

NUS to launch minor in criminal justice from Jan 2027

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Undergraduates interested in criminal justice will be able to pursue it as a minor at the National University of Singapore (NUS) from January 2027.

The programme will allow students to look more closely at the criminal justice process, which can cover policing and prosecution as well as rehabilitation and reintegration.

It will be run jointly by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and the Faculty of Science at NUS, which offer the various courses counted under the minor. Students must pass a minimum of five courses to declare the minor – two core and three elective.

This new programme is a response to strong interest in these individual courses, which are often oversubscribed, said an FASS spokeswoman.

She said that there has been “sustained student demand over several years”.

These courses include sociology of deviance, law and society, intimate and gender-based violence and forensic science, she added.

The programme’s academic convenor, Narayanan Ganapathy, said: “Crime is no longer just a legal issue or a policing issue. It is also shaped by social, economic, technological and political forces.”

He said students should learn to understand not only why crime occurs, but also how criminal justice institutions and society can respond effectively to increasingly complex forms of criminality.

“Our aim is to prepare graduates who can think critically across disciplines and contribute to evidence-informed policymaking and practice in the criminal justice sector,” said the associate professor at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Ganapathy said FASS is also looking to establish a master’s programme in criminal justice and criminology. Details of the master’s programme are still being finalised.

NUS undergraduate Jeslyn Neo told *The Straits Times* that she is planning to sign up for the new programme.

“Instead of solely focusing on theories, many of these classes involve analysing real-world case studies and discussing practical solutions to pressing societal issues,” she said.

The third-year sociology major, who is also pursuing a minor in psychology, said she was looking forward to the new modules, having taken both sociology of deviance, and law and society previously.

The modules, taught by Ganapathy, covered interesting issues such as how prison architecture could play a part in normalising the stigma of prisoners, and the sociological significance of tattoos, she added.

“These classes offer us students a safe space where we get to discuss these social issues and challenge the perceived norms about crime and deviance, or law in general,” said Neo, 21.

After taking the courses, she and several friends started a project to organise a camp for youth offenders and to act as befriending mentors as the youth go through reintegration, she added.

Neo said that students majoring in law, political science, social work and others also make up a good portion of undergraduates who apply for sociology of deviance.

“I heard that in the past, the classes were so popular it filled up the whole lecture theatre,” she said.

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