

Starting Your Career in....

Criminal Law

1. **Tailor your academic work:** in addition to Criminal Law (required), students interested in this area should take Evidence, Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure, and a trial practice class or clinic (see below). Electives to consider include Criminal Trial Tactics, Criminal Motion Practice, Federal Criminal Prosecution, Advanced Topics in Criminal Law, and Military Criminal Justice. Gain marketable experience through participation in mock trial competitions.

2. **Work Experience:**
 - The Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) is the state public defender in Mass. Intern for CPCS or for a private attorney appointed through CPCS to represent indigent defendants. Many general practice attorneys also handle criminal defense cases.

 - The Government and Public Interest Job Fair (every Oct. and Jan.) features employers from CPCS, D.A. Offices, Mass. Attorney General's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Contact other D.A.'s offices directly (addresses can be found in the Mass. Lawyers Diary). Some New Hampshire and Rhode Island offices also interview through this program.

 - Venture beyond New England: SULS students have spent summers with the U.S. Dept. of Justice in Washington, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Montana, and with a public defender agency in San Diego.

 - Clerk for a state District Court judge or a Superior Court judge sitting in a criminal session.

 - Be prepared for hypothetical questions at job interviews with D.A. and public defender offices! Schedule a mock interview with the Career Development Office.

3. **Get 3:03 certified!** Supreme Judicial Court Rule 3:03 allows second year students who have taken Evidence or are currently enrolled in a clinic to appear in court on behalf of the Commonwealth or criminal defendants represented through CPCS or a law school clinic. Students who obtain certification before graduation can continue to appear in court until they receive their bar exam results. Read the Rule for details and apply in the Dean's Office.

4. **Clinical Program:** Suffolk offers 3 hands-on clinics with Rule 3:03 certification: the Voluntary Defenders Clinic, the Voluntary Prosecutors Clinic, and the Juvenile Justice Clinic.
5. **Internship Program:** make an appointment with the Internship Office to set up an internship for class credit at a variety of criminal offices.
6. **Become involved in professional associations:** the Mass. Bar Association (www.massbar.org) and Boston Bar Association (www.bostonbar.org) both have criminal law sections and discounted memberships for students and newly admitted attorneys.
7. **Take continuing legal education courses** through bar associations as well as through MCLE (www.mcle.org) and the Advanced Legal Studies at SULLS (www.law.suffolk.edu/als). MCLE offers an annual seminar in criminal law (usually in September). ALS programs are free for students! Add a CLE section to your resume!
8. **Join MACDL, the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and/or NACDL, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.** Both have websites with links for general law and news, government and prosecution and defense lawyers.
9. **Check out the listserves for Massachusetts District Court, Juvenile Court and Superior Court.** Helpful information is available on these sites.
10. **Speak to professors who have practiced in this area to learn more about their experiences.** Several LPS instructors are former prosecutors and defenders.
11. **Attend a criminal trial!** Go to the Clerk of Court's office and ask if a criminal case is going to trial. Turn off Court TV and get into open court!
12. **Network! Network!** Speak to alumni and others about their careers. Find SULLS alumni practicing criminal law by searching the Martindale-Hubbell directory through Lexis. Pick up a how-to handout in the Career Development Office.