

Master of Arts in Public Safety Administration



The Public Safety Administration graduate program at Western Illinois University is internationally-known for academic excellence. The program provides students with a rich blend of theoretical, administrative, and practical knowledge, as well as research skills. The Master of Arts degree is designed to provide a balanced, interdisciplinary course of study for those currently employed in public safety and related fields, as well as for those wishing to pursue careers in public safety and academia. Courses provide students with the most current information in the areas of administrative and organizational behavior; law; research and quantitative skills; social justice; and specialized areas such as policing, fire, corrections, courts, security and multiculturalism and diversity in criminal justice. Graduates of the program are educationally well-rounded students who possess the skills needed to manage and lead in the increasingly complex field of criminal justice. Additionally, students are academically prepared to pursue advanced degrees in respected doctoral and juris doctoral degree programs.

Admission Requirements

Admission into the Master of Arts in Public Safety Administration program requires a bachelor's degree from a regionally-accredited institution, with at least 18 semester hours (SH) in criminal justice, law enforcement or closely related areas. All students must apply to and meet the general admission requirements of the WIU School of Graduate Studies, in addition to the following departmental requirements:

- Cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher or last two years undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Three letters of reference (may also be used for graduate assistantship, if applicable)
- Current résumé/vita
- Writing sample of 1,000 to 1,500 words, emphasizing academic, nonacademic and employment experiences relevant to the degree
- Official transcripts from all institutions previously attended

Only those files completed with all required documents listed above will be forwarded to the PSA Graduate Committee for admission consideration. All documents should be sent to (and any contact regarding status of receipt of those documents should be directed to) the WIU School of Graduate Studies.

A waiver of the GPA requirement may be requested if demonstrated subsequent training and work experience justify a waiver. Students may not enroll in PSA graduate courses unless they have been admitted to the PSA graduate degree program or have obtained permission from the PSA graduate coordinator or school's director.

Degree Requirements

The master's degree in PSA may be earned through a thesis or non-thesis option. The thesis option requires 33 successfully completed semester hours: 27 SH of coursework and 6 SH of thesis work. Students are allowed to take 9 SH of electives as part of the 27 SH in other departments with the approval of the PSA Graduate Committee. Courses should be geared toward career objectives.

The thesis proposal is to be approved before research begins, and an oral presentation and defense of the thesis is required. The non-thesis option requires 39 SH and a comprehensive seminar to be taken in the student's last semester.

In either option, students are allowed to take up to 9 SH of 400G-level courses that will be counted toward fulfillment of the degree requirements without permission of the PSA Graduate Committee. However, only 12 SH of total coursework may be taken in departments outside the PSA department.

Distinctive Features

The graduate program in PSA is a well-respected criminal justice/public safety program in Illinois, in the Midwest and nationally. The program offers online and face-to-face classes to meet the needs of both traditional students and working practitioners. Online classes are spread over a 16-week semester. Face-to-face classes meet one day per week or over the course of three weekends.

Career Opportunities

Obtaining the master's degree prepares students to manage and lead in the field. In addition, the program provides preparation for students wishing to pursue advanced degrees in respected doctoral and juris doctoral degree programs.

Program Location:

Macomb, Quad Cities, Online

Contact Information

Questions about the program:

School of Law Enforcement and
Justice Administration
Stipes 403, Macomb Campus
(309) 298-1038
LEJA@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/leja

General admission questions:

School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad



**Western Illinois
University**

Below are examples of career opportunities for individuals entering the criminal justice field and teaching at a higher education institution with a master's degree:

- Police officer/deputy
- State trooper
- Federal law enforcement
- Correctional officer
- Firefighter
- Emergency manager
- Probation officer
- Private investigator
- Loss prevention
- Risk manager
- Fire administrator
- Global information systems operator

For individuals with field experience, completing the master's degree helps further their career by preparing them for leadership positions. For example, individuals with a master's degree may hold the following positions:

- Police chief
- Public safety director
- Detective
- Warden
- Federal law enforcement supervisory agent
- FEMA supervisor
- Chief probation officer
- Court services administrator
- Director of security and agency head
- Fire chief

Additionally, students are encouraged to travel nationally and internationally. Travel opportunities include attending regional and national criminal justice and criminology conferences and study abroad opportunities. Attending the annual Midwestern Criminal Justice Association, Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, FEMA events and American Society of Criminology conferences allows students to present research, network with professionals in the field, and receive some of the latest information and research about criminal justice.

Integrated Master's Degree Program

The School of LEJA offers an integrated baccalaureate and master's program for undergraduate students interested in continuing on to graduate school. Admission to the integrated PSA program requires:

- Application to the WIU School of Graduate Studies
- A minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA
- A minimum 3.25 major GPA
- Official transcripts from all institutions previously attended
- Completion of 90 semester hours (30 SH from WIU)
- Current résumé
- Three letters of recommendation, two of which must come from PSA faculty
- Personal essay of 1,000 to 1,500 words that includes academic goals, career plan upon completion of the program, perceived motivations, attributes and abilities that will lead to the applicant's success in the program

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Requirements

The WIU School of LEJA offers the post-baccalaureate certificate program in Police Executive Administration. This program is designed for graduate-level law enforcement students who wish to improve their knowledge in the policing field. This program provides professional development for aspiring law enforcement executives seeking to progress through police supervisory ranks. The certificate program requires admission to the graduate school

and the completion of 18 SH of graduate courses. The following courses are required and must be completed within three calendar years:

- LEJA 501 Theory in Criminal Justice
- LEJA 502 Management Issues in PSA
- LEJA 504 Civil and Criminal Liability
- LEJA 506 Police: Theory and Practice
- LEJA 511 Diversity in PSA or LEJA 512 Ethics in PSA
- LEJA 514 Executive Management Seminar

Graduate Assistantship

All PSA graduate students are eligible to apply for a graduate assistantship, which are awarded through a competitive process. All full-time graduate assistants receive a stipend in exchange for 20 hours of work per week and a tuition waiver. Probationary students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

Faculty Expertise

All Public Safety Graduate Faculty have extensive practitioner experience in some aspect of public safety, ranging from chief; deputy chief; emergency manager; investigator; probation/parole officer; attorney; prison manager; administrative specialist; firefighter; and federal agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Marshals Service. In addition, faculty members are nationally- and internationally-recognized for their research and publications. The faculty have actively published research on evidence-based policing and corrections; fire protection; probation and parole; racial profiling; terrorism; crime prevention; juvenile justice; ethics; risk management strategies in criminal justice; substance abuse issues; criminal behavior analysis and assessment; forensics; victimology; legal and criminal matters; and civil liability.

Featured Alumni



Western Illinois University's LEJA graduate program helped me develop new skills and knowledge in the law enforcement field to improve my job performance and position me for advancement in my career. I had the opportunity to research many criminological theories related to unlawful behavior, and the courses helped me understand why my clients commit crime. I also learned ways to reduce criminal behavior and strategies for rehabilitating my clients. The program was a great place to network with professionals from a range of criminal justice agencies and organizations. Earning my Master of Arts in LEJA was one of the best decisions I have made, and I recommend students continue their education through the Western Illinois University LEJA graduate program.

—Manfred B. Queteer, Jr., Class of 2014, Cook County Adult Probation, Field Service Division Home Confinement Unit, Probation Officer

Western Illinois University complies fully with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, orders, and regulations. The University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from discrimination based on sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status. Further, the University is committed to a comprehensive Affirmative Action program that ensures access and equity in educational programs, activities, and employment.



"The LEJA (now Public Safety Administration) Graduate Program at Western Illinois University is perfect for working professionals who are trying to balance family and career responsibilities, but want to earn a master's degree. I recommend the LEJA graduate program to criminal justice professionals because of its flexible online and weekend class schedule."

—Paula Crouch, Class of 2014, Detective, Springfield Police Department