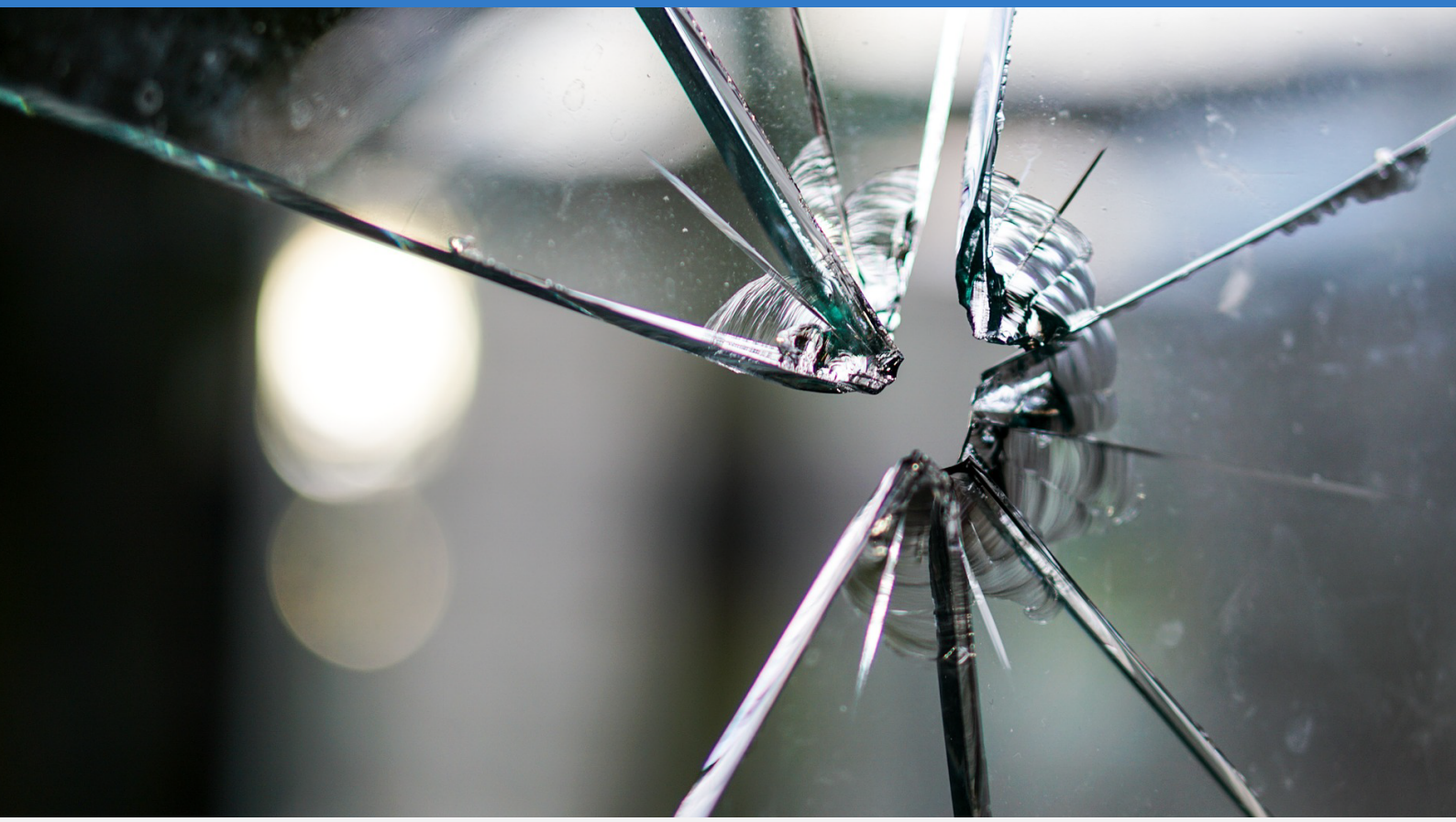
Criminology @ Unisa

A complete guide to preparing yourself for career opportunities



Define tomorrow.

UNISA university of south africa

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The information in this publication is correct as of 7 July 2017. Visit the Unisa Counselling and Career Development downloads page (http://bit.ly/2ux94B5) to check for updates.

How will this brochure help me?

- It will provide you with some insight into what studying criminology involves.
- It will help you gain more information about the skills needed in the field of criminology.
- It will help you point out possible occupations related to criminology.
- It will assist you in finding criminology-related qualifications offered by Unisa.

About criminology

Criminology is the scientific study of crime, including its causes, responses by law enforcement, and methods of prevention[1]. Criminology is a multi-disciplinary field and includes concepts from sociology, biology, statistics, psychology, economics, and anthropology.

Topics studied in criminology include:

- Crime typologies

[1] http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-criminology-definition-history-theories.html

- Offenders and criminal behaviour
- Victimology
- Strategies to reduce crime and reaction to crime
- Crime risk perspectives
- Child and youth misbehaviour
- Dealing with young offenders
- Criminological evaluation and assessment

You will also be trained in research methods and social policy analysis, so you will have the practical research and critical skills to make your observations as accurate and as meaningful as possible.

Due to the pervasive nature of crimes in all societies, the discipline of criminology plays an important role in terms of understanding the causes of crimes, the nature of criminal behaviour, support of victims, and strategies to reduce and minimise crime. Understanding of these issues can help communities to be safe, and improve the wellbeing of the community.

Further reading

- Sample chapter from *What is Criminology?* book.
- *The Criminologist* newsletter (American Society of Criminology)

What skills and qualities are needed for this career field?

Some of the skills and qualities needed by an individual in this field include:

- Problem-solving
- Clear communication skills (in writing and in person)
- A natural curiosity
- The ability to make connections
- Analytical and logical thinking
- An interest in working with large amounts of information (including statistical data)
- An interest in social justice and contributing to society in general

Careers in criminology

Some of the specific areas that criminology focuses on include:

- Frequency of crimes
- Location of crimes

- Causes of crimes
- Types of crimes
- Social and individual consequences of crimes
- Social reactions to crime
- Individual reactions to crime
- Governmental reactions to crime

Opportunities for criminologists include:

- the South African Police Service, SAPS Forensic Science Laboratory, SAPS Crime Information Analysis Centre,
- in the legal system to provide expert opinion, victim impact statements, and offender assessments,
- the Department of Correctional Services for placement in prisons, sentencing and parole,
- the South African National Defence Force,
- the National Intelligence Agency,
- non-government and community-based organisations related to victim empowerment, youth work, prisoners' or victims' rights, and rehabilitation,
- private security industry,
- financial institutions (in forensic units),
- universities (as lecturers and researchers), and
- research organisations (independent or affiliated with a University, for example Institute for Security Studies, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Human Science Research Council, and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research).

Some tasks performed by criminologists include:

- Criminal investigation
- Corrections
- Diversion programming
- Financial and insurance fraud investigation & prevention
- Forensics
- Intervention programming
- Law enforcement
- Medical investigation
- Rehabilitation
- Research and Policy Studies
- Private investigation
- Retail investigation
- Special agencies
- Teaching
- Women's Studies
- Youth programming & counselling

Further reading

- Use the Saferspaces website (http://www.saferspaces.org.za/organisation) to identify organisations that work in the violence and crime prevention field.
- An in-depth discussion of the different roles of criminologists is provided in a PhD dissertation completed by Brenda Ann Beukman. Download it here: http://www.lkpcrimserv.com/Library/thesis.pdf.

Criminology versus Forensic Science

Although forensic science and criminology both approach issues of crime and criminal behaviour from a scientific standpoint, the two disciplines are quite different. Criminology is a specialised social science that evolved from sociology, whereas forensic science is an applied natural science. Forensic science focuses on scientific evidence and involves fields such as chemistry, microbiology, physics, and geology. Criminology is more concerned with understanding criminal behaviour, causes of crime and crime patterns, and prevention of crime.

Types of forensic science include forensic anthropology and archaeology, forensic entomology, forensic pathology, DNA profiling, bloodstain pattern analysis, and forensic chemistry. Types of criminology include general criminology, criminal sociology, criminal psychology, and green criminology. Unisa offers a Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Science and Technology degree, various specialisation degrees related to Life Sciences

(including chemistry, microbiology, and biochemistry), as well as degrees related to anthropology and archaeology (BSc and BA).

Identify opportunities with career research

How do you identify opportunities?

Your career research will connect you to others who will help you to answer questions you have with relation to your career choice; expand your understanding of the opportunities related to your career vision; identify “hidden” career paths that you did not think of previously; and think about how you could plan to pursue specific opportunities.

Prepare

Think about what you still need to find out: what questions do you have? You will use these questions as a starting point to structure your research. Examples of questions include “What can I do with a major in...”, “How much do criminologists earn?” or “What must I study to be ...?”

Keep track of information

Keep track of your research by making notes about what you learn and what you still need to find out. Use online services or apps such as Evernote (http://www.evernote.com) or Diigo (http://www.diigo.com) to keep track of your research online.

Evaluate

Evaluate the information that you are finding: Who wrote the information (person/ organisation)? Which country does the information relate to? When was the information last updated? After you have visited a number of websites, you could compare your notes about the information you found – what are the similarities and differences? What else do you need to find out?

Further ways to do career research

1 Online search

Use a search engine such as Google to search for information related to your questions. For example, you need to find out about career opportunities related to criminology. You could start with using keywords such as “careers in criminology” and then to further contextualise your findings, you could search keywords such as “careers in criminology Africa” and “careers in criminology South Africa”. Scan the brief descriptions of the first ten results and decide which website you would want to explore first. Skim-read through the information on the website (start with the headings) to get an understanding of the content of the page and to find information related to your question. Also, check whether there are links to other websites that you could further explore. As you are reading, make a summary of the information. You could use the information you find to make lists of job titles related to your field of study, organisations that employ individuals in these fields and professional organisations.

Activity

Use Google to find specific job titles related to criminology as a major. The following are some search terms you could consider: “job titles criminology”; and “job titles criminology graduates south africa”.

Job title	Website
Example: **Criminologist**	Quintcareers.com

2 Occupational information websites

The following websites will help you to learn more about specific job titles:

Website	Description
Unisa Counselling & Career Development http://bit.ly/2fE0Xd0	This website provides more information about opportunities related to qualifications at Unisa.
Kheta (from SAQA) http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za/occupations	Search for information about specific job titles.

Website	Description
Career Planet http://www.careerplanet.co.za/	Learn more about career areas such as IT, tourism, engineering and more. The website also contains information about learnerships and student finance
O*Net http://www.onetonline.org/	Explore job titles related to different categories such as your interests, skills, values, typical work activities, and more. You could also browse through groups of occupations related to specific industries or economic sectors.
Prospects http://www.prospects.ac.uk/	Explore different job titles related to job sectors, as well as what you could do with your major subject.

3 Job-search portals

Job search portals are useful in terms of researching specific job titles linked to different career fields and industries. Finding jobs advertisements that interest you is a worthwhile activity, even if you are not currently applying for jobs. You may not yet be eligible to apply for your dream job, but you can still gain a lot of information that can be applied to your career planning. For example, you are interested in criminology, but you are not sure which specific job titles are linked to this field; or you want to know what kind of qualifications and skills are needed to be a criminologist in a correctional services setting.

You can use this information to make career goals, and think strategically about how you can develop experiences that will help you meet more of the selection criteria in the future.

Job search sites include

- PNet (http://www.pnet.co.za)
- Careerjunction (http://www.careerjunction. co.za)
- Careers24 (http://www.careers24.com/)
- Indeed (http://www.indeed.co.za)
- Government positions (http://www.gov.za/aboutgovt/vacancies.htm)

4 LinkedIn

If you have not done so already, start building your network on LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com) today!

Register for a free account and start connecting with your network online. Join groups relevant to your career field so that you could participate in discussions, ask questions and provide answers about specific topics and search for people, organisations and jobs in your field of interest. Do research about companies and employees to help you identify opportunities. To learn more about using LinkedIn effectively, go to http://bit.ly/2gyOAzS.

Activity

1. Go to www.linkedin.com and sign in to your LinkedIn account. If you do not have an account yet, then create one.
2. Make sure that you have captured your current or previous studies at Unisa on your LinkedIn profile.
3. Once you are signed in, hover over “My network” and then click on “Find alumni”.

4. You will now be presented with a page with Headings and graphs beneath the headings (e.g. Where they live, Where they work, What they do). Click on the arrow to the right and then on the search icon next to the What they studied heading.
5. Type in Criminology.
6. You will notice that the graphs adjust. You have now filtered the information to contain information about Unisa graduates who work in the field you searched for.
7. You can now see how many graduates in these fields are on LinkedIn, where they work, what they're skilled at, etc.

5 Talk to others (informational interviewing)

Once you have done some research about specific options, your next step is to talk to individuals in the type of job/ industry that you are interested in. The goal of these conversations is to explore your career options, to expand your network, to build confidence, to access information and to identify your own strengths and areas of development. For example, you read an article about a new programme for addiction treatment and you feel curious about how the researchers went about evaluating the programme. You could contact one of the authors of the article to ask if they would be willing to share how they went about gaining access to the information they needed for their evaluation. Before you interview someone, do research about what you would want to discuss with them – you could ask this person to "fill in the gaps" for you. Start with people you already know: friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, lecturers, tutors and fellow students. Use online social networks such as LinkedIn to further identify potential people. For more information on how to go about this and suggestions for questions that you might want to ask, go to http://bit.ly/2riGpQq. Also, watch this video to learn more: The Dos and Don'ts of Informational Interviews: http://youtu.be/ixbhtm8l0sI.

Remember to keep track of the information you have gathered and how you make sense of this. Also, track the questions you still have and how you think you would be able to get answers to these questions.

Activity

Write a list of any people you know who might work in the fields you are interested in. For instance, do any of your parents' friends work in any of the fields you are considering? And write a list of those people who could give you information about any careers you are considering.

You may have identified a lot more people than you thought! Imagine how much information you can gather about the career you are interested in just by talking to these people. Each person will give you fresh insights opinions and valuable information about the careers you are considering, whether they are currently working in that field or are only remotely related to or associated with it.

6 Attend a careers fair event

Attending a careers fair event gives you the opportunity to speak to people from different industries. You may be studying a qualification that does not seem to have a direct link to the exhibitors or the presenters, but they have one thing in common: they employ people, who work in organisations, who do business with all kinds of suppliers and services. Somewhere in this value chain your qualification will find a place to fit – either as a customer or as an employer or employee.

The annual Unisa Careers Fair usually takes place in July and August at various venues. Go to http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling for more information.

7 Experience studying topics related to your field of interest

Explore what criminology is by watching and listening to on-line lectures and reading free open textbooks. These resources will enhance your understanding of criminology and the various opportunities related to this field.

Search for data science courses and open textbooks on these sites:

- Coursera.org (http://www.coursera.org/)
- Udemy (http://www.udemy.com/)
- Saylor Academy (http://www.saylor.org/books/)
- Open Textbook Library (http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/)
- College Open Textbooks (http://www.collegeopentextbooks.org/textbook-listings/textbooks-by-subject/)
- MITOpenCourseware (http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm)
- Open Culture (http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses)
- iTunes university (http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/)
- YouTube education (http://www.youtube.com/education?b=400)
- FreeVideoLectures (http://freevideolectures.com/)

8 Join a professional organisation

The Criminological and Victimological Society of Southern Africa (CRIMSA) is a non-governmental, voluntary, non-sexist, non-racial organisation aiming to promoting the academic, practical, social and universal relevance of Criminology alike in order to understand, control, prevent and reduce crime and its outcomes and to serve the Southern African community at large. CRIMSA aims to: to promote, coordinate and

apply the criminological sciences (Criminology, Victimology and criminal justice in particular, but also any academic discipline focusing on phenomena related to crime and victimisation) through study and academic interaction, research and community service; to co-operate with interested local, regional and international institutions to create mediums for the publishing of, among other things, research results; to promote and stimulate the academic interests of its members; to inform the community about crime-related phenomena, criminal victimisation and reaction to crime; to contribute to the broader transformation of society through equity and to endorse those values enshrined in the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

For more information visit their website at http://www.crimsa.ac.za/.

Qualifications offered by Unisa

Visit the Unisa website at http://www.unisa.ac.za/qualifications for more information about these qualifications.

Undergraduate qualifications

- Higher Certificate in Criminal Justice
- Bachelor of Arts in Criminology
- Bachelor of Police Science – Criminal Justice Stream

- Bachelor of Arts (General) – Select criminology as a major subject

Honours degree

- Bachelor of Arts Honours in Criminology

Master's degree

- Master of Arts in Criminology (Full Dissertation)
- Master of Arts in Criminal Justice (Coursework)
- Master of Arts in Criminal Justice (Full Dissertation)
- Magister Technologiae: Forensic Investigations (Coursework)

Doctoral degree

- Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice

The research focus areas for the Master's and Doctoral degrees can be found in this document: http://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Apply%20for%20admission/MD/Documents/Unisa-focus-areas-CLAW.pdf.

Short Learning Programmes (SLPs)

Unisa offers a number of SLPs that people could look at completing. It is important to remember that a SLP is not a formal qualification and will not allow you to qualify for a formal qualification. For more information visit: http://brochure.unisa.ac.za/slp/

Centre for Criminological Sciences

This Centre offers a diverse range of courses that incorporate a Course in Security Practice, Programme in Security Management and the Course in Anti-Corruption and Commercial Crime Investigation.

Centre for Applied Criminal Justice

The focus of this Centre's programmes is on classification of media content, and children's rights.

Counselling and career development services at Unisa

The Unisa Directorate for Counselling and Career Development offers career-, academic- and personal counselling services to Unisa students and the broader community. You can talk to a counsellor about:

- **Career decisions.** I am not sure which career path to follow; I don't know which qualification would be best; I want to change my career direction…
- **Career information.** How can I find out more about a career in …
- **Employability.** How do I market myself to employers? How can I look for work? How can I compile an effective CV? How do I go about networking with others? How do I put together my career portfolio? How can I meet potential employers? How can I improve my interview skills?)
- **My studies at Unisa.** How can I get started with my studies? How do I plan my studies? How can I study more effectively? I don't feel motivated to continue with my studies… I feel worried about preparing for/ writing the exams. I failed my exams – what now? I need to improve my reading/ writing/ numeracy skills
- **Personal issues.** How can I have better relationships with others? How can I cope more effectively with issues that impact on my studies?

Visit our website at http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling to access many self-help resources, or talk to a counsellor by e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za.