Department of Counselor Education: Criminal Background Investigation

Policies Regarding Criminal Background Investigations

As a part of the admission process to the Department of Counselor Education, all students are required to undergo a criminal background investigation, as many school/agencies require a criminal background check before considering students for clinical field experiences. Students admitted to the Department of Counselor Education are expected to comply with the Illinois State Police and FBI fingerprint background investigation requirements as set forth by the Department of Counselor Education, Background Investigation Policy. Students who do not comply with the policy will not be allowed to register and/or attend classes in the Department of Counselor Education. Student already admitted into the Department must immediately submit to the background check process.

As of August 1, 2011, the Department of Counselor Education requires a fingerprint-based Illinois State Police and FBI criminal background investigation for all current and newly admitted students and students entering into field experiences or courses where you have direct exposure to potential clients. Questions regarding this policy and procedures should be directed to Dr. Rebecca Newgent, Chairperson of the Department of Counselor Education (309)762-1876.

Students may be prohibited from completing fieldwork, by their field placement site, if background investigations reveal certain criminal offenses, arrests, and/or convictions.

It is not the responsibility of the Department of Counselor Education, the College of Education and Human Services, or Western Illinois University to guarantee that students pass criminal background checks. It is not the responsibility of the Department of Counselor Education to locate a site that does not require criminal background checks. If a student fails a criminal background check, or if a site fails to place a student because of the results of a criminal background check, it is not the responsibility of the Department of Counselor Education, the College or this University to locate an alternative site that does not require criminal background checks.

A student who fails to pass a background check may not be able to complete the program or obtain licensure as a professional counselor or as a school counselor. The Department of Counselor Education is not responsible for a student’s inability to complete the program, obtain licensure or certification.

Procedures for Criminal Background Investigation

The Department of Counselor Education has contracted with the Illinois Regional Office of Education for the completion of criminal background investigations in Illinois. Students must complete an Illinois State Police and FBI background fingerprint investigation through these agencies. Students must obtain the required Authorization for Release for Criminal History and Background Check form from the Chairperson of the Department of Counselor Education.

Locally, students may complete a background investigation through the Moline Regional Office of Education. Background investigations are conducted 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The cost for a background investigation at this office is $54.00. A $3.00 additional processing fee is required for credit/debit cards (cost and/or fees subject to change).

It is located at the following address:
3430 23rd Ave.
Moline, IL 61265-4417
(309) 736-1111
Additional locations (NOTE: Students must call to schedule an appointment at the additional locations) include:

- **Dixon, IL**
  - ROE 47
  - 7772 Clinton St, Dixon, IL 61201
  - 815-652-2054 – ext. 221

- **Galesburg, IL**
  - KCC/DD
  - 2015 Windish Drive, Galesburg, IL 61401
  - 309-344-2600

- **Peoria Heights, IL**
  - KCB Info Services
  - 4111 N Prospect Rd, Peoria Hts, IL 61616
  - 309-353-5527or 888-852-2574

- **Quincy, IL**
  - Intelligence Concepts (in Snelling building)
  - 234 N 5th St, Quincy, IL 62301
  - 217-222-7721

No other location may be used for this process. Nor may prior background checks be used in lieu of this process. Students may complete the investigation at any of above locations. Students must complete the Authorization for Release for Criminal History and Background Check, available in person from the Counselor Education Chairperson (309-762-1876). Students must provide one form of Government-issued ID (e.g., Drivers License or US Passport—a School ID Card is NOT an acceptable form of identification). The fee is payable at the time of printing by money order, cash or credit card. A $3.00 additional processing fee is required for credit/debit cards. NO PERSONAL CHECKS are accepted. Costs vary from office to office. Students are responsible for the total cost of the background check.

It is important for students to be aware that some schools/agencies may have additional requirements for students prior to acceptance at their field site. As a result, additional investigations and costs may be necessary dependent upon field experience requirements. Students are responsible for any costs incurred by additional requirements of schools/agencies.

**Department of Counselor Education Procedure for Criminal Background Investigations**

1. Students pick up (in person) Authorization for Release for Criminal History and Background Check Form, available from the Counselor Education Chairperson, Dr. Rebecca Newgent, Rm 277, 3561 60th Street, Moline, IL (WIU-QC).

2. Students complete Applicant Information on the Authorization for Release for Criminal History and Background Check form, secure appropriate identification, and payment method.

3. Students take the Authorization for Release for Criminal History and Background Check Form, Government issued identification, and payment to one of the approved sites to initiate background investigation.

4. Students return the Authorization for Release for Criminal History and Background Check Form (with the Live Scan Technician section completed) to Department Chairperson.

5. Additional background checks may be requested at the discretion of the Department.
Department of Counselor Education Policy/Procedure for Criminal Background Investigations

Upon the completion of criminal background investigation, a report will be forwarded to Dr. Rebecca Newgent, Chairperson of the Department of Counselor Education.

1. In cases where the student’s record is clear, a student’s file will reflect that the investigation was completed and deemed satisfactory. No further action is required on the part of the student.

2. If information that may negatively affect licensure/certification or field placements is noted, students will be notified by Dr. Rebecca Newgent, Chairperson of the Department of Counselor Education. At that time the following steps will occur:

   a. Students will meet with Dr. Newgent to review and discuss the results of the background check. The handling of all information will be strictly confidential and will adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

   b. Dr. Newgent will discuss with the student the potential difficulties that may occur from a positive background check and help the student plan accordingly. The student will sign a document indicating that this discussion was held and that their field placement site will be notified that there were conviction(s) on the background check.

   b. If the information presents potential difficulty for licensure/certification, field placement, or the safety of faculty, staff, or other student, the Chairperson of the Department may meet, in conjunction with the Department Personnel Committee, (the DPC) for further review.
   Information regarding student rights and responsibilities can be found at the following site: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/

3. All students, regardless of the initial criminal background investigation, will be required to complete a Field Experience Disclosure Form prior to the semesters of clinical/school field experiences. The forms will be completed during the last week of the semester prior to enrolling in CN 544 Counseling Children and Adolescents, CN 547 Techniques of Counseling, CN 593 Counseling Practicum, and CN 597 Counseling Internship. The disclosure status form will indicate whether or not a student’s criminal background status has changed and what changes occurred.

The Filed Experience Disclosure Form can be found on the last page of this document.
Department of Counselor Education
Western Illinois University

Field Experience Disclosure Form

Student Name: ______________________________
(please print or type)

I understand that withholding information or giving false information may make me ineligible for admission to school/clinical field experiences, or continuation in the Department of Counselor Education. I certify that all information is true, correct, and complete. Falsification of any part of this document may result in automatic dismissal from the Department of Counselor Education.

____ I affirm that since completing the initial background investigation for acceptance into the Department of Counselor Education on ________________ I have not incurred any criminal charges, convictions from prior charges, sentences from prior charges, warrants of arrest, investigation for possible criminal charges, or other activities that may prevent me from engaging in school/clinical field work or working with potential clients.

OR

____ I have incurred the following changes since my initial background check that was conducted on ________________:
(date of initial background check)

Change 1: __________________________________________________________________________
Change 2: __________________________________________________________________________
Change 3: __________________________________________________________________________

Other pertinent information: __________________________________________________________

I am enrolling in the following course for the next term (circle appropriate course(s)):

CN 544     CN 547     CN 593     CN 597

Student Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________________

Revised 06.07.2011
Revised 02.20.2012