

In-Demand Skills

Skills Recommended for Criminal Justice Students



Professional Networking

How to Start: Professional networking means connecting with experts across police, legal, clinical, probation, and community organizations. You can build these connections by joining student clubs, attending local precinct, professional, or career events, and by asking questions during internships. Building relationships early shows employers you are proactive and genuinely committed to the field.



Public Speaking & Advocacy

How to Start: Attend networking events, introduce yourself to attendees, and ask thoughtful questions during sessions. During events ask questions and introduce yourself to event participants. Enroll in fieldwork (CRJ 7500), secure internships, or volunteer with organizations that align with your career interests. Actively contribute to class discussions and volunteer to lead group projects. Sharpen your communication and leadership skills by joining a student club or the Student Government Association (SGA).



Portfolio Development

How to Start: Create a professional portfolio documenting coursework, community and professional engagement, certifications, and internship/fieldwork experiences to present to prospective employers and/or transfer institutions.



Critical Thinking & Policy Analysis

How to Start: Familiarize yourself with data and studies that evaluate whether a policy achieves its intended goals. Demonstrate your critical thinking by analyzing any potential unintended consequences a policy may cause. Evaluate the economic, social, and legal trade-offs of implementing a specific policy.



Leadership & Teamwork

How to Start: Enroll in fieldwork (CRJ 7500), secure internships, or volunteer with organizations to practice leadership and collaboration in real-world settings. Actively contribute to class discussions and volunteer to coordinate or lead group assignments. Sharpen your teamwork and decision-making skills by taking on active roles in a student club or the Student Government Association (SGA).



Problem-Solving

How to Start: Problem-solving in criminal justice means finding the root causes of safety issues instead of applying quick fixes. You can practice it by studying real crime data and tackling hands-on challenges during internships or group projects. Showing you can use clear logic to solve problems proves you are ready for real-world decisions.



Data Literacy

How to Start: Learning data literacy means understanding how to read, analyze, and use data points, such as crime stats, to make smart decisions. You can build this skill by reading crime reports, practicing with basic spreadsheets or crime-mapping tools. Showing you understand data proves to employers that you can make smart, evidence-based decisions.



Cultural Competency

How to Start: Cultural competency means understanding and respecting the diverse communities you will serve in public safety. You can build this skill by taking courses in sociology or ethics, engaging with different campus clubs as well as the Student Government Association (SGA), volunteering with local community groups, and attending campus and professional events that highlight diversity and cultural competency. Learning to listen and communicate across cultures proves to employers that you can build trust and handle sensitive situations fairly.



Professional Writing

How to Start: Field writing means reporting facts clearly, accurately, and without taking sides. You can practice it by drafting simple case summaries, mock police reports, and class papers. Writing clearly and directly proves you can handle official documentation and court reports.