

COEHS Policy on Candidate Background Check

This policy is implemented in order to clarify the requirement for, and conditions that may arise from, a criminal check as applies to internships and student teaching assignments made by Lenoir-Rhyne University's College of Education and Human Services (COEHS).

1. The Criminal History Check

- A. All students of Lenoir-Rhyne University requiring placements for field study arranged for by the COEHS (candidates) are required to obtain a background check as a requirement. Field study includes any field experience or other work tied to a course, lab, or service requirement of a program of the COEHS in which candidates may come in contact with students in schools, or with other individuals who are clients of agencies.
- B. This may exclude candidates who are already licensed professionals serving in a role with the school or agency with which the field placement will be made. To be excluded from this policy, a candidate must have been serving continuously with a school or agency entity that conducted a criminal history check.
- C. For all candidates not excluded from this policy, the background check will be conducted according to all sections of the following schedule that applies:
 1. At the point of entry into teacher education or a counseling program.
 2. Immediately previous to service in the schools in an internship or field-based course or experience and/or student teaching such that the background check is in hand before the student enters the school or agency facility.
 3. Immediately previous to any service in either schools or an agency as a counseling intern or other human services role such that the background check is in hand before the student enters the school or agency facility.
 4. Renewal of the background check is also required if the background check is older than one calendar year from the date printed on the background check.
- D. In order for a candidate to begin their field placement, the background check must be "clear," that is show neither a criminal history nor history of inappropriate behavior with or toward children or potential agency clients. The Chair of the School appropriate to the field placement will notify the candidate that their placement is canceled when a background check is received that is other than "clear."

- E. A “clear” background check is defined as a report that shows no criminal charge (misdemeanor or felony), serious summary charge that is entered into a criminal history, or report from a governmental agency regarding inappropriate behavior with or toward children or potential agency clients. This background check will be conducted to examine the North Carolina, Federal, or other state records.
- F. A record other than “clear” may show evidence of the following, but is not limited to the following examples:
1. Any history indicating a conviction, no contest or other similar plea that suggests that the candidate a) poses a threat to the physical safety of school students, agency clients or personnel, or b) behaves in a way that the integrity or honesty of the candidate interferes with their performance in their professional role. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate behavior involving drugs and alcohol.
 2. Any history with “no decision” or “pending” will also be considered as other than “clear” until such time that official evidence of disposition is presented that would show that charges are dismissed or withdrawn.
 3. A more complete list of examples of offenses that may result in a criminal history are presented in North Carolina Law, §115C-238.
- G. An outside vendor approved by the COEHS will complete the background check. The candidate will bear the financial responsibility for the background check. Applications are available from the Field Placement Coordinator who is also the person to whom the background check report should be directed. Reports that are other than “clear” will be referred to the appropriate School Chair for action.
- H. Ordinarily, a copy of the background check is maintained by the COEHS for that period of time a candidate remains a student at Lenoir-Rhyne University. Should it be the explicit policy of a school district or agency, a copy of the “clear” background check will be supplied to the entity with which the candidate will do their field experience. Assurance from any entity receiving such documentation will guarantee the security of the private and confidential information that may be part of the background check.

II. The Appeal Process

- A. In the event a candidate has other than a “clear” background check, the candidate can appeal the decision of the Chair to block the placement of the candidate into a field setting.
- B. Any appeal of a denial of field placement based on the background check may be filed within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of notification of such denial.

C. An appeal shall utilize the following procedure:

1. In the event that the candidate is a student in the School of Education, the appeal shall go to the Teacher Education Council through its Chair. Their recommendation would be via written request of the candidate, and a personal appearance in front of the committee is available at the election of the candidate.
2. In the event that the candidate is a student in the School of Counseling and Human Services, the appeal shall go to the Graduate Student Council.
3. The recommendation of the appellate committee will be forward with all pertinent documents to the Dean of the COEHS. A decision of the Dean of COEHS, which may involve appropriate consultation with legal counsel of the University or of the NC-DPI, will be made and the decision will be communicated to the candidate in writing.
4. Should the candidate desire to appeal the decision of the Dean, such appeal should be in writing within 14 (fourteen) days of notification and will be directed to the Provost of the University. The Provost will render the final decision in this process.