
Policy: Background Checks for Applicants and Students

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Revision Dates:

Section: Student Affairs

Area:

Subject: Background Checks

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for conducting criminal background check(s) for applicants who have been offered admission or students enrolled in certificate or degree programs in the College of Health Professions.

The policy is adopted because it is incumbent on the College of Health Professions to: (a) meet contractual obligations contained in affiliation agreements between the college and clinical education affiliates, (b) exercise due diligence and assess the qualifications of all individuals who may have contact with patients and/or research participants, (c) ensure compliance with clinical education affiliate standards and regulations pertaining to human resource management, and (d) meet public demands for greater diligence in light of the national reports on injury and deaths resulting from medical malpractice and medical errors.

APPLICABILITY

Departments in the College of Health Professions that require background checks for admission must adhere to this policy. This policy applies to (1) all applicants who have been offered admission to certificate and degree programs in departments that require background checks and (2) enrolled students who may be required to obtain additional background checks following matriculation.

POLICY

When required, an applicant or students must obtain a criminal background check from a vendor approved by the College of Health Professions, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, or the University of Arkansas System. Results of the background check must be deemed satisfactory as a condition of the student's admission or continuation in the program.

An offer of admission will not be final until the completion of the background check with results deemed satisfactory. Admission may be denied based on the results of the background check. Only students with satisfactory results will be allowed to register for classes.

At times, a currently enrolled student may be required to obtain an additional background check for a variety of reasons, e.g., clinical affiliate requirements, contradictory findings from a clinical affiliate's background check, suspicion or reports of violation of laws, etc. In those instances, currently enrolled students will be barred from participating in clinical education experiences at clinical affiliates until a background check clearance is obtained. Failure to obtain an additional background check may be cause for suspension or dismissal from the program.

Scope of Background Checks

Background checks typically include the following criteria and cover the past seven years:

- Social Security Number verification

- Criminal search, including felonies, Class A, Class B, and Class C misdemeanors (7 years)
- Violent Sexual Offender and Predator Registry search
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG) List of Excluded Individuals/Entities
- General Services Administration (GSA) List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs
- U.S. Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)
- Applicable State Exclusion List

(Note: The time period and the types of searches are subject to change without notice. Changes will be approved by the College of Health Professions Executive Committee.)

Timing of the Background Checks

An applicant offered admission must obtain a background check prior to enrollment into a certificate or degree program. Background checks must be completed no more than six months before matriculation.

Cost of Background Checks

The applicant or student will pay the cost of required background checks.

Period of Validity

A background check is honored for the duration of enrollment if the student is continuously enrolled. A student who has a break in enrollment is required to complete a new background check. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment of at least one semester in the approved curriculum of the certificate or degree program. An officially approved leave of absence is not considered a break in enrollment.

Significant Findings in Background Checks

Re-verification – An applicant or student has the right to request that the vendor who performed the background check re-verify that the background check is correct. Any costs associated with the re-verification will be paid by the applicant or student. The college may require the applicant or student to produce additional documentation to verify or re-verify findings.

Evaluation of Significant Findings – If significant findings are reported in a background check, the applicant or student may be referred to the specific program or discipline's professional licensing board to obtain clearance. The College of Health Professions will concur with the licensing board's decision.

If the professional licensing board does not review significant findings, the dean or dean's designee will review the findings in consultation with the department chair and make a recommendation to the program's admission committee as to whether the applicant should be admitted or the student should be allowed to participate in clinical education experiences.

False or misleading information supplied by the applicant or student, or omission of required information with regard to a background check, will result in (1) rescindment of an offer for admission or (2) dismissal from the certificate or degree program.

Adverse Actions Based on Background Checks – Consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, if an applicant is denied admission or if an adverse action is taken against an enrolled student, based on findings of a background check (e.g., denial of participation in clinical education experiences, dismissal, or suspension), the applicant or student will be informed: (1) how to obtain a copy of the background check report, (2) how to contact the vendor to challenge the accuracy of the report, and (3) that the vendor was not involved in the decision that resulted in the adverse action.

Appeal Procedures for Enrolled Students – Ordinarily, a student who is unable to complete clinical education experiences will be unable to complete the certificate or degree program, and the student may

withdraw or be dismissed from the program. Therefore, a student who is denied participation in clinical education experiences because of significant findings on a background check may request consideration following the College of Health Professions Grievance Procedures.

Deferred Matriculation or Participation – If a background check reveals matters that may be cleared by the applicant or student, matriculation or continuation in the certificate or degree program may be deferred up to one year while the matter is being resolved.

Approved Vendor(s)

Background checks must be conducted by a vendor approved by the College of Health Professions, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, or the University of Arkansas System. Background check reports from other sources will not be accepted.

Confidentiality and Disposition of Background Check Reports

Background check reports are maintained securely, confidentially, and separately from other academic files in the office of the dean for a period of time established by guidelines or policy.

APPROVAL

This policy was approved by the College of Health Professions Executive Committee on June 14, 2012