

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COLLEGE OF NURSING

STUDENT  
BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT

***Background Check Policy***

***Rationale***

Health care providers are entrusted with the health, safety, and welfare of patients; have access to controlled substances and confidential information; and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior. Thus, an assessment of a student's suitability to function in such a setting is imperative to promote the highest level of integrity in health care services.

Clinical facilities are increasingly required by accreditation agencies, such as Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization (JCAHO), to conduct background checks for security purposes on individuals who provide services within the facility and especially those who supervise care and render treatment. To facilitate this requirement, educational institutions have agreed to conduct these background checks for students and faculty.

Clinical experiences are an essential element in the nursing curriculum. Students who cannot participate in clinical experiences due to criminal or other adverse activities that are revealed in a background check are unable to fulfill the requirements of the program. Additionally, many healthcare licensing agencies require individuals to pass a background check as a condition of licensure or employment. Therefore, it is in everyone's interest to resolve these issues prior to a commitment of resources by the student or the College of Nursing.

***College of Nursing Responsibility***

The College of Nursing agrees to certain conditions for placement of students in clinical agencies/facilities through a formal contract between the University of South Carolina and the clinical agency/facility. One of these conditions is a background check. The following background checks are required:

1. Criminal background check for place of residence for the past 7 years.
2. Check of the Sex Offender Registry.
3. Check of the Office of Inspector General.

APPROVED:

*Christine W. Curtis*      6/28/07  
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Christine W. Curtis      Date  
Vice Provost for  
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Approved 5/17/07 by Cliff Scott  
Page 1 of 3

4. Check of the General Services Administration list of excluded individuals/entities.
5. Check of any other registry or records required by law, accrediting agency, or specific agency.

Students may not participate in clinical experiences if they have convictions of, plea of guilty, plea of nolo contendere (no contest), or pending criminal charges involving the following:

- a. Crimes involving violence against a person including, but not limited to: murder, manslaughter, use of deadly force, assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature, assault and battery with intent to kill, sex crimes, abuse of children or the elderly, abduction and robbery.
- b. Crimes occurring within five years of application involving the distribution of drugs.
- c. Crimes occurring within five years of application involving illegal use or possession of weapons including but not limited to guns, knives, explosives or other dangerous objects.
- d. Crimes occurring within five years of application involving dishonesty or moral turpitude including but not limited to fraud, deception, embezzlement or financial exploitation (but not including shoplifting, petit larceny or bad check).
- e. Any other crime or pattern of criminal behavior which, in the Facility's opinion, warrants exclusion or dismissal from the student rotation at the Facility.

### ***Student Responsibility***

Prior to progressing to upper division or admission to the graduate programs, students will undergo a background check. The student will provide the necessary information and sign a permission form so that the background check can be performed by the University's vendor through processing at the Division of Human Resources.

### ***Storage of Background Check Materials***

The vendor will provide background check results to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the College of Nursing. The College of Nursing will ensure confidentiality of results by providing results only to the student and appropriate College of Nursing Administrators. The reports will be kept in a locked safe placed in a locked file cabinet. Only the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Dean will have keys to access the reports. The background checks are kept on file as long as the student remains affiliated with USC and no less than two years after they are no longer enrolled. Records will be retained pursuant to the FERPA policies and requirements at the University of South Carolina.

## ***Background Check Procedure***

All students admitted to the College of Nursing must submit to a background check prior to admission to the upper division or graduate programs. The procedure is as follows:

1. Sign the permission for background check during orientation to upper division or graduate programs.
2. Office of Student Services will submit the signed permission forms to USC Division of Human Resources.
3. Division of Human Resources will submit names to contracted agency.
4. Graduate students will sign the permission form at orientation. The same process described above will be used.

### ***Background Check Findings***

The Division of Human Resources will send the completed background checks to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The results will be indicated by "Clear," or "Problem." If a "Clear" background check is returned by the vendor, the student will be considered eligible for progression to the upper division or enrollment in graduate programs.

If a "problem" background check is returned, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to discuss the "problem." If the student believes that the background check is in error and can provide proof, the student will be given an opportunity to produce this proof. If the student is unable to refute the background check findings, the student will be ineligible for progression to the upper division or admission to the graduate program.

All students are required to report to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs any situations or incidents that occur after the background check is completed. Doubts about whether an occurrence or incident should be reported, should be resolved in favor of reporting. Failure to report an incident which is later discovered will result in expulsion from the College of Nursing.

### ***One time only Procedures***

The new requirements for background checks are contained in contracts with agencies/facilities that become effective June 30, 2007. Therefore, all students, including students progressing to upper division, must have a background check done. Students will sign the permission form during advising and background checks will be performed during summer 2007.