

**WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY for STUDENTS**

**Policy Statement**

Western Carolina University and the College of Health and Human Sciences is committed to the safety of the campus community and the agencies, clients, and patients we serve. All students who are formally accepted into undergraduate or graduate programs that require clinical internships\* in the College of Health and Human Sciences must participate in a criminal background screening prior to participating in a clinical placement. (Specific due dates will be included in the students' admissions letters) Students who do not comply with the deadline may have to delay their clinical placement and/or delay their progression within the program. Students should be advised that criminal background screening is also required for many health care provider licensures.

\* Exceptions (do not require clinical internships):

Criminal Justice	Online Health Information and Administration
Emergency and Disaster Management	Environmental Health
Online EMC program	Undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics

**Procedures:**

1. Criminal background investigation will be performed, at the student's expense, by a third party vendor under contract with UNC/WCU (e.g., Certiphi), with the results of the investigation sent to the Dean's Office for review and judgment in accordance with applicable College policies and procedures.
2. Once students have been admitted to a program, the department head or clinical coordinator will submit their names and the deadline for when the CBC must be completed to the Dean's Administrative Assistant (DAA). The DAA in the College of Health and Human Sciences will perform a preliminary investigation of students' criminal background check (CBC) prior to clinical placement.
3. The DAA will notify the School Director or Department Head if students have "passed" the CBC (no criminal activity found) or if the student's CBC needs review (indicating criminal activity found). No other information will be provided to the Director or Department Head related to the CBC.
4. For students who need review, the DAA will notify the Dean and the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean will convene the CBC review committee, consisting of three clinical coordinators from the College of Health and Human Sciences, who will then review the case. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. A representative who represents the major or discipline of the student(s) who need CBC review will also be consulted.
5. The CBC Review Committee will review the student's CBC for the following felonies. A conviction or plea of guilty or no contest to any of the **felonies** noted below will

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**disqualify** the student from participating in a clinical learning experience in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

- a. Homicide
  - b. Kidnapping and abduction
  - c. Assaults with weapons or inflicting serious injury
  - d. Rape or other sex offense
  - e. Robbery or larceny
  - f. Abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, disabled adults or elder adults
6. Other types of felony or misdemeanor convictions, (with the exception of one time minor traffic violations) including sale, possession, distribution or transfer of controlled substances, or questionable criminal histories will be reviewed by the Academic Action Committee in accordance with the following criteria:
- a. Would the student pose a threat to the health and safety of the university community and any patient or client?
  - b. What were the:
    - 1) The dates, locations, and nature of the conduct/crime?
    - 2) Characteristics of the victim(s)?
    - 3) Frequency of convictions or pleas?
    - 4) Opinions of law enforcement officials, district attorney?
  - c. In addition, is/are there:
    - 5) Any pending charges?
    - 6) Evidence of successful rehabilitation?
    - 7) Evidence of remorse/accountability?
    - 8) Positive references?
    - 9) Evidence of the accuracy and truthfulness of the information submitted?
7. Based on the above criteria, a recommendation by the Academic Action Committee will be submitted to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. The Dean may accept the recommendation of the Committee or make an alternative decision. The decision of the Dean will be final. Once the decision is made, the Dean's office will notify the School Director or Department Head and the student.

### **Note: Confidentiality of Records**

Criminal background screening records are confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than (1) faculty/staff involved in the case as indicated above and (2) with the agencies or hospitals or request them. All records will be kept in a secure location in the Dean's office.

### **Individual Courses**

On occasion students who take particular courses but are not yet accepted into any programs within the college may be asked to submit a CBC to participate in an "observation activity" at a particular agency that requires background screening. In these cases the results will be submitted to the agency/hospital setting for review. Those students who are unable to participate in the activity due to a past conviction will be given an alternative assignment.