

UW-LA CROSSE HEALTH PROFESSIONS DEPARTMENT Criminal Background Check Policy and Procedure

Background

The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) in compliance with standards HR 1.20 and EP 5, and the current Wisconsin Caregiver Law with the Department of Health and Family Services (chapters 48 and 50 of the Wisconsin Statutes) background checks are now required for all students in the allied health areas working in clinical settings. To ensure compliance with these rules, the results of criminal background checks must be obtained for all current students before the program begins (early summer). As a representative of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, you are expected to practice sound professional ethics and to conduct yourself in a professional, responsible, and reliable manner at all times. You are expected to maintain high professional standards and a part of this professional standard is a criminal background check.

Important Notice

Individuals who have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor may be denied certification or licensure as a health professional. Information regarding individual eligibility may be obtained from the appropriate credentialing bodies. Clinical rotation and fieldwork sites require a criminal background check and Caregiver check in order to permit participation in the clinical experience, rotation or fieldwork. Participation in clinical experiences, rotations or fieldwork is a required part of the curriculum and a requirement for graduation. Clinical rotation and fieldwork sites may deny a student's participation in the clinical experience, rotation or fieldwork because of a felony or misdemeanor conviction. Failure to produce a criminal background check would result in delayed graduation or in the inability to graduate from the program. If you have a question, please contact the fieldwork coordinator or director of your program.

Derogatory information can include but is not limited to the following:

- *Conviction of a felony offense.*
- *Misdemeanor convictions probated sentences or felony deferred adjudications involving crimes against person (including physical or sexual abuse);*
- *Misdemeanor convictions related to moral turpitude (including prostitution, public lewdness, exposure etc)*
- *Felony conviction/deferred adjudications for the sale, possession, distribution, or transfer of narcotics or controlled substances;*
- *Inclusion on the list of Ineligible Persons;*
- *Providing a false statement on the application*

Initial Background Check (Student Completes)

Students are responsible to arrange for a criminal background check using a company that is capable of providing the service in an orderly and timely manner. The Health Professions Department has established a relationship with CertifiedBackground (www.certifiedbackground.com). The company charges between \$20.00 and \$45.00 depending on how many places you have lived prior to attending UW-L. You may select another criminal background check company; however you are expected to check with the program first to determine the exact type of information that is required. Each company offers a wide variety of services and the cost can easily become prohibitive.

Background checks are required for fieldwork placements in many facilities. Thus all students in the Health Professions Department will have a criminal background check done prior to the first day of class to facilitate fieldwork assignments. All costs incurred by the students for this background check are the responsibility of the student. CertifiedBackground makes the results available to the Health Professions Department electronically. If an alternate provider is selected, the student must present the results of the criminal background check in hard copy on the first day of classes.

Re-Check Prior to Fieldwork/Clinical Rotations (Program Completes)

Most facilities require a current criminal background check (done within the past 6 months) and a caregiver background check. The Health Professions Department will conduct a follow-up Criminal History Background Check for Wisconsin and Minnesota and a Caregiver background check before the student's first full time rotation/clinical/fieldwork assignment. All students are required to have this re-check and it will be charged to the student as a special course fee. Criminal Background Checks (CBCs) completed at other facilities may not be accepted as a substitute for this process.

Recordkeeping

Students are advised to keep a copy of the results for their personal files to take with on their clinical/fieldwork rotations.

Confidentiality

Results of all background searches will be kept confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to administer and enforce this policy or pursuant to appropriate legal process. Students are required to complete and sign the authorization, acknowledgement, and release form that permits sharing necessary criminal background information to the placement facility(s) (Attachment 1). Criminal background records are stored in a secure place and kept separate from the student's academic file. Criminal background check information is destroyed once the student is no longer a student in the Health Professions Department.

Disclosure

The student will be notified if the background check information raises a potential concern for placement or consequences for credentialing or licensure. The Program Director will also be notified of any record that

raises a potential concern for the student. The Director will then discuss the potential impact of the record and options with the student.

Obligation to Report

All students admitted to the Health Professions Department have an ongoing obligation to report any criminal conviction that may impact upon the student's continued ability to participate in the clinical program to the program director/chair of the program no later than the next day of its occurrence. Failure to comply with any aspect of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the students' program.

Background Check Summary

1. Initial Background Check: Results due the first day of class

Prior to the beginning of classes, students will be supplied with an instruction sheet and a UW-L code for conducting their online search with CertifiedBackground. Students are responsible to complete the background application process and paying the fee in enough time to receive the results and supply them to the program on or before the first day of class. The signed waiver form, included with the instruction sheet, should be turned in to the Fieldwork Support person, Room 4035, Health Professions Department on the 4th floor of the Health Science Building.

Specific information requested in a background check is:

- Verification of the student's social security number
- Search of Caregiver Background and Criminal History

Background check results are returned within days on-line. If there are errors on the background check, the student is responsible for working with the background check company to resolve the discrepancies.

2. Re-Check Prior to Fieldwork/Clinical Rotations: Results due prior to placement

Once the student is assigned to a Fieldwork/Clinical Rotation facility, the Fieldwork Support Person will coordinate with each facility what specific Criminal Background Check information they require. Students will be notified if the facility they will be attending requires additional background information. The fee for the criminal background re-check is assessed as a special course fee.

Attachment 1

**The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Health Professions Department
Occupational Therapy Program**

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AUTHORIZATION, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AND RELEASE FORM

I hereby authorize the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L), Health Professions Department to obtain criminal records about me from any source. I also authorize UW-L Health Professions Department to provide such records to third parties for the purposes of evaluating my application for acceptance into or continued participation in an internship or field/clinical placement/rotation.

In the event I am accepted into an internship or field/clinical placement/rotation, I hereby acknowledge that during the course of my internship or field/clinical placement I shall notify UW-L Health Professions Department as soon as possible, but no later than the next day I am expected to attend the internship or field/clinical placement, when I have been convicted of any crime or have been or are being investigated by any governmental agency for any act or offense. I further acknowledge that if I fail to abide by this acknowledgement, UW-L Health Professions Department has the right to immediately terminate my participation in an internship or field/clinical placement.

I hereby release such third parties and the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, its agents, employees, and officers, including the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Health Professions Department from any liability that may arise from the disclosure of any information contemplated by this form or from UW-L Health Professions Department terminating me from an internship or field/clinical placement as described in the immediately preceding paragraph.

I understand that this form is in effect until my degree is completed at UW-L, unless I revoke it in writing and provide such revocation to the Program Director or Chair of the Department/Program at the Health Professions Department, 4th floor of the Health Science Center. I further understand that if I choose to revoke this form, I may not be able to participate in an internship or field/clinical placement/rotation.

I have read and understand the above authorization, acknowledgement and release.

Signature of Student Date

Printed Name of Student

Major/Program or Student Classification

