



Criminology

A SHORT VOCATIONAL GUIDE



GRADUATE PROFILE

Keeva is a writer who has spent ten years experimenting professionally with various genres – from radio plays to advertising, blogs, editorials and scripts. Keeva says:

“I became interested in studying criminology when I was attempting to write a crime fiction piece and found I didn’t know anything about crime. It was a great decision. I believe writers should always be learning if they wish to commentate on the world around them and criminology really did expand these horizons. Better still (with the exception of statistical analysis), it was fun. As a writer I have drawn from what I learnt on so many occasions, particularly in advertising and when writing opinion pieces. Rather than a marketing degree, I have a degree that has given me market insight – and this has proved particularly valuable.

I currently run my own communications company, and having a Criminology degree has proved attractive to clients. It has given me a point of difference from my competitors and has allowed me to offer advertising and communications products that have social and cultural awareness”.

KEEVA STRATTON

Copywriter / Director, Quip Creative

CRIMINOLOGY – A SHORT VOCATIONAL GUIDE

There is no single answer to the frequently asked question, what does a criminologist do?. Students and potential students of criminology rightly want to know where they might get a job and what career paths exist for criminologists. This document provides some insights into what criminologists do and suggests some potential employment opportunities and career paths open to criminologists.

Criminology draws on many disciplines and has many applications. People who have studied criminology work in a number of areas and for a host of organisations. While it would be rare to see a job advertisement for a criminologist, you will find criminologists hard at work in the following places:

- **Criminal justice agencies** – for many criminologists, one of the criminal justice agencies will be a source of employment. It is unsurprising to find criminologists working in correctional facilities / prisons, supervising offenders (adult and juvenile) on community-based orders, analysing crime data for state police departments or working within the court system. The NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG) is responsible for a range of functions relevant to criminologists. Courts administration, victim compensation and services, crime prevention, restorative justice, court diversion, resolving community disputes, and the development of legislation are just some of the functions and activities of the NSW DJAG.
- **Non-criminal justice state agencies** – state agencies outside of those responsible for the criminal justice system are also potential sites of employment for criminologists. Agencies responsible for preventing vehicle accidents and road trauma; agencies responsible for processing fines and pursuing unpaid fines; agencies that provide oversight of the police; agencies responsible for managing social housing and those providing health and welfare services all potentially have discrete

roles and functions that align with the interests, knowledge and skills of criminologists.

- **Government policy and politics** – central agencies (for example, the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet) and political advisors for ministers responsible for police, juvenile justice, corrections and the Attorney General are critical players in shaping criminal justice policy. Having a background in criminology is highly pertinent to positions in these central government and political offices.
- **Border protection and intelligence agencies** – an intricate web of agencies now exist to protect Australian borders and to gather and analyse intelligence about transnational and local crime. The Australian Crime Commission, the Australian Federal Police, the NSW Crime Commission, Customs and AUSTRAC are just some of the agencies engaged in this work. Positions within these organisations will often be a mixture of uniformed and non-uniformed personnel with diverse skills and backgrounds. Criminologists are increasingly working as data analysts, intelligence officers, and researchers and are working alongside investigators, uniformed patrol personnel and undercover operatives in these organisations.
- **Local government** – while the bulk of the responsibility for managing crime still rests with federal and state-based government agencies, local government has in recent

decades assumed some responsibility for the prevention of crime. Many of the larger local government authorities have staff dedicated to preventing crime. Understanding community demography, monitoring crime trends, auditing crime hotspots and developing prevention programs are common tasks of local government crime prevention officers.

- **Research institutions** – there are numerous research institutions that focus on crime and criminal justice issues. The Australian Institute of Criminology, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, the NSW Law and Justice Foundation, law reform commissions (state and Australia), sentencing councils and parliamentary committees all conduct research into aspects of criminal justice policy. Organisations like the NSW Audit Office, the Productivity Commission and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also conduct research into aspects of criminal justice practice.
- **Non-government organisations (NGOs)** – changes in the delivery of welfare and rehabilitation services has resulted in the growth of NGOs in recent years. This presents many opportunities for criminologists to work in these organisations. It is not uncommon for NGOs to now provide support services to ex-prisoners or to provide early intervention and diversionary programs to prevent entry into the criminal justice system. Program design and evaluation, research and analysis and policy development are just some of the roles that criminologists could and do perform for NGOs.



GRADUATE PROFILE

Pan has degrees in psychology, criminology and forensic psychology. Pan worked as a psychologist within the criminal justice system prior to becoming a private forensic psychologist. As forensic psychologist, Pan is responsible for preparing reports for people appearing in court and working with convicted offenders. This work requires a good understanding of human behaviour, a capacity to work with people accused of diverse and at times horrific crimes and a familiarity with the workings of the criminal justice system.

Pan says that “my study advanced my career within the department and improved my ability to assist those in the criminal justice system”.

PAN TSOMIS, Forensic Psychologist

- Consumer groups and advocacy organisations** – many people study criminology because of their passion for social justice. Criminologists are frequently engaged by consumer groups and agencies advocating on behalf of prisoners and victims of crime. Whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, criminologists will prepare submissions, liaise with consumers of criminal justice services, conduct research and help to give a voice to people often neglected in criminal justice policy debates.
- Private companies** – the government is not solely responsible for crime and criminal justice related services. Private companies run prisons, transport offenders, manage security for government and commercial buildings and infrastructure, prevent retail theft, investigate fraudulent activities, build products to secure homes and cars and monitor alarms (amongst other things). Having a background in criminology can be advantageous when considering a career with a company responsible for one or more of these functions

 - Universities** – many criminologists work in universities. Reflecting the different influences on the discipline, some academic criminologists are found in law faculties while others might be in sociology, education, psychology or other departments. Teaching students, publishing, supervising postgraduate research, conducting research and undertaking applied work are just some of the responsibilities and activities of academic criminologists.

This is but a thumb nail sketch of the potential career opportunities and pathways available to criminologists. With greater inter-disciplinary collaboration and specialisations emerging, we are now also seeing a host of ancillary roles and agencies operating in the shadow of the criminal justice system. Many of these areas require a combination of skills and qualifications. For example, forensic psychology, forensic accounting, crime mapping, crime risk assessment, security management, crime prevention through product design, crime prevention through environmental design and counter-terrorism are just some of the emerging areas that require combinations of skills and knowledge; criminology is just one of the knowledge domains required by people operating in these areas. These hybrid disciplines and job roles often provide opportunities to combine first career options with an interest in and the study of criminology. For example, an accountant might benefit from studying criminology to aid their movement into forensic accounting and auditing. Similarly, a teacher will benefit from studying criminology if they are hoping to develop programs to prevent young people moving into the criminal justice system or a social worker might benefit from studying criminology to assist with their work in accommodating victims of domestic violence.

Beyond these disciplines/careers, it is not uncommon to see students with the following backgrounds studying criminology:

PSYCHOLOGY	SOCIOLOGY	LAW
YOUTH WORK	WELFARE	SOCIAL SCIENCES
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	ECONOMICS	POLICING
SECURITY	PLANNING	POLITICAL SCIENCE
MENTAL HEALTH	DRUG POLICY	VICTIM SERVICES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	COMMUNICATIONS	STATISTICS

With growing specialisations, it is likely that combinations of degrees and backgrounds will be increasingly coupled with criminology in the future.

GRADUATE PROFILE

Jackie's story shows how studying criminology can shape a career.

"After my HSC I completed a BSc with honours in Psychology which I really enjoyed and which gave me a good grounding in statistics. I still didn't know however what I wanted to do. I took a job as a research assistant with an organisational psychologist at the University of Sydney. However, I found that I didn't have a passion for the subject area. I started thinking that this was a point, at the start of my career, where I could be strategic about what direction I went in. So I thought about all the possible social science subject areas available to me and which would I find stimulating, both now and into the future. It seemed that crime was a serious problem, possibly misunderstood by the general community, it presented an opportunity to make a difference and was independently fascinating. I enrolled in the MCrim and started searching for 'crime jobs'. Before too long I secured a junior role at the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. I am still here more than ten years later but am now the Deputy Director. Working for government and in particular BOCSAR really suits me. It is a stimulating workplace with the opportunity to be involved in very interesting projects which have real policy significance. There is a lot of data to play with and we often get to be involved in current crime issues which is exciting".

JACKIE FITZGERALD - Deputy Director, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

HOW HAS STUDYING CRIMINOLOGY HELPED PEOPLE IN THE FIELD?

Graduates of the University of Sydney Master and Diploma of Criminology programs have carved out diverse career paths and significantly contributed to criminal justice policies, systems and discourse. The following comments from University of Sydney alumni highlight the reasons for choosing the University of Sydney and the benefits of completing a Master or Diploma of Criminology program.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY MASTER OR GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CRIMINOLOGY PROGRAM?

“Sydney has a great reputation ... I have attended three universities over the years, and Sydney has been a class above the rest”

“Great reputation in law”

“The school seemed to have a good reputation with some high profile staff”

“Sydney has some of the best academics and has a great reputation”

HOW HAS YOUR CRIMINOLOGICAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY HELPED YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CAREER?

“I got a job while still enrolled in the MCrim. I think it definitely helped me stand out from the other applicants. Even now, after ten years, my resume would look quite empty without it”

“It enabled me to get work in chosen and new profession”

“Criminology served to expand and deepen my understanding of the problems that effect particular cultural or socioeconomic groups”

These are just some of the reasons of and benefits from choosing to study criminology at the University of Sydney.

HOW DO I GET A BREAK?

Getting a break can be difficult. With so many potential career paths, making a choice about the preferred option can be overwhelming. Some of the tips below can help with deciding on a career path and getting the first break.

- **Sector** – being familiar with the sector is an important starting point to securing a job. Knowing which agencies operate in the area and understanding the operating environment will help in deciding which career path to pursue.
- **Events** – the Sydney Institute of Criminology (University of Sydney) hosts numerous free seminars annually. These (and similar) events provide opportunities to hear from current experts, policy makers and practitioners. Attending these events helps to build and maintain currency of knowledge, while also making it possible to meet people within the sector.
- **Volunteer** – people with experience will generally be more attractive job candidates than those without experience. Voluntary work can be a great way to get relevant experience and to build networks. Many organisations operating within the criminal justice system require volunteers to undertake various tasks. The Volunteers in Policing program; non-government organisations working with people in or just released from the criminal justice system frequently require volunteers; and management committees of community organisations all provide volunteering opportunities.
- **Internships** – completing the internship program with the Sydney Institute of Criminology (only open to Sydney University students) provides opportunities to work on diverse criminological / criminal justice projects. Interns help organise public education events, liaise with academic staff and manage particular projects. Through these tasks, interns enhance their knowledge of particular research and criminal justice systems.
- **Network** – one of the best strategies for getting a job is networking. Knowing people in the relevant sector helps to get alerted to future job advertisements and is still the way that many people secure employment. Building networks through attending events and functions, undertaking voluntary work and completing internship programs help with future job opportunities.
- **CrimNet** – CrimNet is an electronic criminal justice information network, sponsored by the Sydney Institute of Criminology. It aims to fulfil the need for a means of regular and instant communication between criminal justice professionals, practitioners, academics and students in Australia and overseas. It is free to join (<http://mailman.ucc.usyd.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/law-crimnet>) to receive regular updates via email and is a great way of learning about employment opportunities, public events and the latest research.

SYDNEY LAW
SCHOOL

INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

T +61 2 9351 0239

F +61 2 9351 0200

E law.criminology@sydney.edu.au

SYDNEY.EDU.AU/LAW/CRIMINOLOGY

