

Criminal Justice and Criminology MA

Methodological and Statistical Competency

Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's methodological and statistical abilities.

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.

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.

Attached Files

[Thesis Evaluation Rubric](#)

Findings Description:

Overall, the majority of students achieved a working mastery of social science research methods techniques including an understanding of statistics as measured by the 4 criteria outlined in the thesis rubric. The findings reveal that the majority of the students excelled at mode of inquiry (6/7), execution of study (5/7), interpretation of results (6/7), and analysis (6/7) with a score of 80% or higher. The average score (out of 5) was highest for mode of inquiry (4.57), followed by analysis (4.36), and execution of study (4.14) and interpretation of results (4.14).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Strengthening Methodological and Statistical Skills

Action Description:

In the upcoming year, the Department will focus on strengthening students' methodological and statistical skills. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 2. adding Statistics II as a core course for 2nd year MA students who are beginning to work on their thesis, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Research Competence

Goal Description:

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

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](#)

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:

Overall, students demonstrated competency in conducting original criminal justice and criminological research. The findings reveal that the majority of the students excelled at choice of the problem (6/7), theoretical framework (5/7), written presentation (6/7), originality (7/7), and contribution to the field (6/7) with a score of 80% or higher. The average score (out of 5) was highest for originality (4.43) and contribution to the field (4.43), followed by written presentation (4.29) and choice of problem (4.29), then theoretical framework (4.14).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Strengthen Student Ability to Conceptualize and Deliver Original Research

Action Description:

The Department will focus on strengthening students' abilities to conceptualize and write original research in criminal justice or criminology. This may be accomplished by 1. providing a workshop on how to identify criminological problems to study that make a significant contribution to the field, 2. offering more theory-based elective courses to further develop their theoretical knowledge base, and 3. allow MA students to register for Ph.D. electives.

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 student research and statistical skills with an overall goal of preparing our MA students for the PhD program. The Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will discuss: 1. continuing to provide a faculty led ½ day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 2. adding Statistics II as part of the core requirements, 3. allowing MA students to register for Ph.D. electives, and 4. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Students will also be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles with faculty assistance as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events. The Department will also seek ways to better keep track of graduate student publications.

The development of our MA 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 scholarships.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

This past academic year, continued emphasis was placed on strengthening student research and statistical skills. The Department provided a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, offered a Statistics II elective course for 2nd year MA students who are beginning to work on their thesis, and provided additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities. The Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee also proposed to the faculty 1. to add Stats II as part of the core curriculum, and 2. to allow MA students to register for PhD electives. Both proposed changes were approved.

Several students worked on publications for peer-reviewed journal articles with faculty assistance as well as presented their research at national conferences (e.g., ASC and ACJS) and University-sponsored events (e.g., 3MT). The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee began keeping track of MA publications and advertising these accomplishments via their newsletter and on our website.

Closing Summary

Closing Summary:

For the 2017-2018 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening student research and statistical skills with an overall goal of preparing our MA students for the PhD program. The Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will discuss: 1. continuing to provide a faculty led ½ day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 2. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities, 3. providing guidance on how to develop and complete a thesis that is publishable, and 4. encourage qualified MA students to pursue their doctorate in CJ at SHSU.

Students will also be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles with faculty assistance as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events.

The development of our MA 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 scholarships.