UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS

BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

Frequently Asked Questions – Unit/Department

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1. Why are Background Checks required?

   The University is committed to providing a safe learning, living and working environment for our students, faculty, and staff. The Board of Trustees approved a Background Check Policy on September 10, 2015, and the policy was made effective on October 5, 2015.
   http://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/September-10-2015/010-sep-UniversityBackgroundCheck-Policy.pdf

2. Who is required to have a criminal background check under the Background Check policy?

   - All individuals who are newly hired at the University as faculty (tenure system and specialized faculty, including post-doctoral research associates), medical residents and interns, and staff (academic professional, civil service, extra help and academic hourly) are required to undergo a background check.
   - Retired former employees are required to undergo a background check when the first post-retirement employment occurs on/after October 5, 2015.
   - Individuals already employed by the University are covered by this policy when transitioning into positions that are security sensitive, subject to the University of Illinois Protection of Minors Policy, deemed critical, or are required to undergo a background check from an external agency.
   - A criminal background check must be conducted before a current employee transitions from an undergraduate or graduate, temporary hourly (Extra Help or Academic Hourly) or unpaid affiliate position to a Faculty (including specialized faculty), Academic Professional, Medical Resident, or Civil Service position.

3. Who is not required to have a background check under the Background Check policy?

   In general, graduate or undergraduate student employees, fellows, volunteers, individuals appointed to non-paid positions, contractors or other individuals employed by another entity are not required to have a background check. However, if an individual in one of these categories has a position with duties/responsibilities that are subject to the University of Illinois Protection of Minors policy or are assigned to a security sensitive position, as defined by the Urbana campus policy for security sensitive positions, the individual would be required to have a background check.

4. When should a Unit submit a background check request?

Units are required to submit a background check request for every hire of an individual for placement into a position in their Unit. Illinois HR will determine if a background check is required to be conducted.

The following types of appointments are not subject to a background check unless position or relationship is subject to security sensitive or Protections of Minors.

- Lump sum payments
- Stipend - 0% with pay
- Addition of a 0%/$0 appointment to a current employee
- Individual as a whole is unpaid
- Volunteers
- Contractors

5. Is the background check requirement the same as the Protection of Minors policy?

No, the Protection of Minors policy is a separate policy that requires background checks to be conducted for all individuals (including University personnel, graduate and undergraduate employees, fellows, volunteers, and contractors) who are responsible for the supervision or care of children, or whose duties would require close contact and/or alone time with minors who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University. https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=4292&pageId=5689

6. What is included in a standard background check?

The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign conducts national criminal background checks through a third-party vendor, General Information Services, Inc. (GIS). The background check includes a review of:

- National, state and county criminal conviction records
- National and State sex offender registry
- Social Security Number verification (used for identification purposes)

All background checks are conducted in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) and any other applicable law(s).

7. What is not included in the standard background check?

- Verification of employment history
- Verification of education
- Reference checking

These remain the responsibility of the hiring unit and are to be completed prior to an offer being extended.

8. Is credit history a part of the background check?

No, credit history is not included in the standard, criminal background check. However, a small number of administrative positions with specific job responsibilities may also require a credit history check. A requirement

for a credit history check must be pre-approved by Illinois Human Resources and be included in the job posting.

9. When will the University conduct the background check?

For new hires and current employees accepting new appointments that require a background check, the background check will only be conducted after a candidate accepts a written, contingent offer of employment. The candidate must also provide authorization directly to the vendor, GIS.
For current employees who are assigned new duties/responsibilities, the background check will be conducted when the employing unit submits a request for a background check to Illinois HR and Illinois HR determines a check is required under the Protection of Minors Policy or Campus Security Sensitive Policy.
No background check will be conducted until GIS receives the consent and authorization from the candidate. Background checks must be completed prior to an individual starting work.

10. What language needs to be included in the contingent offer letter?

Please find the contingent offer letters templates at:

Academic Positions Link	http://humanresources.illinois.edu/hr-professionals/hiring-employees/offer-letters.html
Civil Service Positions Link	http://humanresources.illinois.edu/hr-professionals/hiring-employees/offer-letters.html

11. How long will this process take?

In general, the process can be completed in three to five business days from the time that the candidate provides consent to GIS. However, the length of time to complete the process is influenced by a number of factors, such as:

- Inaccurate information submitted on the background check request
- Candidate fails to respond to e-link request from GIS
- Candidate declines consent to background check
- The number of states and counties in which a candidate has resided
- If the candidate has changed or modified their name (marriage, etc)
- If the candidate has a very common name such as John Smith
- If fingerprinting is required in order for GIS to obtain information from federal/state/county repositories

12. What if the background check process has not been completed but I need the candidate to start?

Please contact the appropriate Illinois Human Resources office (Academic HR/Staff HR) to discuss the possibility of a conditional hire. Conditional hires will only be allowed on a very limited basis, require justification from the hiring unit and approval from Campus level. If a conditional hire is approved, the candidate is required to sign a Conditional Hire Statement.

13. How will information received from GIS be shared at the University? Who will have access to the report?

Designated staff within Illinois Human Resources have exclusive access to any/all GIS background check information. GIS conviction reports are reviewed by the campus Hiring Risk Assessment Review Committee, which makes recommendations of eligibility to the Provost or Associate Provost for Human Resources. The reports will not be accessible to hiring units, and no information regarding conviction reports is shared outside

the Committee members, appropriate Illinois HR staff, and the Provost/Associate Provost for Human Resources (or her/his designee) for the purpose of making hiring/appointment approval.

14. If there is a conviction, who decides if employment can be offered?

The Hiring Risk Assessment Review Committee (HRARC) reviews records and makes recommendations for eligibility. The HRARC recommendation for faculty and specialized faculty is provided to the Provost or his/her designee, who consults with the Dean of the hiring unit. The HRARC recommendation for all other employment categories (except undergraduate student) is forwarded to the Associate Provost for Human Resources or his/her designee. The Provost and the Associate Provost for Human Resources have final decision authority.

15. Who is on the Hiring Risk Assessment Review Committee (HRARC)?

The HRARC is comprised of staff from Staff Human Resources (SHR), Academic Human Resources (AHR), and the University of Illinois Police Department (UIPD). When record reviews for faculty/specialized faculty are needed, two faculty members are assigned to the Committee by the Provost.

16. Will the report be kept in a personnel file?

No. Records are maintained in separate and secure files within Illinois HR (SHR/AHR), and access is limited to designated Illinois HR staff only.

17. If there is a conviction history, does this mean the candidate cannot be hired or assigned certain duties/responsibilities?

Having a conviction history is NOT an automatic bar to employment. An individualized assessment of the conviction history is conducted and records are reviewed including relation to the employment (position/duties) being sought in order to determine if the candidate is eligible for employment in that position.

18. Who pays for the background check?

The hiring unit pays for the background check. GIS sends a monthly bill to Illinois HR, and Illinois HR bills the hiring unit based on the CFOAPAL (account) information provided in the background check request process.

Some grant funds do not allow charges for background checks to be charged to them. Please check your grant or with Grants & Contracts if unsure whether or not background check charges are allowable. Journal Vouchers will be rejected, during the billing process, if charged to grant funds.

19. What happens when an international hire does not have a social security number yet?

The Unit proceeds with the background check request as usual. GIS provides instructions to the candidate. Usually, individuals without a social security enter all zeros (000 00 0000) in the Social Security number field of the GIS order form.

20. When can we start the Visa process?

The Unit can initiate the Visa process in parallel to the background check process. Specific questions regarding the Visa process need to be directed to the Office of International Student and Scholar Services.

21. How will the unit be notified that the background check is completed?

An e-mail from Illinois HR is sent to the hiring unit upon the successful candidate clearance and completion of the background check. That e-mail must be uploaded to the Human Resources Front End (HRFE) hiring transaction.

Please note that for Tenure-system Faculty hires, the unit must get approval from Board of Trustees after clearance of the background check.

22. What if the background check process is taking too long, can we move forward with another candidate?

No, once an offer has been accepted the process must go through completion. The unit cannot move forward with another candidate until notified by Illinois HR that the initial candidate has not cleared the background check process.

23. What happens if the selected candidate does not successfully clear the background check?

The Unit will be notified by Illinois HR and advised that they can move forward with additional candidates.