Policy - Admissions Criminal Background Check

Origin Date: March 10, 2014

Last Evaluated: February 5, 2015

Responsible Party: Program Director

Minimum Review Frequency: Annually

Approving Body: Principal Faculty

DPAS Associated forms: CBSO Student Release Form

Background and Purpose

High Point University Department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS) requires a background check on all of its conditionally admitted applicants 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 history that might pose a risk to patients or others.

Policy Statement

All conditionally admitted applicants to the High Point University Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Program will be required to undergo criminal background and sex offender (CBSO) checks performed at least 45 days prior to matriculation. The offer of admission is conditional upon results of the background check. While enrolled, repeat background checks will be required annually, or more frequently, at the discretion of the clinical facility. If a conditionally admitted applicant declines to undergo the background check or if findings of a grievous nature are revealed, the offer of admission will be revoked. A copy of the CBSO check results will be made available to the applicants upon request. Other copies will be distributed as appropriate on a need-to-know basis. All applicants 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 didactic 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 High Point University PAS Program does not imply or guarantee that the student will obtain state licensure upon graduation.
Process

1. Examination of information obtained through criminal background and sex offender check
   a. The Department Chair/Program Director will review the initial CBSO check report results of all conditionally admitted applicants.
   b. If a CBSO check report contains adverse information, that report will be referred to the Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee. Additionally, the applicant will be informed and provided with the contact information to challenge the finding or provide explanatory information.

2. Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee process
   a. A standing Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee, comprised of members of School of Health Sciences Faculty, appointed by the Dean of the School of Health Sciences, and functioning separate from the DPAS program, will be responsible for reviewing all materials referred to it by the DPAS Admissions Committee. Other University officials and University Legal Counsel may be consulted, as appropriate.
   b. The Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee will evaluate adverse CBSO check reports in order to make a determination about the applicant’s suitability for the program. The committee may consult with the Chair of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies in order to clarify program and professional standards prior to final determination.
   c. Conditionally admitted applicants who have adverse information in their CBSO check report, and who believe that there are mistakes in the report or extenuating circumstances to be taken into account, may submit a written request for consideration to the Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee, and/or appear in person before that committee. Any written request for consideration or personal appearance must occur with seven days of notification of adverse information.
   d. The Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee will conduct a careful review of the information in the CBSO check report, any self-reported information in the applicant’s file, including criminal convictions and pending adjudications, and any relevant supplementary information obtained from the applicant or from other sources, including court documents. Factors involved in the individual case review may include, but are not limited to:
      i. the nature, circumstances, and frequency of any reported offense(s)
      ii. the length of time since the offense(s)
      iii. available information that addresses efforts at rehabilitation
      iv. the accuracy of the information provided by the applicant in their application materials
      v. the relationship between the duties to be performed as part of the educational program and the offense committed
   e. The Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee will be responsible for deciding whether the results of their CBSO check report investigation disqualify the admitted applicant from entrance into the program. They will forward their decision in writing to the applicant, the Chair of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, the Graduate Admissions Office, and to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences within 14 days after receipt of referred report from the DPAS Admissions Committee.
3. Appeals process
   a. Dean of the School of Health Sciences
      i. A conditionally admitted applicant who is denied admission by the Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee may appeal the committee’s decision. The appeal must be made in writing and received by the Dean of the School of Health Sciences within seven days after the Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee renders its decision.
      ii. The Dean will consider the request for appeal.
      iii. The applicant may request a meeting with the Dean. The Dean will determine whether such a meeting is necessary, and will determine any terms of the meeting.
      iv. The Dean will render a decision on the matter within seven days of receipt of the appeal request.
      v. The applicant, Chair of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, and the Graduate Admissions Office will be informed of the Dean’s decision.
   b. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
      i. A conditionally admitted applicant who has been denied admission by the Criminal Background and Sex Offender Review Committee, and whose subsequent appeal to the Dean has also been denied, may appeal the Dean’s decision. The appeal must be made in writing and received by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs within seven days of the Dean’s decision.
      ii. The Provost will consider the request for appeal.
      iii. The applicant may request a meeting with the Provost. The Provost will determine whether such a meeting is necessary, and will determine any terms of the meeting.
      iv. The Provost will render a decision on the matter within seven days of receipt of the appeal request.
      v. The applicant, Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Department Chair and the Graduate Admissions Office will be informed of this decision.
      vi. The decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding the termination of the offer of admission is final and cannot be appealed.

Maintenance of Records and Confidentiality
Information obtained for the purpose of and during the CBSO check will be retained by the School of Health Sciences separate from other student educational and academic records. Confidentiality will be maintained consistent with FERPA and any other appropriate guidelines.

Approved by: Principal Faculty

Modified: February 5, 2015

Next Review: February 2016