

CAREER VIEW

CRIMINOLOGY

Crime is a hugely complex social phenomenon. Criminology, in turn, is a multi-disciplinary field of study with a wide-ranging scope of inquiry. However, it has three main points of concern: how crime is defined, why people commit crimes and how a society responds to crime.

Criminology explores the culture of crime and the workings of the criminal justice system including the police, courts, prisons and rehabilitation services. It studies the characteristics of offenders and how criminal behaviour relates to a wide range of social factors; for example drug

use, educational attainment, ethnicity, family relationships and mental health. It researches the ways in which crime impacts on victims and their families. How, for instance, are victims of rape treated in the justice system? How do the families of homicide victims survive? It seeks to understand how criminal behaviour meets the needs of its perpetrators. It asks who goes to prison and what happens to them there. It questions the nature of punishment – is it to provide justice, to deter or prevent crime, or to reform criminals? It questions the relationship between crime and the media. Does the way crime is reported and represented influence criminal behaviour and attitudes to victims?

WHY STUDY CRIMINOLOGY?

Criminology is concerned with what happens in our own backyard as well as activities on a global scale. Graffiti, substance abuse and family violence are all subjects for criminological inquiry, as are state crimes, terrorism and genocide. Criminology is also concerned with how the nature of crime changes as societies change over time. Digital technology opens up opportunities for fraud and misappropriation that, only a few years ago, would have been



incomprehensible. Social media enhances the ways by which individuals can commit interpersonal assaults. Changes to the Earth's climate brings with it implications for issues of international human rights as well as national security. Criminologists can assist authorities to respond to these challenges in effective ways.

Criminology brings together law, psychology, policing, sociology and cultural studies to give a big picture view of crime in our society. The study of criminology is intellectually challenging and involves digging deeply into social realities which can show human nature at its worst. It provides significant understanding and develops important skills necessary for those who want to work constructively towards making the world a better place. It is also an ideal subject for those who simply have a fierce curiosity about everything.

For those wanting to work in policy, advisory or consultancy roles, it can be advisable to plan for postgraduate qualifications. Criminology is a research-based field and the research component of postgraduate degrees, including research methodology, is necessary to properly understand past and current research protocols and assess the validity of their findings.

Topical coverage of career related issues brought to you by Victoria University Careers and Employment.

Areas covered include how degrees and courses relate to employment opportunities, to life/work planning, graduate destination information and current issues or material relevant to the employment scene. Your comments and suggestions always welcomed.

It is important to understand that criminology and forensic science are separate career areas and that the training and everyday work is therefore quite different. Criminologists do not, for example, collect and analyse evidence from crime scenes.

WHAT SKILLS DO CRIMINOLOGY GRADUATES DEVELOP?

Skills are the 'can do' edge of your degree. They represent open ground where you can show employers the value of your degree in a way that is meaningful to them. Criminology graduates can stand out because they have developed, among other things, higher order thinking skills and a certain mental discipline. These are very transferable in that they can be applied to any situation which calls for abstract reasoning and intellectual rigour. Such skills include:

Analytical thinking: the ability to break information down, identify the underlying structure and pull together summaries or conclusions from the essential points. Criminology graduates study various research data and theories which are complex and often counter-intuitive, and out of which they are expected to pull clarity and lucid analysis. Those in jobs where information is the basic currency, such as policy analysts, research assistants, or lawyers, constantly call upon this skill in order to function effectively.

Critical judgement: represents the ability to evaluate situations and information and pick out what is logical and relevant to the context in which it occurs. Although popular culture is riddled with crime 'facts', criminology graduates are trained out of these myths and generalisations and learn to select and collate data which is both valid and reliable for the purpose. Any job which relies on accurately evaluating or monitoring people, events or information, such as police officer, journalist, psychologist or customs officer, demands critical judgement.

Problem solving: Criminology graduates will have regularly grappled with issues which defy a simple solution. They are therefore likely to identify and confront problems with confidence and be able to formulate a strategy for resolution. Abstract problem-solving may be an important feature of a job role such as policy analyst, but it is a skill most employers value, even when focussed on practical day-to-day situations.

The ability to make connections: refers to the mixing and matching of ideas drawn from a range of conceptual structures. The richness and diversity of criminological literature, together with its theoretical constructs, gives criminology graduates a full data bank of ideas with which to juggle. In a

work environment the ability to make connections underpins many functions and roles, particularly those involving management, where skills such as strategic planning are important. Of special value is the ability to combine ideas which are not usually connected. Employers are keen on those who can come up with innovative proposals, particularly in 'stuck' situations.

Research and information skills: Criminology is a research-focussed subject and its graduates will have demonstrated competence in understanding research methodologies, statistical analyses, and accessing computer-based information systems. Postgraduate study which has involved some original research will extend these skills further. A huge amount of the world's information is conceptualised in research projects, captured in databases and coded in statistical formats. Graduates who can work effectively with these systems will always have access to new knowledge and be competitive for new jobs.

Non-judgemental people skills: Criminology graduates appreciate that both good and bad behaviour emerge from a heady mix of motivation, opportunity, conditioning, and personality. Such understanding tends towards tolerance for others' idiosyncrasies, which goes down well in all work situations and is vital in jobs where a capacity for empathy is required such as probation officer, psychologist and other client-centred roles.





the courts system in both policy roles and roles within the courts.

The **Department of Corrections** contains a policy development area and recruits at the graduate level for *policy analyst* roles. In addition, **Community Probation Services** and **Prison Services** have *operational advisers* at head office who, for example, assess the implications of legislative change on operational functions. Operational advisers are also recruited at the graduate level. Similarly, a criminology degree is an excellent background for

probation officers. There is no particular emphasis on postgraduate qualifications for any of these roles, but a combination of criminology and psychology is highly desirable. Registered psychologists with criminology qualifications are ideal for *psychologist* positions.

New Zealand Police: Police National Headquarters maintains a Policy unit. Opportunities for criminology graduates exist within the Policy team, with perhaps one graduate *policy analyst* vacancy available a year. There are a number of *intelligence analyst* positions within the National Intelligence Centre based at Police National Headquarters and a number of similar positions within districts based across New Zealand. New Zealand Police have recently implemented a career pathway for *intelligence analysts*. Criminology graduates, particularly those with a practical focus such as that which is developed through environmental criminology, are desirable applicants when vacancies occur. Within the Intelligence Group there are *lead intelligence analyst* and *senior intelligence analyst* positions for more experienced analysts with work experience. There is a *trainee analyst/analyst position* which is an entry level development role. Graduates are often valued for their writing and analytical skills. An interest in Asia and the Pacific Rim countries is good as there is a strong off shore focus. Police officers complete a criminology paper as part of their basic training. More advanced study in the subject could enhance career prospects for sworn officers.

Communication skills: These are absolutely vital to employers. Criminology graduates have worked through contentious and complex ideas, both verbally and in writing, and have been trained to express their thinking with clarity and precision. Communication skills combine speaking, listening, writing and understanding, and underpin almost any job you can think of.

WHERE DO CRIMINOLOGY GRADUATES WORK?

Job opportunities are, to a large extent, a function of organisational structures. For criminology graduates, opportunities lean towards organisations which are linked to the criminal justice system. This system is a network of interdependent organisations which, despite the requirement for correction facilities, maintains an underlying emphasis on the prevention of crime rather than its punishment.

Ministry of Justice: The Policy and Legal Group of the Ministry recruits graduates as entry level *policy advisors*, and there is a career path through to *senior policy advisor* positions. The Ministry considers all criminal justice roles including crime prevention, youth justice, criminal law and process, international criminal law, organised crime, victims' role in the justice system, and sentencing and parole laws. There are also opportunities for criminology graduates in



New Zealand Customs are interested in criminology graduates at all levels of the organisation, from service delivery roles such as *customs officer* through to *policy advisers, intelligence analysts* and *investigators*. Customs work includes criminology from an international perspective and requires the ability to think strategically around the local/international dimension. Recruitment mainly occurs at an entry *trainee customs officer* level from where progression to more specialised areas can occur. Interested applicants are advised to visit the website.

The Ministry of Social Development's Centre for Social Research and Evaluation (CSRE) is part of the Ministry's policy cluster. CSRE carries out a range of evaluation, forecasting and modelling research functions. Criminology is a relevant degree for both *research* and *policy analyst* roles. Postgraduate study, usually a Master's degree, is required.

Child, Youth and Family: A person with a criminology degree could possibly fill roles such as *policy* or *operational policy advisers*, including *regional advisors* and *business analysts*. Policy advice generally relates to the way in which proposed policy activities across the Ministry of Social Development, and between the Ministry and other Agencies and Departments, are consulted, organised, integrated where appropriate and reported against. Operational policy in Youth Justice focuses on translating governmental and departmental policy into operational activities. It then provides ongoing support and monitoring and, where appropriate, recommends and manages changes to improve quality

and effectiveness. A qualification in criminology would also be useful for someone seeking a role as a *youth justice coordinator*, where they would be involved in arranging and managing family group conferences for young offenders and their families.

Local Authorities, such as the Auckland and Wellington City Councils, are complex organisations with a role in crime prevention through such mechanisms as environmental design and urban strategic planning. Partnership links between local authorities, community service providers and the Ministry of Justice Crime Prevention Unit create positions such as *community safety co-ordinator* and various *administrative* and *project management roles*.

Tertiary Institutions: Teaching at university level usually requires a PhD. Graduates can advance their research and teaching skills by undertaking a Master's degree or PhD and may have the opportunity to tutor undergraduate students. Many students also go overseas to study. Other roles in tertiary institutions include *research assistants, academic advisors, learning support, administration* and *managerial positions*.

Criminology plus.... With their critical thinking, analytical and communication skills, criminology graduates are attractive to employers both inside and outside the criminal justice system. There are a range of professional roles which require separate training but which can complement a criminology degree. These include: *lawyer, journalist, social worker,*

GRADUATE PROFILES

psychologist, counsellor, architect, urban designer, security specialist and *detective*. Operational and management roles in organisations which have regulatory or statutory responsibilities, such as ACC, can also be compatible with a criminology degree.

JOB TITLES

The following is a sample of job titles taken from our graduate destination surveys. Some roles may require additional qualifications and training.

Administration Officer • Alcohol and Other Drug Clinician • Assistant Investigator • Camp Counsellor • Case Manager • Cases Editor • Claims Manager • Communications Consultant • Community Support Worker • Complaints and Compliance Analyst • Contracts Administrator • Court Registry Officer • Crime Desk Operator • Development Assistant • Intelligence Collator • Intelligence Officer/Analyst • Lecturer • Licensing Officer • Organisational Research Analyst • Police Communicator • Police Officer • Policy Analyst • Prison Officer • Probation Officer • Programme Support Coordinator • Psychometric Assessment Coordinator • Research Assistant • Residential Youth Worker • Safety & Health Administrator • Security Officer • Senior Researcher • Student Advisor • Support Services Coordinator • Teacher • Tutor • Vetting and Validation Officer • Youth Worker



Ellie McKenzie

*Policy Advisor
Ministry of Justice*



The subjectiveness of crime was what made me want to study Criminology. By majoring in Criminology I wanted to explore questions such as ‘why are certain behaviours classified as crime?’ and ‘what factors influence our intolerance of certain behaviours?’ So after finishing a BA in Sociology and Media & Communications, I enrolled at Victoria to delve into these issues.

Criminology at Victoria is so much more than I expected it to be! People often assume it’s a peculiar subject that doesn’t offer a lot of career options. It’s actually made up of a wide range of disciplines like psychology, law, sociology, politics, and – as I found in my Honours year – even physio-psychology. The subject is vast. I found it incredibly enlightening to study the effect of drugs on the brain, and the similarities between historical and contemporary rejection of behaviour.

The skills I learned from studying Criminology are much more rewarding than I anticipated them to be. My public speaking skills have improved after having the opportunity to share my research with the class in every Honours course I took. I am more critical of media portrayals of crime now that I have a better awareness of the reality of why people offend. I’ve also become more open-minded about cultural norms in other countries that are illegal or not tolerated in New Zealand, rather than simply viewing them as weird or wrong.

I wanted to experience working in government to decipher the process involved in regulating behaviour. Being a policy advisor for the Ministry of Justice is the perfect way to see what factors are considered in using law as a tool to influence people and reflect common values. I’m now also very grateful I needed to write so many essays: formal writing skills are invaluable in almost any job an Arts student is suited to!

For anyone contemplating studying Criminology as a major it is useful to know that crime is a social construct. As long as crime is a fluid concept, then Criminology will always be relevant, applicable and will always need new research.

Kellie Hoy

*Senior Advisor
Ministry of Social Development*



I was unclear what career path I wanted to take when I first started studying at Victoria University of Wellington. Although I was adamant about wanting to complete a Bachelor of Arts, choosing what to major in was a real challenge. This uncertainty led me to make a spur of the moment decision to enrol in a Criminology paper during my second year of study. From that point onwards, I knew that Criminology was well and truly what I'd been looking for.

I completed my Bachelor of Arts in three short years, majoring in both Criminology and Sociology. After undertaking a further year of study in Honours, I decided to complete a Master's in Criminology. For my thesis, I completed a critical and gendered analysis of how the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda responded to sexual violence in the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Five years of study certainly paid off when I was successfully appointed as a Sexual Violence Victims Advisor for the Ministry of Justice at the Wellington District Court. While immensely challenging at times, I absolutely loved helping victims/survivors of sexual violence through the difficult and enduring court system. After taking six months off work to embark on overseas travel, I was eager to head home and try something new. I am now working as a Senior Advisor for the Ministry of Social Development within the Approvals team. I absolutely love my job, and I go to work every day motivated by my strong commitment and desire to make a difference to the lives of New Zealanders.

With so many options to choose from, the key to succeeding in study is to find out what it is that motivates you, what it is that you're truly passionate about, and what that something is that leaves you yearning to find out more. I found all those things and more in Criminology, and that has a lot to do with the fantastic lecturers that make up the Criminology department. My degree allowed me to kick-start my career in a dynamic field. The skills I developed while studying are easily adaptable and well utilised. I can't wait to discover what career opportunities I am still yet to unlock.

Tom Worthington

*Probation Officer
Department of Corrections,
Wellington*



A couple of years after college I happened into a job at a youth offending service in London. This was an interesting experience working with other people my age facing some tricky challenges. I became interested in what caused people to head down certain paths and the influence of the justice system. After coming back to study I enrolled in Law and a few other subjects, though nothing sparked my interest like Criminology, so that is what I pursued as my major.

I enjoyed the wide range of topics you can choose from within Criminology; even the areas I wasn't particularly interested in were enjoyable and challenging. Generally Victoria did a good job of making our studies relevant to the real world, in particular the opportunities to visit a prison and hear from current professionals and experts in the field.

Studying Criminology helps to broaden your perspective of the causes of crime and possible solutions. I think it's important to pair this with other subjects you find interesting and enjoyable. Criminology is relevant and complementary to many other areas such as economics, psychology and anthropology.

While finishing off a couple of courses in my final year I managed to pick up a summer intern position in policy at the Ministry of Justice, which led into a full time position. After some time in policy and travelling I began a front-line role with a mental health NGO. I really enjoyed this and it allowed me to develop skills and a fresh perspective which I could take into my work as a probation officer.

I think it's a good idea for people studying Criminology to also pursue any other interests and passions they may have and to seek out new experiences. Staff come to the Department of Corrections from all backgrounds and walks of life, and many types of skills are valuable. Recently there seems to be a willingness to look for more creative solutions to crime and I think anyone interested in studying Criminology should be confident in their ability to help make a positive impact following their studies.

Lynzi Armstrong

*Lecturer in Criminology
Victoria University of Wellington*



I became very interested in research in the final year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Glasgow. Around that time I had been following media coverage on the tragic murders of five women who had been working as sex workers in Ipswich. I became interested in the laws surrounding the sex industry and how these laws impact on the safety of sex workers. My curiosity led me to discover that sex work had been decriminalised in New Zealand in 2003 and I became interested in doing PhD research in this context. I was lucky to get a scholarship and I picked up my life and moved to New Zealand to start my PhD research in late 2007.

I loved having the opportunity to think deeply about a topic I am very passionate about and to have the chance to make a contribution to knowledge in that area. My research also enabled me to meet a wide range of people I may not have otherwise had the chance to meet. They not only taught me so much about the topics I was exploring but also helped me to learn wider lessons about social justice, oppression and other complexities of society and how people navigate it.

Doing a PhD in Criminology helped me to further develop a wide range of skills. I found that the process really challenged previous ideas I had and made me much more reflective as a researcher. While I was looking for an academic job, my PhD also helped me to secure interesting roles outside of academia in government research and policy.

Think very carefully about what topic you want to pursue for your postgraduate study. Focus your study on something you care deeply about, allow yourself to be challenged, and understand that being challenged is a critical part of the process. Be reflective while you are doing your research and think about the lessons you are learning and how you may be changing both as a researcher and as a person. Your awareness of this process and the skills you develop during it will be beneficial in your future career either inside or outside of academia.

Nikita Howe

*Intelligence Collator
New Zealand Police*



I first discovered criminology while attending the Victoria open day in my final year of high school. I had already planned to major in Psychology and since I was fascinated by criminal behaviour, I thought Criminology would be a great complementary major.

Once I began my Criminology courses, I was a little surprised that it wasn't at all like CSI as I had imagined! Nevertheless, I wasn't disappointed as the subject matter captured my attention by covering a huge variety of topics such as policing, youth crime, alcohol and drugs, and gender-specific crime. Being genuinely interested in lecture content and reading material certainly makes university workloads less daunting.

After receiving my Bachelor of Arts, I felt like there was more to learn and bigger questions to pose so I chose to continue my Criminology studies by enrolling in Honours. Being able to narrow my studies down and go deeper into subjects I enjoyed during my undergraduate years was both challenging and rewarding. My individual research project focused on the resilience of at-risk youth in New Zealand and I still find myself applying parts of my research to my current role.

I believe one of the most valuable skills I learnt during my time at Victoria, particularly during Honours, was the ability to manage a heavy workload to meet deadlines and personal goals. While it may have felt impossible at times, it prepared me well to hit the ground running and manage my time wisely when I started my first job as an Intelligence Collator with the New Zealand Police. The ability to problem solve, evaluate, draw out important information, critically analyse and write concisely are other skills gained during my studies that I use on a daily basis. While I have just started out on my career path, I believe that these skills will be invaluable as I continue my career no matter where I go.

As a final piece of advice, make the most of your opportunities while at Victoria. Your tutors and lecturers are keen to help you achieve the best results possible throughout your university degree, so if you're unsure about anything be sure to use the advice and feedback they offer.

CRIMINOLOGY AT VICTORIA

The Institute of Criminology was established at Victoria University on 1 January 1975, and was one of the first multi-disciplinary research and teaching centres established in the university. Since then it has made contributions on many levels within the crime and justice sector, employing staff members of a high calibre with good national and international linkages. Its location close to downtown Wellington enables consultation with government and positions students well for employment opportunities within the public service.

Criminology at Victoria can be undertaken by students as a major subject of a BA (Bachelor of Arts) degree and they can continue on to further postgraduate possibilities. Criminology can also be combined with other subjects such as Social Policy, Sociology, Psychology or Political Science. The study of Criminology at Victoria begins at 100 level.

Students seeking to advance to graduate levels can begin with a one-year Honours degree or proceed



to Master's and PhD levels where a written thesis is required. A thesis is the product of original research, which may be undertaken full or part time.

Examples of postgraduate research thesis topics include:

Sentencing consistency in the New Zealand District Courts;

A kaupapa Māori analysis of the use of Māori cultural identity in the prison system;

A qualitative study investigating the association between social exclusion, stigma and long term problem drug use in a New Zealand town;

Property of Corrections: The Experience of Incarceration for Female Inmates in a New Zealand Prison;

Negotiating Gender and Police Culture: Exploring the Barriers to Retention and Progression of Female Police Officers in New Zealand;

Same sex relations, state crime and resistance;

Risky residences: An exploratory study of sexual violence in university halls of residence;

Doing gender as an offender: A criminological analysis of offender narratives, and the interrelationship between masculinities and child sexual abuse.

Victoria also offers a Graduate Diploma of Arts for graduates. This can allow those without prior knowledge of criminology to undertake a tailored course of study that may include both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in criminology with complementary courses in other disciplines.

Criminology staff interests include: substance use and misuse; the psychology of criminal behaviour; media representations of crime; sexual offending; crime reduction and community safety; plural policing and private security/private policing; youth justice; youth cultures; gender, risk and harm minimisation; history and sociology of punishment; state crime and human rights; transitional justice; women, rape and the police; sex work; and gender issues in crime and policing.

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