

**Heartland Community College  
Policy & Procedure  
Student Criminal Background Check**

**Policy:**

To ensure public safety, meet requirements of our clinical education partners, and verify that our students will eventually be able to practice legally as licensed professionals, all students accepted into the Nursing Program will be required to undergo a criminal background check. Admission into the Nursing Program is dependent on completion of a satisfactory criminal background check. For our purposes, a satisfactory background check means that no criminal history was revealed or that the student has obtained approval from the Dean of Health and Human Services (HHS) via the procedure detailed below. Once admitted, students are responsible for notifying the Nursing Program Coordinator of any future convictions, arrests, detentions, charges, or investigations by any law authorities during their time in our program.

The background check must take place within a sixty-day window prior to the beginning of a student's coursework in the Nursing Program and will be conducted by a vendor selected by Heartland Community College, using the student's name, social security number, and birth date. All costs are the responsibility of the student. Current fees for the background check will be indicated on the Nursing Program website.

**Procedure:**

1. Students accepted into the Nursing Program will be notified via email that they must complete a satisfactory criminal background check in order to proceed with coursework.
2. Students will be issued written instructions on how to complete the criminal background check including the acceptable time frame. Students may not use previously-conducted criminal background checks on file at other agencies to satisfy this requirement.
3. Students who fail to cooperate appropriately with regard to the process (i.e., refuse to release information, omit or provide false or misleading information, or fail to complete the background check within the specified timeframe) will not be allowed to enter the program.
4. HCC will choose the criminal background check vendor, and results will be made available to the HCC Instructional Chair of Allied Health.
5. The criminal background check will include, at a minimum, an HR Nationwide screen, social security trace, nationwide criminal directory review, offender registry and county court record check, and medical sanctions.

**Dealing with Positive Results**

6. If a report indicates any positive criminal history, the Instructional Chair of Allied Health will notify the Dean of HHS and the Program Coordinator.
7. The Dean of HHS will contact the prospective student informing them of the findings and request additional documentation related to the findings.

8. If the student feels the report findings to be mistaken, the Dean will ask the vendor to further investigate the student's case to determine the accuracy of the information. This will be done at the cost of the student.
9. If the student responds that a positive criminal history is accurate and offers an explanation why the information should not prevent his/her admission into the Nursing Program, the Dean of HHS will consider the following factors in making a decision:
  - i. Length of time since the incident occurred and the age of the applicant at the time of the incident.
  - ii. Seriousness of the incident.
  - iii. Whether the applicant has made full restitution and/or participated in any programs of rehabilitation.
  - iv. Other extenuating circumstance or conduct since the time of the incident.
  - v. State, licensure/registry and/or clinical requirements.
10. The Dean of HHS may require review and/or approval from an outside agency (e.g., IDPH, ARRT, IDFPR) prior to making a final decision. This will be done at the cost of the student.
11. The Dean of HHS will notify the student in writing within 14 business days of receiving his/her letter regarding the decision to allow or deny entry into the program.
12. If an admitted student is charged with any criminal offense(s) other than a minor traffic violation after this criminal background check has been conducted, the student is required within 2 business days after the incident to report to the Nursing Director/Dean of HHS the date and nature of the charge(s). The Dean of HHS will, with advisement of HCC counsel, determine whether disciplinary action is warranted, up to and including dismissal from the program. An additional criminal background check may be required at the student's expense. Clinical sites may elect to deny a student with a newly reported criminal offense permission to participate in programs at their site, which may affect her/his progress in the program. Failure to disclose any charges for criminal offense(s) other than a minor traffic violation after the criminal background check may result in dismissal from the program and/or inability to obtain licensure. Change in the background status of a student may necessitate disclosure to accrediting and or state agencies for compliance purposes.
13. Approval from the Dean of HHS to allow entry into the program does not guarantee eligibility for employment in the field of study.
14. The criminal background check report and any written correspondence will be retained in a secure file in the HHS divisional office. Only individuals with a need to know such as those involved with clinical practice sites that require criminal history information will have access to this information.