by 1. providing statistical and research workshops throughout the year, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, 3. encouraging students to attend preconference statistical workshops (which are relatively low cost to students) as well as participate in other (sometimes free) online statistical/research courses.

With the new portfolio policy in place, students will be encouraged to send their research out for peer-review publication prior to defending their portfolio with a focus on top-tier publications.

Pending funding, students will be encouraged to present their research at national conferences.

The Department will continue to seek ways to better track and market Ph.D. student peerreviewed publications throughout various stages in the program.

The development of our PhD students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research fellowships.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee will continue to provide formal faculty observations of Doctoral Teaching Fellows. The committee will use the "long-form" rubric for new doctoral has developed a "short-version" of the observation form for students with previous teaching experience. Furthermore, to promote excellence in teaching, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Students will also be encouraged to complete PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series.