



JUS 261 Module Six Short Paper Guidelines and Rubric

The Module Six short paper explores the effect of criminal sentencing regulation on judicial efficiency. Referencing your text and online resources regarding sentencing guidelines and mandatory minimum sentences, you will consider the relationship between the unique punishment phase of criminal litigation and the caseloads and work flow of the court system.

Read Chapters 9 and 10 of *Judicial Process in America*, as well as the following module resources:

- [Reconsidering Mandatory Minimum Sentences: The Arguments for and Against Potential Reforms](#)
- [Excerpt from Introduction to Federal Sentencing Guidelines](#)
- [How Plea Bargains Are Making Jury Trials Obsolete](#)

Specifically, the following **critical elements** must be addressed:

- **Definition:** Define “mandatory minimum sentences” and “sentencing guidelines.”
- **Purpose:** Referencing your textbook and resource materials, explain *why* we have mandatory minimum sentences and sentencing guidelines. What purpose do they serve?
- **Opinion:** State your opinion as to whether mandatory minimum sentences help or hinder judicial efficiency and defend your position by explaining *why* and *how* they do so.

Guidelines for Submission: Your short paper must be submitted as a one- to two-page Microsoft Word document with double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and at least three sources cited in APA format.

Instructor Feedback: This activity uses an integrated rubric in Blackboard. Students can view instructor feedback in the Grade Center. For more information, review [these instructions](#).

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Needs Improvement (55%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Definition	Meets “Proficient” criteria and includes specific and relevant description of definitions based on research	Provides accurate definitions for mandatory sentences and sentencing guidelines	Provides definitions for mandatory sentences and sentencing guidelines but the definitions are inaccurate	Does not provide definitions for mandatory sentences and sentencing guidelines	30

Purpose	Meets “Proficient” criteria and includes specific and relevant examples based on research	Explains the purpose of mandatory minimum sentences and sentencing guidelines using specific details	Explains the purpose of mandatory minimum sentences and sentencing guidelines but description is inaccurate and/or lacks details	Does not explain the purpose of mandatory minimum sentences and sentencing guidelines	30
Opinion	Meets “Proficient” criteria and includes specific and relevant examples based on research	States opinion as to whether mandatory minimum sentences help or hinder judicial efficiency and defends opinion using supporting evidence	States opinion as to whether mandatory minimum sentences help or hinder judicial efficiency but lacks specific evidence to support opinion	Does not state opinion as to whether mandatory minimum sentences help or hinder judicial efficiency	30
Articulation of Response	Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas	Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas	10
Earned Total					100%