



SHIPPENSBURG  
UNIVERSITY



pennsylvania  
JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION

*Master of Science in the Administration of  
Juvenile Justice  
Graduate Education Program*



*A graduate degree program partnership between  
Shippensburg University and the  
Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*

*Revised 10/2023*

Dear Prospective Student,

Welcome to the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission’s (JCJC)-sponsored Graduate Education Program at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. If you are interested in pursuing a master’s degree in the field of juvenile justice, this guide is prepared expressly for you. While we have attempted to address the most frequently asked questions regarding our program, we encourage you to contact our Graduate Education Coordinators, Mrs. Sonya Stokes at [systokes@ship.edu](mailto:systokes@ship.edu) or Dr. Laura Beckman at [lobeckman@ship.edu](mailto:lobeckman@ship.edu), with any additional questions.

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW



## PROGRAM HISTORY

Established in 1982, the JCJC's Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (CJJT&R) at Shippensburg University is regarded as a statewide and nationwide renowned training, education, and research center for juvenile justice in Pennsylvania. The JCJC supports graduate education for working professionals in the field of juvenile justice by offering a weekend graduate education program taught by the faculty of the Shippensburg University Department of Criminal Justice. Since its inception in 1982, the JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program has significantly contributed to the improvement of services to justice-

involved youth in Pennsylvania. By sponsoring scholarships for the costs of the program, the JCJC provides a tool to help county juvenile probation departments recruit and retain quality juvenile probation officers, increase their officers' level of expertise and effectiveness, and create a professional climate conducive to creativity and research. The program also creates a networking system in which the juvenile probation officers meet colleagues from all over the state. In May 2016, a comprehensive review of this program was jointly undertaken. The goals of this endeavor, developed by the JCJC and the Department of Criminal Justice, were to:

- Create a program that aligns with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) certification standards.
- Develop a program that provides a focus on juvenile justice with practical applications for juvenile probation officers throughout the Commonwealth.
- Deliver a program taught by committed faculty with working knowledge of juvenile justice best practices.

The master's degree's name was changed from a Master of Science in the Administration of Justice (Juvenile Justice Concentration) to a Master of Science in the Administration of Juvenile Justice (MAJJ). This change reflects the overall focus of the program as a juvenile justice curriculum that reflects the current practices in the field of juvenile justice.

## PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The program provides a quality education that promotes advanced inquiry and application of new knowledge. One of the core values of Shippensburg University is to inspire and guide students to become successful leaders in their professions and their communities. The program aims to serve the educational and research needs throughout the Commonwealth's juvenile justice system. The emphasis of the program is scientific and practical. Graduates will be better qualified to participate in their profession if they are prepared as research-oriented students and informed practitioners of juvenile justice.

Program faculty participate in research and service activities that benefit criminal and juvenile justice and social service agencies locally, statewide, and nationally. The faculty's involvement in research and community affairs enhances the classroom experience, as faculty members are able to engage students in discussions of current controversies, dilemmas, discussions, practices, and strategies surrounding juvenile justice as well as future streams of inquiry and thought. In most of our coursework, juvenile crime and delinquency are viewed as social phenomena and are analyzed with methodologies developed in the social and behavioral sciences.

## EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The program's major strengths are its applied perspective and strong emphasis on theory, policy, research, and analysis. Philosophy, format, and implementation stress the practical application of a higher level of knowledge, skills, and strategies.

The curriculum is guided by the following assessment objectives which are evaluated on a yearly basis:

### **OBJECTIVE 1: Comprehensive Knowledge of Juvenile Justice:**

Students will understand more readily the operations of both the juvenile and criminal justice system and the many issues (both theoretical and practical) that confront the administration of justice in a democratic society.

### **OBJECTIVE 2: Critical Analysis:**

Students will understand more readily how to interpret, analyze, and evaluate issues of importance in the field of juvenile justice.

### **OBJECTIVE 3: Communication:**

Students will be able to more readily express their knowledge and critical analysis ability through both written work and oral presentation.

### **OBJECTIVE 4: Exposure to Human and Cultural Diversity:**

Faculty will expose students to the issues of diversity in the juvenile justice system and provide opportunities for students to participate in experiences that promote diversity.

### **OBJECTIVE 5: Exposure to Ethical Problem Solving:**

Faculty will expose students to the nature of ethics in general and the role of normative ethics in the juvenile justice system and provide opportunities for students to participate in juvenile justice-related situations (hypothetical or actual) that deal with ethical issues.

### **OBJECTIVE 6: Exposure to Technology:**

Faculty will expose students to the use of technology in the field of criminal justice in general and provide opportunities for students to participate in juvenile justice related situations that deal with technological issues.



## KEY PROGRAM FEATURES

- Nationally recognized program taught by highly qualified and experienced faculty.
- Free tuition, lodging and most University fees provided by the JCJC.
- A hybrid 33-credit program.
- Summer coursework fully online and blended online and /or face-to-face weekend sessions during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- A cohort-based program designed to enhance professional networking across the Commonwealth.
- Practical courses designed for juvenile justice professionals with an emphasis on evidence-based practices.



## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The program is competency-based; its intent is to develop in students a set of competencies jointly arrived at by the JCJC and the Department of Criminal Justice. Education for excellence in criminal and juvenile justice practice is the guiding mission of the Department of Criminal Justice. The faculty who teach in the program are committed to providing high quality education that will prepare students to provide practitioner-based services that are ethical, impartial, and effective in a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse society.

**Upon completion of the program, student learners should possess:**

- Advanced understanding of administrative principles and practices found in criminal and juvenile justice agencies.
- Advanced knowledge of theories relating to crime causation and criminality.
- In-depth knowledge of the interdisciplinary nature of the criminal and juvenile justice system.
- Knowledge of contemporary technologies used to manage juvenile justice information.
- Skills that enable the learner to conduct and evaluate criminal and juvenile justice-related research.
- Advanced problem-solving skills that enable the learner to identify, analyze, and solve juvenile justice operational problems that affect the delivery of criminal and juvenile justice-related services.
- Advanced reading, writing, and verbal communication skills.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION (33 credits)

Program information and course descriptions are in the graduate student catalog. Graduate students are expected to maintain a satisfactory academic standard, which requires a cumulative QPA of 3.0 (B) or better in your total program courses. If it drops below 3.0, or you earn a C grade in a graduate course, you will be placed on academic probation.

### REQUIRED CORE COURSES (21 Credit Hours)

AJJ 501: Seminar in Juvenile Justice & Delinquency

AJJ 502: Advanced Criminological Theory

AJJ 503: Leadership in Juvenile Justice

AJJ 504: Advanced Research Methods

AJJ 505: Quantitative Analysis

AJJ 506: Strategic Planning, Budgeting & Finance

AJJ 507: Seminar in Policy Analysis

### ADMINISTRATION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE CAPSTONE COURSES (6 Credit Hours)

AJJ 551: Practicum I

AJJ 552: Practicum II

### ELECTIVE COURSES (6 Credit Hours)

AJJ 520: Advanced Studies in Policing

AJJ 521: Seminar in Victimology

AJJ 522: Seminar in Social Justice

AJJ 523: Mental Health & the Administration of Justice

AJJ 524: Anatomy of Violence

AJJ 525: Intimate Partner & Family Violence

AJJ 540: Selected Topics

AJJ 541: Selected Topics

AJJ 550: Independent Study



## COURSE DELIVERY INFORMATION

Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1A	Summer 1B	Fall 2	Spring 2
AJJ 501	AJJ 503	AJJ 551	AJJ—Elective 1*	AJJ 505	AJJ 507
AJJ 502	AJJ 504		AJJ—Elective 2*	AJJ 506	AJJ 552

\* indicates 100% online class

## ADMISSION INFORMATION

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Interested applicants must follow application procedures for both the JCJC and Shippensburg University. The application process is facilitated online through Shippensburg University. For your reference, below is the list of required materials:

- A completed Graduate Education Program Application (see the JCJC Website: [www.jcjc.pa.gov](http://www.jcjc.pa.gov) or Admissions Application for the Shippensburg University, School of Graduate Studies).
- A letter of Interest for Endorsement and Admission to the JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program and the Shippensburg University School of Graduate Studies. This letter should address the following issues: a) why you are a strong candidate for endorsement; b) any reasons why you may still be a strong candidate despite having an undergraduate GPA below 2.75/4.00; c) complete description of juvenile justice work experience; and, d) how you expect to use the graduate education experience to improve practices in the county from which application is made.
- The Recommendation Form (<https://www.jcjc.pa.gov/Program-Areas/Graduate-Education/Documents/recommendation.pdf>) for interested juvenile probation officers is to be completed by the chief juvenile probation officer in your county and signed by the chief juvenile probation officer and the Juvenile Court Administrative Judge in your county. The Recommendation Form for interested applicants who are employed by juvenile justice providers is to be completed by the head administrator in your organization and signed by the head administrator and a Juvenile Court Administrative Judge.
- A copy of your résumé.
- A copy of your undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts. Official transcripts are required.
- A copy of your official GRE/MAT scores (applicable only if your undergraduate GPA is below 2.75/4.00).

### APPLICATION TIMELINE

Since there are a limited number of positions available for each cohort, admission is on a competitive basis. The timeline for enrollment and the application process is as follows:

#### April 1st

Application deadline each year to begin in the Fall semester. Interested applicants must follow application procedures for both the JCJC and Shippensburg University as outlined above.

#### April

JCJC endorsement interviews at Shippensburg University.

#### May

JCJC endorsement; the Commission members endorse candidates at their May meeting. Prospective students receive endorsement letters from the JCJC and instructions for registering for classes.

#### August/September

Program orientation and classes begin.

## ADMISSION INFORMATION

### PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

The program is available to full-time county juvenile probation officers and juvenile justice providers in the Commonwealth who graduated from an accredited college or university with at least 18 credits in the behavioral or social sciences. The county chief juvenile probation officer may at their discretion identify additional requirements regarding interested applicants in your county (e.g., minimum service time with the juvenile probation department prior to eligibility). Similarly, the head administrator of a juvenile justice provider may at their discretion identify additional requirements regarding interested applicants in your organization (e.g., minimum service time with the organization prior to eligibility).

### PROGRAM COSTS

The JCJC pays all tuition, lodging, and most University fees for juvenile probation officers. These students are responsible for other costs, including books, remaining University fees, and mileage. Students from juvenile justice providers are responsible for all program costs.

### CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION

Students agree to attend the program continuously for two academic years, and to maintain their current employment status for the duration of the program and for at least two years after graduation. Students who fail to meet these conditions will be required to reimburse the Commonwealth for all, or a portion of, costs paid on their behalf by the JCJC.

There are two primary requirements for admission to the program:

- Acceptance into the Shippensburg University School of Graduate Studies.
- Endorsement by the JCJC.

Applicants must meet all requirements of the Shippensburg University School of Graduate Studies as defined in the current Graduate Catalog. Applicants should have a baccalaureate degree in criminal justice, or a closely-related social science field from a regionally accredited college or university with a **minimum grade point average of 2.75/4.00**. Applicants who do not meet the minimum grade point average requirement must successfully take either the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Miller Analogies Test (MAT) and submit their scores as part of their application. The standard for successfully passing the GRE or MAT is at or above the 50th percentile.

**The Department of Criminal Justice recommends the GRE as it reflects a familiar testing format that is similar to the SAT.** The GRE assesses student strengths in verbal, quantitative, and analytical areas, whereas the MAT only assesses student strengths in the area of verbal reasoning. The Administration of Juvenile Justice degree focuses on academic research requiring strong verbal, quantitative, and analytical skills, and the GRE provides for a better assessment of a student's potential for success. Both the GRE and MAT require academic preparation to successfully complete. Upon request, assistance with GRE/MAT preparation may be available from the University.

### PROGRAM FACTS

- The JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program at Shippensburg University began in 1982.
- Shippensburg University has graduated over 600 juvenile justice professionals through the program.
- Most of the Commonwealth's 67 counties have a juvenile probation department with a leadership model of a chief, a deputy chief, and supervisor(s). Approximately 80% of the more than 200 currently employed juvenile probation leadership earned a master's degrees through the program.
- The program was revised in 2017 to a hybrid format that includes online and in-person instruction.

## ADMISSION INFORMATION

### INTERVIEW

As indicated above, admission to the program is a competitive process. As such, there is an interview component which follows the submission of all completed application materials (which ensures that all admission requirements have been met). This interview is conducted by members of the JCJC and faculty from the Department of Criminal Justice. The interview process is the final stage in the selection of candidates for proposed endorsement.

The interview process is a requirement for admission to the program and is highly influential in the selection process. Candidates are given the opportunity to explain why they would be a strong student in the program, and how their education can benefit their county and the Commonwealth's juvenile justice system.

### ORIENTATION

Students are expected to attend the program's orientation. The one-day orientation provides members of each new cohort with important information to be successful as a graduate student at Shippensburg University.

### DR. ANTHONY F. CEDDIA AWARD

Each year, the members of the Department of Criminal Justice faculty who teach in the program select an exceptional student from that year's graduating class to receive the Dr. Anthony F. Ceddia Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Juvenile Justice. The criteria for the award are academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to the juvenile justice profession as demonstrated throughout the program. All three criteria are given serious consideration by the faculty when selecting the award recipient.

#### Additional information can be obtained by contacting:

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