

# Criminal Justice Practicum

CRM 490 / CRML 490



## Guidelines & Application



*UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON*  
*DEPARTMENT of SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINOLOGY*

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## Introduction

The Criminal Justice Practicum is an applied learning program designed to help students develop a more complete understanding of the criminal justice system through real-world experience. The practicum builds upon and enhances the education students receive in the traditional classroom setting. Criminal justice programs at colleges and universities began regular use of applied learning in the late 1960s. Over the past 30 years, UNCW has placed hundreds of criminal justice students in local, state and federal agencies to augment the learning process. Former students frequently mention the Criminal Justice Practicum as the most important learning experience in their undergraduate education, and an essential first-step in entering the professional work force directly out of college.

The practicum will greatly enhance your personal and professional development. You will gain valuable experience in a criminal justice agency. You will also begin to develop a network of professional relationships. These contacts often lead to future employment, occasionally in the agency where you completed your practicum, or by having your contacts write letters of recommendation or make calls to colleagues in other agencies. But as in most things in life, you only get out what you put in. *Your professional career starts right NOW! Prepare yourself to make the most of this opportunity.*

## Educational Objectives

- Expand and enrich student understanding of the criminal justice system;
- Supplement classroom learning with active real-life learning;
- Apply social science theories and principles to the real world;
- Develop professional knowledge and skill-sets necessary for future employment;
- Help refine career plans and goals.

## Practicums vs. Internships

There tends to be confusion regarding the difference between a **practicum** and an **internship**. Actually, practicums and internships are quite similar. Both are a type of experiential learning where students “learn by doing.” Both practicums and internships require an agreement among the student, the university, and the participating agency; students typically work for an entire semester in an agency for academic credit under the direction of a faculty instructor and an agency supervisor. An additional similarity between practicums and internships is that students are normally expected to complete a semester-long project or write a paper at the conclusion of the experience.

The main difference between practicums and internships is the degree of formal instruction built into the experience. Practicums stay closer to the traditional classroom format. For example, the Criminal Justice Practicum requires weekly classroom meetings to share students’ experiences and to integrate core concepts and theories learned through formal study of the discipline. Practicum students and the faculty instructor work closely together through frequent communication. By way of contrast, internships often entail less formal contact between the student and faculty instructor during the semester and seldom is there a classroom component. Student-interns are monitored more by the participating agency than by the university.

## Eligibility for Enrollment

Enrollment **preference** will be given to students with an overall GPA of 2.00 (2.3 GPA in the major) and senior standing. However, underclassman and students with lower GPAs are not automatically precluded from the course. This is a “Permission Only” course, meaning that students must receive the formal permission of the instructor before they may enroll in the class. Students must be in good standing with the university and have no major criminal record. Note: Most agencies require a background check. A serious blemish on your record or pending charge may disqualify you from particular agencies and your ability to participate in the practicum.

## Credit Hours

The criminal justice practicum is a 4-hour block. Students must enroll in both CRM 490 Practicum (3 hours) and CRML 490 Practicum Lab (1 hour). The CRM 490 Practicum course requires students to intern *a minimum* of 150 hours during the semester in their assigned agency, or roughly 10 to 12 hours per week over a 15-week period. A time sheet is used to record the hours. The CRML 490 Practicum Lab is held once a week. The one-hour lab gives students the opportunity to meet with the instructor and other practicum students to discuss various issues related to the course. Note: The criminal justice practicum requires a SIGNIFICANT amount of time, energy, and commitment. It is not an easy course, and it is not for everyone.

## Enrollment Procedures

- Contact the practicum instructor and/or attend the Practicum Information Session prior to registration. Your junior year is a good time to start planning for the practicum. The practicum instructor is available to discuss your career plans and help you decide what agency may be the best fit for you (see *List of Agencies*, attached).
- Fill out the *Application Form* online: [https://uncw.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9LIN62aaDoenxdj](https://uncw.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9LIN62aaDoenxdj).
- If you are accepted into the practicum, the practicum instructor will enter a “Course Override” into the computer that will enable you to register for CRM 490 and CRML 490. This is done at the normal time for registration.
- Plan for your internship during course scheduling. Try to arrange your classes on a MWF or TR sequence so that you have time available to work in the agency.
- Once enrolled in the practicum, contact agency supervisors to set up an interview (*this needs to be done early, preferably no later than the last day of classes in the semester prior to the start of your practicum*).
- Take a copy of your resume to interview. Dress professionally.
- Keep your practicum instructor up-to-date during this entire process.
- Be ready to start practicum as soon as the semester begins.

## List of Agencies\*

<b>Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE)</b>	<b>New Hanover County District Attorney's Office</b>
<b>Bladen County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>New Hanover County Correctional Center</b>
<b>Brunswick County Adult Probation &amp; Parole</b>	<b>New Hanover County Pretrial Release</b>
<b>Brunswick County District Attorney's Office</b>	<b>New Hanover County Sheriff's Office</b>
<b>Brunswick County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>North Carolina Adult Probation &amp; Parole</b>
<b>Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)</b>	<b>Pender County Correctional Facility</b>
<b>Coastal Horizon Center (TASC)</b>	<b>Pender County District Attorney's Office</b>
<b>CUE Center for Missing Persons</b>	<b>Pender County Sheriff's Office</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Shelter &amp; Services, Inc.</b>	<b>Public Defender's Office (New Hanover County)</b>
<b>Jacksonville Police Department</b>	<b>Rape Crisis Center of Coastal Horizons Center, Inc.</b>
<b>Juvenile Detention Center</b>	<b>Special Police @ New Hanover Regional Medical Center</b>
<b>Juvenile Services Division</b>	<b>State Bureau of Investigation (See link to website on next page)</b>
<b>Kure Beach Police Department</b>	<b>UNCW Campus Police</b>
<b>Leland Police Department</b>	<b>U.S. Probation</b>
<b>LINC (Leading into New Communities, Inc.)</b>	<b>Wilmington Police Department</b>
<b>Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS) (See link to website on next page)</b>	<b>Wrightsville Beach Police Department</b>

\*Note: The list above consists of agencies in which UNCW Criminal Justice Practicum students have interned in the past. Some of these agencies may not currently be accepting interns and you are always welcome to seek out agencies that are not listed. Be sure to check with the criminal justice internship coordinator to ensure agencies that are not listed fit the requirements for the course.

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To learn more about practicum opportunities in any of the agencies listed above, contact:  
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Wilmington, NC 28403-5978  
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## Special Application Procedures

Certain agencies have special application procedures for potential interns. Many of these agencies require applications to be submitted well in advance of the semester in which you plan to enroll in the practicum course. See agency websites if you are interested in interning with any of the following:

### Central Intelligence Agency (CIA):

<https://www.cia.gov/careers/student-opportunities/index.html>

### Department of Energy, Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence:

<http://orise.orau.gov/doescholars/>

### Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):

<https://www.fbijobs.gov/students/honors-internship-program>

### Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers:

<https://www.fletc.gov/fletc-college-intern-program>

### Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS):

<http://www.ncis.navy.mil/Careers/Interns/Pages/default.aspx>

### North Carolina Highway Patrol:

<https://www.ncdps.gov/Our-Organization/Law-Enforcement/State-Highway-Patrol/join-state-highway-patrol/internships>

### North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI):

<http://www.ncsbi.gov/Careers/SBI-Careers/SBI-Internships.aspx>

## UNCW Career Center

The UNCW **Career Center** (Fisher University Union 2035, <http://www.uncw.edu/career>) is an excellent resource for students seeking internships. Their mission is to be a comprehensive career counseling and resource center dedicated to empowering students and alumni as active participants in their own career development.

In addition to providing information regarding available internships, they also operate the **Certified Internship Program (CIP)**. Although the CIP does not provide course credit, it does count as fulfilling the *Explorations Beyond the Classroom* requirement for university studies. The CIP requires 50 hours of work over a five-week period. As such, it is an excellent option for students wanting to get real-world experience but do not have the time required for the Criminal Justice Practicum. More information on the CIP can be found at the career center's website: <http://www.uncw.edu/career/cip.html>.

## Practicum Application

[https://uncw.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9LIN62aaDoenxdj](https://uncw.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9LIN62aaDoenxdj)