



POLICY TITLE

Student Criminal Background Check Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Physician Assistant Studies program requires a background check on all of its conditionally admitted applicants and current students in order to enhance the health and safety of patients, students, faculty, and staff in the academic and clinical environments, to adhere to applicable healthcare regulations, and to attest to affiliated clinical facilities a student's background and eligibility status. The background check will identify incidents in an applicant's or student's history that might pose a risk to patients or others.

ARC-PA STANDARD ADDRESSED

A3.02: The program must define, publish, and make readily available and consistently apply its policies and practices to all students.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed in even-numbered year as needed by the Program Coordinator and Director of Clinical Education, elevating any policy amendments to the Program Director for approval.

DEFINITIONS

The Background Check through Castle Branch, Inc. covers the following:

- Statewide Criminal Search – North Carolina
- 7 Year County Criminal Search – Counties Outside of North Carolina
- Nationwide Federal Criminal Search
- Nationwide Sex Offender Index
- Nationwide Healthcare Fraud & Abuse Scan
- Social Security Alert
- Residence History
- Includes a search of all counties of residence within the past 7 years, outside of NC

POLICY

All UNC Chapel Hill Physician Assistant Studies conditionally admitted applicants and current students will be required to undergo criminal background and sex offender (CBSO) checks prior to matriculation (Due NLT December 1), annually, or more frequently, at the discretion of the clinical facility. For conditionally admitted applicants, the offer of admission is conditional upon results of the background check. If a conditionally admitted or current student decline to undergo a background check while enrolled in the program or if findings of a grievous nature are revealed, this will be grounds for revoking offer of admission or dismissal from the program. Costs of the CBSO checks are the responsibility of the applicant/student. A copy of the CBSO check results will be made available to the applicant/student upon request. Other copies will be distributed as appropriate on a need-to-know basis. All applicants/students will sign a release form indicating that the program has the right to release appropriate information to clinical sites.

CBSO check results that limit the Program's ability to secure clinical experiences may prevent a student from progressing in their pre-clinical phase of study, being promoted to the clinical education phase or being recommended for graduation. By accepting admission to the Program, applicants agree to submit to national criminal background checks, and also agree to pay expenses associated with this requirement.

Acceptance into and successful completion of the UNC PA Program does not imply or guarantee that the student will obtain state licensure upon graduation.

Information obtained for the purpose of and during the CBSO will be retained within the Castle Branch portal and may be viewed by the Program Coordinator and the Director of Clinical Education. This remains separate from other student education and academic records. Confidentiality will be maintained consistent with Family Educational Rights and Privacy (FERPA) and any other appropriate requirements and/or guidelines.

PROCEDURES

Upon enrollment in the program and start of the clinical year, the UNC PA Program will instruct students in the process for contacting the Castle Branch Screening and Compliance vendor with which the program has established a reporting relationship. To place an order, go to mycb.castlebranch.com and in the place the order field, enter the following package code specific to the UNC PA Program: **U033**. The cost for the Criminal Background Check is \$30.50. Students who have resided outside of the United States will be required to complete Castle Branch's International Criminal Background Check (**U033int**) in addition to the standard U.S. criminal background check. Additional fees will apply. The Program Coordinator and Director of Clinical Education will review the yearly CBSO check report results for all conditionally admitted applicants and enrolled students. In the event a CBSO check report contains adverse information that may subsequently prevent progression through the pre-clinical or clinical phase of study, limit the program's ability to secure clinical experiences, or be recommended for graduation, the UNC PA Program Director will be notified. Additionally, the applicant/student will be informed and provided with the contact information to challenge the finding or provide explanatory information.

If a student has a positive Criminal Background Check, the clinical site will be informed by the student and the Director of Clinical Education. The student will have the opportunity to provide additional information to the clinical site explaining the results. The clinical site and not the Division, Program or Department will determine the student's eligibility for the clinical rotation.

Students who have a positive Criminal Background Check may not be able to complete their clinical rotations and may not be eligible for certification and/or licensure examinations. A positive Criminal Background Check may result in referral to the University's Emergency Evaluation and Action Committee (EEAC). Information regarding the EEAC process is available online at <http://policy.sites.unc.edu/files/2013/04/EEAC.pdf>. Students may also be referred to the Honor System or the UNC PA Program Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) for compliance with the DAHS Professional Behavioral Policy.

PUBLISHED

- UNC PA Program Policies and Procedures web page: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/unc-pa/students/policies-procedures/>
- UNC PA Program Student Handbook

HISTORY OF APPROVAL AND UPDATES

Initially approved by Program Director, October 30, 2020