Criminal Justice
Graduate Program Handbook

Department of Criminal Justice
College of Arts and Sciences

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Welcome to Fayetteville State University’s Graduate program in Criminal Justice. The Department is pleased to offer both a Master’s of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) and a Graduate Certificate, and is committed to providing a high quality graduate education in criminal justice.

This handbook is intended as a resource for graduate students in criminal justice to aid them in their completion of the Master of Science in Criminal Justice or the Criminal Justice Graduate Certificate at Fayetteville State University (FSU). This handbook does not replace published college and university requirements and should be used in conjunction with the FSU Graduate Catalog, the Graduate School Handbook, and other university documents for purposes of addressing policy issues. In all cases, university and college policy and procedure documents supersede this document. Students should obtain and keep a copy of the Graduate Catalog for the year in which they were admitted to the program and of the Graduate School Handbook.
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Establishment of the Master of Science in Criminal Justice Program

Fayetteville State University has offered an undergraduate degree in criminal justice since 1985. In the Spring of 2003, Chancellor T.J. Bryan reorganized a number of academic units, and the Department of Criminal Justice was established. Almost immediately after the department was created, work began on the establishment of a graduate offering in criminal justice. In February of 2006, the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina approved the proposed program. The MSCJ program admitted its first students in the Fall of 2006.

Our Focus: Theory in Action

We believe that education is best when it serves a purpose and when the educator and the student are consciously aware of that purpose. The specifics of that purpose may vary from person to person, but the ultimate goal for us is to improve the world in which we live. When we study theory, it is not just to learn why things occur; it is also to explore how we can shape the occurrence of events. Here in the Department of Criminal Justice at Fayetteville State University we not only study what is, we encourage our students and ourselves to explore the question: “What ought to be,” never assuming that there is only one answer to the question. We embrace diversity at FSU in our faculty, staff, and students, as well as in our ideas and perspectives. We do so primarily by fostering growth in three broad dimensions.

Practical Experience (Praxis): For adult learning to take place, it is essential to make education relevant to the audience. Our journey into academics is grounded in real-life situations and experiences. Learning does not only include obtaining knowledge about theoretical explanations and organizational analyses, it is about applying knowledge and developing skills which serve practical situations. We believe that theory and the real world are dialectically linked, with each one shaping the other; therefore, it is incomplete to learn only one or to learn one separately from the other. We seek to make the educational experience a rewarding and productive exercise for learner and teacher alike.

Change: One practical outcome of graduate education includes the production of change agents who have the knowledge and skills to enhance their own environment. We seek to instill in our graduates the highly marketable skills of innovation, adaptability, and insight. We want to produce visionaries, able to imagine a world that fully embraces justice and equality, as well as activists who are inspired to contribute to the accomplishment of this end.

Service: We hope to instill in our students, faculty, and staff a strong commitment to service. Our profession is all about service to the community and the world as we seek to make a better place for all to live. We embrace the spirit of putting our ideas, our research and our theories into action. We believe strongly in scientifically rigorous, socially and politically aware, improvement-oriented research. We also believe in sharing our knowledge and skills with the local, state, national, and international community.
**The Benefits of a Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

The scientific, intellectual, and analytical demands placed upon criminal justice practitioners have increased dramatically over the last 25 years. As a result, graduate education in criminal justice is beneficial for individuals who wish to expand their career opportunities or who seek leadership roles in criminal justice, social justice or related organizations. The MSCJ is designed to offer high-quality graduate-level education to individuals such as:

1. Students with baccalaureate degrees who aim to further their education in criminal justice;
2. Criminal justice professionals and researchers who wish to advance their careers;
3. Criminal justice and social justice advocates who seek additional knowledge and skills that can be used to improve the quality of justice in their communities; and
4. Military personnel who aim to enhance their skills and improve their employment marketability.

The requirements of the MSCJ ensure a high quality education while also being competitive in the market. Within the 33 credit hour program, the faculty has included a strong set of core courses (12 credit hours) that build a substantial foundation of knowledge with an emphasis on theory and research. The remaining 21 credit hours can be used to explore a specialization, a range of electives, and/or independent research through the thesis option.

**The Benefits of a Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice**

The Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice is principally a career enhancement tool. It is designed to meet the needs of:

1. Students with a graduate degree in a field other than criminal justice who aim to teach criminal justice at an institution of higher learning;
2. Criminal justice professionals who wish to advance in their current career path.

The 18-hour certificate program requires students to master foundational knowledge as it relates to criminological theory and research, but also provides enough flexibility in electives that students can hone skills in their areas of interest.
Educational Objectives

The educational objectives of the MSCJ program are consistent with the mission of FSU. In order to complete the program, students must be proficient in:

- **Critical thinking** – The ability to use and analyze evidence to guide problem analysis, problem solving, and decision making by differentiating between misconceptions and sound empirical knowledge.

- **Communication skills** – The ability to express, interpret and prioritize thoughts, ideas, and knowledge in a clear, concise manner in both written and oral form.

- **Technology and computing skills** - The ability to use word processing, library resources, editing tools, and basic statistical programs to research complex criminal justice issues.

- **Quantitative Reasoning** – The ability to build on the knowledge of applied and scholarly research to generate research questions, compute statistical analyses of data and/or demonstrate the ability to meaningfully interpret outcomes.

- **Ethical decision making** – The ability to apply analytical skills to criminal justice problems and identify the ethical implications within such problems in the appropriate legal and substantive settings, along with proposing potential solutions that are realistic options in public policy settings.

- **Understanding diversity** – The ability to identify, discuss, and propose action in response to the complex differential effects of treatment of people by and/or within the criminal justice system based on racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, sex, gender, and age characteristics.
Application and Admission

**Application:** Students are admitted into the Master of Science program in Criminal Justice semi-annually, in the fall and in the spring. The priority deadline for applications for fall admission is April 15, and the priority deadline for spring admission is October 15. Applications received after these dates cannot be guaranteed consideration for the following semester. Complete applications packets shall contain:

1. Fayetteville State University Application for Graduate Study;
2. Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate colleges and universities attended, and showing award of a baccalaureate degree;
3. Official scores from the general Graduate Record Examination (GRE) taken within the last five years;
4. Two recommendation forms completed by people who are qualified to assess the applicant’s academic potential;
5. One- to two-page admissions essay detailing the applicant’s future goals, and explaining how earning a Master of Science in Criminal Justice from Fayetteville State University will help achieve those goals;
6. Non-refundable application fee, in cash, check, or money order.

International students must meet the English proficiency requirements of FSU. Consult the current Graduate Catalog for details.

The application and recommendation forms can be found on the FSU Graduate School website. All application materials should be sent to:

Graduate Admissions
The Graduate School
Fayetteville State University
1200 Murchison Rd.
Fayetteville, NC 28301

**Admission:** The Department’s Graduate Admissions Committee makes all admission recommendations to the Department Chair. The Chair makes admission recommendations to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, who then makes a recommendation to the Graduate School Dean. The Graduate Dean makes all final admission decisions. Current admissions criteria can be found on the departmental website.
**Provisional (Degree-Seeking) and Professional Development (Non-Degree) Admission:** Provisional admission is given to degree-seeking applicants when the Graduate Admissions Office receives a transcript showing award of a baccalaureate degree, but the rest of the application is incomplete. When MSCJ application materials are incomplete, students will normally receive Provisional admission to the university, while the Graduate Admissions Office is waiting for the remainder of the materials to arrive.

Students with Provisional admission status may only take up to 12 hours of graduate courses in criminal justice without being admitted to the MSCJ program. These 12 hours should primarily, if not exclusively, consist of core courses in the MSCJ program.

Professional Development admission for non-degree seeking applicants is given as soon as the Graduate Admissions Office receives application materials, including the graduate admission application, application fee and a transcript showing award of a baccalaureate degree. Professional Development admission is a non-degree seeking admission to take classes for the purposes of self-improvement and does not culminate with admission to the MSCJ program or a degree.
**MSCJ Curriculum**

The MSCJ is a 33-credit hour program that includes 12 credits of core courses. Students have considerable flexibility with the remaining 21 credits. Our elective courses cover a wide range of topics, including victimology, white-collar crime, communities and social change, criminal justice ethics, program evaluation, criminal justice organizational change, race and justice, and juvenile justice. Graduate students can also select a maximum of 12 credit hours from Fayetteville State University’s other graduate programs. The faculty advisor (Graduate Coordinator) must approve elective courses taken in other departments.

Students can choose either the comprehensive examination option or the thesis option for the final component of the degree. The MSCJ can be completed in 18 months, but is typically completed in four semesters. Additional semesters may be needed for students who take courses part-time.

**Requirements for the Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice**

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<tr>
<td>CRJC 501 Foundations in Criminal Justice Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRJC 521 Foundations of Criminological Thought</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRJC 540 Research Methods in Criminal Justice</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRJC 550 Statistical Applications in Criminal Justice</td>
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**Choose one pathway:**

- Electives (21 credits) + Comprehensive exam OR
- Electives (15 credits) + Thesis (6 credits)  

**TOTAL** 33

**Graduate Certificate Curriculum**

The Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice is an 18-credit hour program that includes 9 credits of core courses. Students have considerable flexibility with the remaining 9 credits. Our elective courses cover a wide range of topics, including victimology, white-collar crime, communities and social change, criminal justice ethics, program evaluation, criminal justice organizational change, race and justice, and juvenile justice. The certificate program can be completed in as few as two semesters.

**Requirements for the Graduate Certificate Criminal Justice**

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<tr>
<td>CRJC 540 Research Methods in Criminal Justice</td>
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**Choose one of the following courses:**

- CRJC 500 or CRJC 501 or CRJC 510 or CRJC 530 or CRJC 531 or CRJC 550  
- Take 3 additional CRJC electives  

**TOTAL** 18
Course Listings

Core Curriculum, 12 credits
CRJC 501 Foundations in Criminal Justice Systems
CRJC 521 Foundations of Criminological Thought
CRJC 540 Research Methods in Criminal Justice
CRJC 550 Statistical Applications in Criminal Justice

Electives, 21 credits
CRJC 500 History of Crime Control Policy
CRJC 510 Criminal Justice Administration
CRJC 531 Advanced Seminar in Criminological Theory
CRJC 570 Race, Crime and Justice
CRJC 580 Females, Crime and Justice
CRJC 590 Ethics in Criminal Justice
CRJC 600 Corporate and Government Crime
CRJC 605 Community Policing
CRJC 610 Organizational Change in Criminal Justice
CRJC 620 Juvenile Delinquency and Justice
CRJC 630 Communities, Justice and Social Change
CRJC 640 Qualitative Methods in Criminal Justice, Prerequisite: CRJC 540
CRJC 650 Program Evaluations in Criminal Justice, Prerequisite: CRJC 540, CRJC 550
CRJC 660 Current Issues in Victimology, Prerequisite: CRJC 540
CRJC 670 Special Topics in Criminal Justice (This course may be repeated up to three times so long as the title changes)
CRJC 690 Independent Study (pending approval)

Thesis, 6 credits (required only for thesis students)
CRJC 698 Thesis I, Prerequisites: Core courses and faculty advisor approval
CRJC 699 Thesis II, Prerequisites: CRJC 698
CRJC 899 Thesis Non-credit

To fulfill electives, a maximum of 12 credit hours may be selected from Fayetteville State University graduate programs other than Criminal Justice, if the courses fit into the student’s plan of study as approved by the faculty advisor.

Course descriptions are available in the Graduate Catalog.
University Academic Regulations

General academic regulations common to all graduate programs are in the Graduate Student Handbook, which can be accessed from the Graduate School homepage: http://www.uncfsu.edu/graduateschool. All graduate students should familiarize themselves with these policies. Failure to abide by these policies can have negative consequences for progress in the program, including termination from the program.

Academic integrity, academic dishonesty and plagiarism are taken very seriously by all Criminal Justice Graduate faculty, the Criminal Justice Department, and the Graduate School. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook, and specifically the Student Code of Conduct policies, found here: http://www.uncfsu.edu/handbook/.
**MSCJ Program Completion Components**

**Preparation of Program of Study:** During the first semester, all students must meet with their advisor (the Graduate Coordinator) to complete a Program of Study. The Program of Study will be updated each semester to show progress toward degree completion. It is the student’s responsibility to meet with their advisor on a regular basis to ensure that reasonable progress is being made.

**Admission to Degree Candidacy:** Students should apply to candidacy immediately upon completion of 12 semester hours of coursework. They **must** apply before completing 18 hours of coursework. The Application for Admission to Degree Candidacy is available on the Graduate School website under “Forms.”

**Culminating Experience: Thesis or Comprehensive Exam** In order to complete the MSCJ program, each student must demonstrate mastery of the program’s substantive content, as well as the ability to organize and structure ideas in order to apply them to practical situations. Students shall demonstrate their knowledge and skills in one of two ways: (1) pass a comprehensive examination, or (2) write and successfully defend a research thesis.

**Applying for Graduation:** Candidates for the Master of Science in Criminal Justice must apply for graduation in the semester before they intend to graduate. Specific deadlines for applications can be found on the Graduate School calendar on the Graduate School website and the application can be found under “Forms” on the Graduate School website.
Thesis Eligibility and Procedures

Students must have a GPA of 3.4 or higher in the MSCJ program (not including transfer credits) to pursue the thesis option.

A thesis is a complete, original academic work prepared by a graduate student for the purpose of demonstrating a level of research competence in a discipline. In most cases, a thesis involves the posing of an original research question, the review of relevant academic literature, the creation of an empirically sound social scientific method for the investigation of the question, data analysis and interpretation of results, and a concluding chapter containing a discussion of the significance of the findings.

Although it is advisable to consider possible thesis topics from the very beginning of coursework, a student may not register for CRJC 698 and formally begin the thesis prior to completion of the MSCJ core courses (CRJC 501, 521, 540, and 550), admission to degree candidacy, and approval of a concept paper (see below).

Each student interested in writing a thesis must complete the following steps:

1) Carefully review the Thesis and Dissertation Manual and Guidelines, which can be found here: http://www.uncfsu.edu/graduateschool/student-resources

2) Apply for and be admitted to degree candidacy.

3) Select a thesis topic. Students should discuss their ideas with a faculty member who has substantive expertise in the area in which the student wishes to conduct research, and who is eligible to chair the student’s thesis advisory committee.

4) Prepare a 3-5 page concept paper outlining the proposed topic, research question(s) and method, accompanied by a list of scholarly sources relevant to the proposed topic. Submit the concept paper for consideration by the faculty member desired as chair of the student’s thesis advisory committee. Upon approval of the concept paper, the faculty member will request that the department chair include a section of CRJC 698 on the next semester’s schedule in which the student will enroll. Register for CRJC 698.

5) In consultation with the thesis chair, select at least two additional members for the thesis advisory committee. One member must be a graduate faculty member in the Department of Criminal Justice and one member must be a graduate faculty member in another academic department. Once a committee is determined, complete the Thesis Advisory Committee Membership Form, which can be found under “Forms” on the Graduate School website.

6) While enrolled in CRJC 698, complete the formal thesis proposal with guidance from the thesis advisory committee. In addition, if the research will involve human subjects, complete the required Human Rights in Research application and receive
approval from the FSU Human Rights in Research Committee to complete the research.

**Thesis Proposal:** The thesis proposal consists of the first three chapters of the thesis (Introduction, Literature Review, and Method) and a complete list of references. In addition, all instrumentation and other relevant documents (e.g., informed consent) must be included as attachments.

The student must defend the thesis proposal orally before the thesis advisory committee in an open forum to which Criminal Justice faculty and graduate students are invited. The invitation to the oral defense of the proposal must be distributed two weeks prior to the date of the defense. Upon passing the oral defense of the proposal, the student will proceed to conduct the research and write the thesis under the direction of their thesis chair. Students must successfully complete the oral defense of the proposal before any data collection begins. If the proposal is not approved by the thesis advisory committee, the student will be ineligible to proceed with the thesis.

**Human Rights in Research Application:** A student who wishes to conduct research involving human subjects must submit an application to the Fayetteville State University Human Rights in Research Committee (HRRC) and receive approval from the HRRC prior to beginning the research. Under the direction of the thesis chair, the student should complete and submit the HRR application well in advance of the thesis proposal defense date, so that approval of both the thesis proposal and the HRR application can occur while the student is enrolled in CRJC 698. The HRR application may be found at: [http://www.uncfsu.edu/research/policies](http://www.uncfsu.edu/research/policies)

**Steps for the Preparation of a Thesis Proposal**

1) As noted above, the thesis proposal includes the introduction, literature review, and method chapters of the thesis, along with a reference list. The student will write drafts of these sections and submit them to the thesis chair, who will offer suggestions for revision and return the drafts to the student. The student shall make revisions as specified by the chair. The process will continue until the chair indicates that the document is ready for distribution to the other members of the thesis advisory committee.

2) The student will submit the approved draft of the proposal to the other members of the thesis advisory committee, who will offer any suggestions they have for revision of the proposal.

3) Once committee member suggestions are addressed to the chair’s satisfaction, the student will work with the thesis advisory committee to schedule a time and place for the oral defense of the proposal and distribute an invitation to Criminal Justice faculty members and graduate students to attend the proposal defense.
4) When the student has successfully defended the proposal, the thesis chair will submit the Approval of Thesis Proposal form to Office of Graduate Studies.

The primary purpose of the proposal and oral defense of the proposal is to achieve a joint understanding among the Committee members and the student regarding the nature of the planned research. The approved proposal is a formal agreement about the work to be conducted. If substantial changes to the proposed study are necessary, a second proposal defense must be held. Such situations should be very rare. By the same token, if the student conducts the study as proposed, the committee members should not require substantial additional work after the research is concluded.

Ideally, the student will complete the oral defense of the thesis proposal and, if applicable, receive HRRC approval for the research project while enrolled in CRJC 698. The student may then enroll in CRJC 699 to conduct the research and complete the thesis. If the student does not complete and defend the thesis while enrolled in CRJC 699, she or he may enroll in CRJC 899 for subsequent semesters to complete the thesis.

Steps for the Preparation of a Thesis

1) When the student has passed the oral defense of the proposal and, if applicable, obtained approval from the HRRC, the student will conduct the research detailed in the proposal, with guidance from the thesis chair.

2) After conducting the research, and in consultation with the chair, the student will complete a draft of the thesis. The thesis will consist of the three chapters that constituted the thesis proposal (Introduction, Literature Review, Method) and two additional chapters (Results and Discussion & Conclusions).

3) The chair reviews drafts and revisions until the thesis draft is deemed acceptable to distribute to the other members of the thesis advisory committee.

4) With approval from the thesis chair, the student submits the thesis draft to the other members of the thesis advisory committee for their feedback and suggestions.

5) Once committee member suggestions are addressed to the chair’s satisfaction, the student will work with the thesis advisory committee and the Office of Graduate Studies to schedule a time and place for the oral defense of the thesis. The Office of Graduate Studies will distribute an announcement inviting the university community to the thesis defense.

6) When the student has successfully defended the thesis to the satisfaction of the thesis advisory committee, and made any final revisions required by the committee, the student will submit the thesis manuscript to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be reviewed for adherence to FSU’s Guide for the Preparation and Submission of Theses and Dissertations (available on the FSU Graduate School website). It is the
joint responsibility of the student and the thesis chair to assure that all guidelines are met before submitting the thesis manuscript to the Office of Graduate Studies.

If a student registers for thesis credit, they will receive a grade of IP for both CRJC 698 and CRJC 699 (and CRJC 899 if relevant) until the thesis is complete. If, after enrollment in CRJC 698, the student decides not to continue to pursue the thesis, they must take the comprehensive examination and take additional electives (if necessary) to complete 33 hours in the MSCJ program. Thesis credit may be used as elective credit, if the thesis advisory committee chair determines that sufficient work has been done to warrant the credit. As of this writing, a student cannot graduate with an IP grade on their record. Therefore, it is very important to register for thesis credit only if the student is certain that they will pursue the thesis.

Even though the thesis is conducted under close supervision of the thesis chair, the student must be able to work independently. Each Spring, faculty members who have students enrolled in CRJC 698, 699, or 899 shall review the progress of those students toward completion of the thesis and communicate with them if progress is not satisfactory. Likewise, if the student has problems obtaining the direction and oversight needed from the thesis chair, they are encouraged to discuss such issues first with the thesis chair. If the issues remain unresolved, they are encouraged to meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator.
Comprehensive Examination

Students who do not write a thesis must take a comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam will test the mastery of students’ substantive knowledge covered in the courses they have taken, and will require of them the ability to apply that substantive knowledge to concrete situations.

Students should be aware that no guarantees are offered regarding the passing of comprehensive exams. A student may complete successfully all of the required course work for the MSCJ but fail all or part of the comprehensive exam, and not be eligible to receive the degree of Master of Science in Criminal Justice. See the section below entitled Failure and Retaking for more details.

Eligibility to Take the Comprehensive Exam

To be eligible to take the comprehensive exam, students must meet each of the following conditions:

1) Have been admitted to master’s degree candidacy;
2) Have completed all of the core courses for the MSCJ; and
3) Must be in the last semester of course work for the MSCJ.

Composition of the Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam will consist of two questions (Type I and Type II) that address each of the four areas of the core courses, one to be answered in the morning, one to be answered in the afternoon. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of material from core courses and to be able to integrate that material with material presented in the elective courses that they have taken.

Preparation of Examination Questions

Each year, graduate faculty shall prepare at least four exam questions. Two questions will be used on the exam (not necessarily in a single semester), and two will be used as sample questions.

Test Administration

The default method of administration is by computer. Administration will be proctored by CJ faculty in a designated FSU computer lab. Distance students who are not able to take the exam on campus will be required to take the exam in a proctored setting. The Graduate Program Coordinator will make these arrangements on an individual basis.

The exam will begin at 9:00 and end at 5:30. Students will have 3 hours to complete Type I and 3 hours to complete Type II. There will be a 1.5 hour break at noon.

Student names will not appear on the exams. The Graduate Program Coordinator will assign each student a number and will keep the list that links those numbers to the actual exams. No one other than the Graduate Coordinator will have access to that list until after the exams have been graded.

Any student with a disability verified by the FSU Center for Personal Development shall be provided with reasonable accommodation based on the nature of the disability. The Graduate
Program Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the accommodation (e.g., allowing a longer period of time to take the exam, allowing the exam to be taken over a two-day period, or allowing a physically disabled student to take the exam at an alternate location).

Any exceptions to the standard procedures will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Students are not allowed to keep copies of their answers to examination questions.

**Preparation**

Generally, each student should plan to begin studying for their comprehensive exam no later than the semester before they plan to take it. The focus of preparation should be practicing the integration of knowledge learned in the core courses and the application of that knowledge to criminal justice issues, problems and policies. Sample questions shall be made available to students.

A general grading rubric for each type of question will be provided to the students. While these rubrics obviously will not provide information on the “right” answers, they should be specific enough to direct students regarding the expectations for what constitutes a complete answer to each type of question.

**Grading**

Each answer will be read and evaluated by two members of the graduate faculty of the Department of Criminal Justice. Using a rubric as a guide, each reader will assign one of the following grades: Pass or Fail. Students must receive a grade of ‘Pass’ on all questions to pass the exam. In the event that the two graders assign different grades, a third graduate faculty will evaluate the answer and assign a grade.

Absent extenuating circumstances, grading of the exam will be completed no more than 15 days after administration and grades will be submitted to the Graduate School by the posted deadline.

**Appeals**

If a student believes that a grade of Fail received on any question is unwarranted, they can appeal the grade by submitting an application to appeal the decision to the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Failure and Retaking**

Students who fail a question must retake a question in the area failed. They will not answer the same question(s) on the retake, but will answer a question in the same area. For example, if they failed a Type II question, they must retake a Type II question, different from the one failed.

Students have **one** opportunity to retake the question(s). If they fail a question a second time, they will have failed the exam and will be dismissed from the program and are ineligible to graduate or complete a thesis. Per FSU policy, the exam cannot be retaken in the same semester as the original administration.
Graduate Advisement and Mentorship

The Graduate Program Coordinator is the academic advisor for all graduate students. The major function of the academic advisor is to assure that students register for courses in a timely manner and follow departmental and university procedures regarding their progress through the program.

The role of the academic advisor differs from the role of faculty mentor, although both can be highly beneficial to students. Although involvement in a mentoring relationship is voluntary, we encourage students to identify and link with a faculty member who can act as mentor for the student. Mentors can assist students in several ways, including helping students select relevant electives, discussing professional and academic goals, and helping students to further develop research skills. Mentors can be a great source of advocacy and support for students. In most instances, the mentor should be someone with whom the student shares substantive and/or professional interests. There are different ways that students can identify potential mentors. For example, some students might relate well to a faculty member who teaches a course in which they are enrolled. Students are also encouraged to review faculty profiles that are described on the departmental website.

We are aware that mentoring relationships are often more difficult to establish with students who take online courses. Despite these limitations, we have a number of ways that we can communicate face-to-face with students, and we firmly believe that good mentoring is possible with distance education.