You are being required to complete the attached disclosure form, from which information will be used to complete a criminal background check. This form asks you to disclose information related to acts, crimes, and offenses that may be obstacles to you participating in off-campus field experiences. This process is routine, required, and essential. It serves to comply with state, school-district, and other non-school agency requirements that look to the university to make a “good faith effort” to ensure the safety of all students, patients, and clients being served. Please complete this form thoroughly and honestly.

Your behavioral history shapes your reputation and can be an asset and/or an obstacle as you seek to participate in volunteer and required experiences working towards your degree in fields of education and human sciences. We are dealing with professions that work intimately with children and adults. There are high expectations for us to have strong, positive dispositions and to demonstrate behavior that is driven by integrity and honesty. Keep these things in mind as you continue your field of study and practical experiences. Certain offenses may not keep you from your field experiences, but may prevent you from securing a job after graduation. Make good choices so that your behavior and reputation become an asset rather than an obstacle.

A background check will be run at least every two years. Some placements will also complete their own background checks on field placement students. It is recommended that you talk with Dr. Michael Harris, Associate Dean, if you have any questions or if situations arise between background checks. The cost of the criminal background check currently is covered through a course fee.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will I be automatically barred from a field experience just because I report “yes” on one or more of the items asked?
   No, you will not automatically be barred from a field experience. If you report a “yes” on one or more of the items, you may be asked to meet with the Associate Dean of the College to discuss the item in more detail. At that time, a determination will be made regarding your ability to participate in a field experience.

As far as a state license/certification is concerned, answering truthfully, regardless of whether you fear that telling the truth means answering “yes” to a question that might cause a problem for licensure/certification, is ALWAYS the best approach. Although telling the truth MIGHT jeopardize the desired outcome for you, lying on the application for a license/certificate will ALWAYS be a bad idea. The DPI and other agencies may deny a license/certification to a person who provides false information on his/her application. There is no one question on applications for licensure/certification that results in an automatic denial, in and of itself, unless, for the case of DPI, the person has been convicted of one of the offenses that precludes licensure for 6 years following the conviction.
2. Are alcohol-related offenses considered criminal and must they be reported?
For licensure and certification purposes, DPI and other certifying agencies ask specifically about criminal convictions and serious traffic offenses. Underage drinking tickets are not criminal – they are, in Wisconsin, considered civil forfeitures. However, there are many different types of alcohol-related offenses – including but not limited to furnishing alcohol to minors, drunk driving, etc. These, certainly, would need to be reported. If you have any question about whether or not to report an offense, it makes sense to err on the side of caution and include the information.

3. What types of acts are considered criminal and required to be reported?
If you are asked if there has ever been a conviction, you should report anything that you did that violated a state or federal law that results in a conviction, as well as any other serious negative conduct for which you received a legal type of sanction. If you have any doubt about whether or not to report something on an application for licensure, you should report it rather than risk appearing like you are trying to conceal something.

4. If my record has been expunged, must I disclose an incident?
For a criminal background check you should disclose the incident and explain that the incident was expunged. An expunged case is sealed by the clerk of court and is available to be viewed only with a court order. If the judge properly orders a case expunged, any reference to it will be removed from The Wisconsin Circuit Court Access website. A judge has no other authority or power to expunge cases, and there are no similar provisions for other types of cases. Even under the limited circumstances of an expunged record, a judge can only order expunction of the court’s record. The Wisconsin Crime Information Bureau also keeps criminal records. The case may still exist in the records of the District Attorney, other law enforcement records, the Department of Transportation and other places.

5. Do I need to disclose offenses from another state?
Yes, you always need to disclose offenses from our state or any state.

6. If my records were sealed for an offense as a juvenile, should I disclose these incidents? Will they show up?
In some cases, juvenile arrests do appear on a criminal background check, depending on the situation. Specifically, in certain circumstances, juvenile sex offender records are available and information about prior sex offenses, even if they were committed as a juvenile, should always be disclosed on the application for licensure/certification. Another situation in which sealed juvenile records may be disclosed to an employer is when a person is applying for a position as a day care provider. In this instance the nature of the offense should be disclosed to the prospective employer. Again, all questions on any disclosure form or license/certificate application should be answered honestly and to the best of your ability.

7. If some incident is under investigation currently, should I report that now or wait until the final judgment?
The Background Information Disclosure form, the DPI’s license application, and other agency applications for certification specifically ask for information about pending charges and/or investigations. This information must be reported as part of the process.

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