

FAQs BS Criminal Justice at Empire State University

Q: Can I get an Associate's degree in Criminal Justice?

A: No, Empire State University doesn't offer an approved Associate's degree for Criminal Justice. We suggest an Associate's degree in either [Community and Human Services](#), or [General Studies](#), or [Social Science](#).

Q: Can I use a Criminal Justice concentration for a bachelor's degree?

A: No. You cannot use a concentration for any degree that includes a title similar to "Criminal Justice." However, with degrees in [Public Affairs](#), [Community and Human Services](#), and [Social Science](#) you could design a concentration in many adjacent areas such as "Policing," "Emergency Management," "Terrorism and Homeland Security," "Criminology," etc.

Q: How many credits can I transfer to Empire State University?

A: Empire accepts up to 93 credits of advanced standing credits; including transcript credit, credit identified through [Prior Learning Evaluations \(PLE\)](#) and credit recommended through our [iPLA](#) process. Please note that, depending on the design of your degree program you might not be able to use all available credit. Additionally, you are required to complete at least 24 credits of advanced-level Criminal Justice courses while at Empire State. Any credits you intend to use towards the Criminal Justice program will be vetted by Criminal Justice faculty. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you intend on going to graduate school and/or applying for a position with the New York State Troopers or other agencies, the prior learning credit you can use for educational credit may be limited. It is up to you to review agency and/or graduate school requirements to see what their limits are.

Q: Can transcript credit from other accredited colleges and universities be used in the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Criminal Justice program?

A: If you have completed an Associate's degree in Criminal Justice at a school with whom we have a pathways agreement, some of your courses may have already been identified as fulfilling one or more of Empire State University's B.S. in Criminal Justice [degree requirements](#). Please look [here](#) to see if your school has an established pathway with us. Other courses which you may have taken will be evaluated by our Criminal Justice faculty and Registrar to determine if any meet the Criminal Justice degree program requirements or other Empire State University requirements.

Q: What about prior learning credit? Does Empire State University recognize and award prior learning credit for law enforcement academy training and in-service trainings?

A: Yes, we recognize prior learning credit from agencies such as [New York City Police Academy](#), the [New York City Police Department](#), [NYC Housing and/or Transit Police](#), [New York State Division of Criminal Justice Municipal Officer Training Council](#), the [NYC Department of Correction](#), and the [New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision](#). If you have completed other similar trainings, or have obtained relevant certificates, licenses, or work experience, you might be able to use our [Individual Prior Learning Assessment \(iPLA\)](#) process to translate that learning into college level credit. You will work with your mentor who will assist you with this process and determine if any of the program requirements might be satisfied by prior learning credit. Please note, however, that although you may have prior learning credit that can be translated into university credit, all of your credits may not fit into a degree plan. Consult with your mentor to determine what other credits you will need to satisfy the Criminal Justice program and university requirements.

Q: I have a lot of transfer credits, but most of them are not liberal studies credits. How many liberal credits does the B.S. in Criminal Justice require?

A: While the B.S. in Criminal Justice requires 62 credits of liberal studies courses, a [Bachelor of Professional Studies \(B.P.S.\)](#) degree would require only 32 liberal studies credits and thus might be a quicker path to your degree. Examples of possible degree pathways might be a Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs, or in Community and Human Services, with a concentration in Police Studies. For more information about the B.P.S. option, please consult with your primary mentor.

Q: Can I use my Empire State University B.S. in Criminal Justice to get a job in law enforcement?

A: Yes, having a B.S. in Criminal Justice can be helpful in obtaining a job in law enforcement, but many agencies will accept degrees in other areas as well. It is important to note, however, that a degree is not the only determining factor. Law enforcement agencies typically look for candidates with a combination of education, training, and experience that demonstrate their ability to effectively perform the duties of a police officer. For example, in addition to a university degree, most law enforcement agencies require candidates to pass a rigorous selection process that includes physical and written exams, background checks, and interviews. Some agencies also require candidates to complete an academy training program. It's worth noting that specific requirements can vary from one law enforcement agency to another, so it's important to research the specific requirements for the agency or departments you're interested in working for.

Q: Will a B.S. in Criminal Justice help me to become a forensic investigator?

A: In many cases, yes, but you should discuss with your primary mentor any additional classes that might be helpful for applying to specific law enforcement agencies and/or graduate schools. For example, many graduate forensic science programs require that students complete undergraduate courses in [biochemistry](#), [genetics](#), [molecular biology](#), and [statistics](#) – all of which are offered at Empire State University, and which can be added to your Criminal Justice degree program in consultation with your primary mentor. You might also consider an [Interdisciplinary](#) degree in “Forensics,” which would combine science, criminal justice, math, psychology, etc. Again, check with your mentor to see which option is best for you.

Q: I am interested in the Criminal Justice program, but I am already a student in a different Area of Study (AOS) at Empire State University. Can I switch to the B.S. in Criminal Justice program?

A: Yes, you can switch to the Criminal Justice program; however, your degree program would need to include the [required and elective Criminal Justice courses](#) (or equivalents) outlined in the program. Please consult with your primary mentor.

Q: Could my bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice be a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)?

A: No, the program in Criminal Justice at Empire State University is a Bachelor of Science (B.S.).

Q: Does my bachelor’s degree plan have to include all the courses listed in the B.S. in Criminal Justice program?

A: Yes, if you are enrolled in Empire State University’s B.S. in Criminal Justice program, you must include the [required and elective Criminal Justice courses](#) listed (or equivalents). In addition, you must complete all other [degree requirements](#), e.g., [SUNY General Education](#), [Educational Planning](#), sufficient advanced credits.

Q: What if I want to take some of the Criminal Justice courses, but not be part of the B.S. in Criminal Justice program?

A: Any student can take Empire State University's Criminal Justice courses, as long as the prerequisites (if any) are met.

Q: Is Educational Planning required as part of the B.S. in Criminal Justice program?

A: Yes, as per university policy, at least four credits of [Educational Planning](#) are required. This requirement can be met by a variety of Educational Planning [courses](#). Consult with your mentor regarding the options.

Q: Are there SUNY General Education requirements for the B.S. in Criminal Justice program?

A: Yes, students need to meet the SUNY [general education requirements](#) for a bachelor's degree. Additionally, some of the classes in the Criminal Justice degree program will satisfy general education requirements. You will work with your primary mentor to meet the requirements.

Q: How are the courses for the B.S. in Criminal Justice offered?

A: The courses are offered in our various modes of delivery, including independent study, [online courses](#), [study groups](#), or [residencies](#). Please consult the Registration [Term Guide](#) for current listing of study options.

Helpful documents:

- [A.A./A.S. in General Studies](#)
- [A.A./A.S. in Social Science Degree Planning Worksheet](#)
- [B.A./B.S./B.P.S. in Public Affairs Degree Planning Worksheet](#)
- [B.A./B.S. in Social Science Degree Planning Worksheet](#)
- [B.S. in Criminal Justice Degree Planning Worksheet](#)
- [Community and Human Services course map/guidelines](#)
- [Emergency Management and Homeland Security concentrations](#)
- [Pathways Transfer Programs for Community College Students](#) (see CRJS pathways with Orange, Ulster, Rockland Community Colleges)