

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Policy :

To ensure public safety, meet requirements of our clinical education partners, and help advise students of potential barriers to employment, all students accepted into a Heartland Community College (HCC) Health Sciences (HS) selective admission program (Medical Assistant, Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiography) will be required to undergo a criminal background check. Admission into the HCC HS selective admission program is dependent upon completion of a satisfactory criminal background check. For our purposes, a satisfactory background check means that no criminal history was revealed or that the student has obtained approval from the Dean of Health Sciences (HS) via the procedure detailed below. Once admitted and throughout the duration of the program, students are responsible for notifying the Program Director/Coordinator of any subsequent convictions, arrests, detentions, charges, or investigations by any law authorities.

The background check must take place within a sixty-day window prior to the beginning of a student's coursework in the program and will be conducted by a vendor selected by Heartland Community College, using the student's name, social security number, and birth date. All costs are the responsibility of the student. Current fees for the background check will be indicated on the relevant program's website.

Procedure:

1. Students accepted into an HS selective admission program will be notified via email that they must complete a satisfactory criminal background check to proceed with coursework.
2. Students will be issued written instructions on how to complete the criminal background check including the acceptable time frame. Students may not use previously-conducted criminal background checks on file at other agencies to satisfy this requirement.
3. Students who fail to cooperate appropriately with regard to the process (i.e. refuse to release information, omit or provide false or misleading information, or fail to complete the background check within the specified timeframe) will not be allowed to enter the program.
4. HCC will choose the criminal background check vendor, and results will be made available to the HCC Program Director/Coordinator.
5. The criminal background check will include, at a minimum, an HR nationwide screening, a social security trace, a nationwide criminal directory review, an offender registry and county court record check, and a review of medical sanctions.

Dealing with Positive Results:

1. If the report indicates any positive criminal history, the Program Director/Coordinator will notify the Dean of HS. The Dean of HS will contact the student and provide the student with the report and a summary of their rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
2. If the student feels the report findings are in error or are inaccurate, the Dean will ask the vendor to further investigate the student's case to determine the accuracy of the information. This will be done at the cost of the student.
3. If the student determines the report is accurate, the student will be required to submit a letter explaining why the positive findings should not prevent his/her admission into the selective admission program along with any additional documentation that would support the request.

4. The Dean of HS and the Program Director/Coordinator will review the letter and any supporting documentation and will consider the following factors in making a decision:
 - i. Severity of the offense
 - ii. The type of crime and who the crime was committed against - person, property, or society
 - iii. Association of crime with duties of the position
 - iv. Circumstances of the offense
 - v. Length of time since the incident occurred and the age of the applicant at the time of the incident
 - vi. Number of offenses
 - vii. Student employment history before and after the offense
 - viii. Whether the applicant has made full restitution and/or participated in any programs of rehabilitation.
 - ix. Other circumstances or conduct since the time of the incident.
 - x. State licensure/registry and/or clinical requirements
 - xi. Whether the applicant was convicted
5. The Dean of HS may require review and/or approval from an outside agency (e.g. IDPH, ARRT, IDFPR) prior to making a final decision. This will be done at the cost of the student.
6. The Dean of HS will notify the student in writing within 14 business days of receiving his/her letter regarding the decision to allow or deny entry into the program.
7. If an admitted student is charged with any criminal offense(s) other than a minor traffic violation after this criminal background check has been conducted, the student is required within 2 business days after the incident to report to the Program Director/Coordinator the date and nature of the charge(s). The Dean of HS will determine whether disciplinary action is warranted, up to and including dismissal from the program. An additional criminal background check may be required at the student's expense.
8. Clinical sites may elect to deny a student with a newly reported criminal offense permission to participate in programs at their site, which may affect her/his progress in the program. Failure to disclose any charges for criminal offense(s) other than a minor traffic violation after the criminal background check may result in dismissal from the program and/or inability to obtain licensure. Change in the background status of a student may necessitate disclosure to accrediting and or state agencies for compliance purposes.
9. Approval from the Dean of HS to allow entry into the program does not guarantee eligibility for employment in the field of study.
10. The criminal background check report and any written correspondence will be retained in a secure file in the Program Director's/Coordinator's office. Only individuals with a need to know, such as those involved with clinical practice sites that require criminal history information, will have access to this information.

Revised: 6/29/2018

Approved: Dr. Rick Pearce, VP for Learning & Student Success