

LAMAR UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

POLICY FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING

National and community social work agencies which provide practicum/internship opportunities for social work students increasingly require social work programs to conduct criminal background checks before placing students into internship placements.

Purpose

Criminal background pre-screening is designed to facilitate the internship process of social work students. The placement process requires that students are matched with agencies that will facilitate the field learning process for the student. Agencies increasingly require that the Lamar Social Work faculty become aware of any issues that might be necessary in the internship placement process. This awareness covers issues such as student interest in fields of practice (children, adults, medical, developmental disabilities, etc.) as well as personal issues pertinent to the individual student. These student idiosyncratic issues range from a spectrum of student issues: personal disability, lack of transportation, necessity of coordinating child care, or coordinating Lamar classes with the internship process, to cite just a few individual student circumstances.

While not all agencies categorically preclude social work student interns based upon past criminal background issues, most community social work agencies demand that their potential social work interns be pre-screened by the Lamar Social Work Faculty. Agencies require frankness about their employees and interns' criminal backgrounds.

Process

Criminal background checks will be performed by an external vendor and the Lamar Social Work Faculty will review the student's criminal history. While there is no absolute disqualification, students must be aware that this information will be shared, if requested, with the field placement agency. Most agencies will not allow a student to enter an internship program if the student's criminal background demonstrates any record of violence. Registered sex offenders are not permitted to enter internships.

Students must provide permission to share their criminal background information with the Lamar Social Work faculty and the assigned field agency (internship site). Students who do not grant this permission will not be allowed to enter the social work internship/practicum classes (SOWK 4321 & SOWK 4324). A student who is convicted of a criminal offense while enrolled in the program must report the conviction to the Program Director within three days of conviction. The term conviction for these purposes includes probated sentences and deferred adjudications. If the student is in the pre-field class (SOWK 4100) or in one of the social work

internship/practicum classes (SOWK 4321 & SOWK 4324) the student must report the conviction to the Social Work Program Field Director as well as the Social Work Program Director within three days of conviction.

Notes

Verification information will be filed in a secured area to insure confidentiality. In the event that the student feels that an error has been made in the results of the criminal background check, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the external vendor for a verification check and the student is responsible for any cost associated with this check. Other than error relative to identify, there will be no appeal, of this policy.

Fees

The social work student is entirely responsible for the fees assigned by the vendor for performing the criminal background check.

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My signature below indicates that I have read the above policy on Criminal Background Screening and have been provided a copy of it. This form provides my irrevocable consent for the results of the criminal background screening to be released to Lamar University Social Work Faculty.

My signature below provides my consent to release my criminal background screening to my internship/practicum agency for the purpose of arranging my field placement.

I understand that I have the authority to grant or deny permission for this release.

I also understand that declining to grant this permission may exclude me for consideration for field placement. Further, I understand that declining this permission will revoke my standing as a social work major in the Lamar Social Work Program.

My signature below indicates that I am aware that I am responsible for the cost of the criminal background screening.

Signature

Social Security Number

Printed Name

Date