

Professional Science Masters Degree Applicability to Law Enforcement

The University of Rhode Island's Digital Forensics and Cyber Security Center (DFCSC) supports state, national, and international public welfare through education, research, training, and service in forensic investigations and securing information systems. The URI DFCSC is a recognized national leader in providing a strong, cutting-edge, comprehensive program in both fields.

The DFCSC collaborates extensively with the Rhode Island State Police Computer Crimes Unit (RISP CCU) and with the Rhode Island Joint Cyber Task Force (RI JCTF). Through these partnerships the center staff are able to bring real-world problems and experiences into the program. Research is derived from the existing problems faced by both Law Enforcement and private critical infrastructure providers.

The Digital Forensics and the Cyber Security programs approach teaching as a mixture of academic and practical points of view. This hybrid approach allows students to build a strong foundation and expand their knowledge by applying real-world techniques and tools to the subjects being taught.

The Professional Science Masters is a University issued degree that is geared towards working professionals who have already completed a four-year undergraduate degree. The PSM, while equivalent to a full Masters degree, does not require a capstone project, such as a thesis. The individual courses in the PSM do require students to complete graduate-level research projects. The final course in the program has students complete an internship, which may be covered by their existing employment, saving time and effort.

The content of the courses is influenced directly from the protocols and procedures used in the Law Enforcement sector. This provides students with an educational experience that most closely matches how forensic laboratories like the RISP CCU Lab and the FBI Regional Computer Forensics Laboratories (RCFLs) operate. Students are well prepared to complete on-the-job training for department specific protocols in evidence handling procedures and investigation priorities while already having a strong foundation in these core skills.

The PSM degree is well suited for both LE Professionals and those civilians who support their mission. LE officers need to be prepared for on-scene digital evidence collection as well as understanding how to interpret that evidence and the reports generated from it. The courses and training experienced by students in the PSM program provide that preparation.



The National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security (NSA/DHS) have selected the University of Rhode Island as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education.

