



West Chester University Professional Education Unit

A Policy Requiring Current Criminal Background Clearances for Enrollment in Field Experience Courses and Student Teaching

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from Academic Affairs Council), 11/7/2012 (including recommendations from CPE),
approved by consensus by CPE on 11/9/2012, approved by CAPC on 12/6/2012.

A. Purpose/Background

1. The Professional Education Unit at West Chester University prepares teachers and other school professionals (hereafter “candidates”) for P-12 classrooms and schools of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by providing programs of preparation that include early field experiences and student teaching experiences in P-12 schools in partnership with local public and approved private school programs. These programs lead to certification in Pennsylvania.
2. Candidates are required by Pennsylvania law, under the Public School Code of 1949 as amended by 24 P.S. § 1-111, to acquire a Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record (Act 34 of 1985), Federal (FBI) Criminal History Report (Act 114 of 2006), and Child Abuse Report (Act 151 of 1994). Candidates must acquire these clearances prior to the start of their first field experience, and maintain up-to-date versions of these three records of criminal history background information (“clearances”) throughout their preparation until such time WCU recommends them to PDE for teaching certification.
3. In the event candidates are placed in P-12 classrooms and schools outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and criminal background clearances other than the ones stipulated in paragraph (A)(2) are required for admittance into those programs, candidates are required to acquire and maintain the appropriate clearances in the manner described in paragraph (A)(2).
4. For the purposes of this policy, “up-to-date” clearances are defined as those clearances with an issue date (1) preceding the first day of a semester in which a candidate participates in a field-based observation, practicum, or student teaching experience, but (2) no earlier than one year before the last day of the semester during which a candidate participates in that field-based experience.

B. Authority

1. In order to comply with professional and ethical obligations related to the safety of P-12 students and Pennsylvania law, the Professional Education Unit at West Chester University stipulates that all candidates participating in West Chester University academic courses that require participation in observation, practicum, or student teaching experience will provide up-to-date clearances at the start of the semester in which they are enrolled in such classes. Clearances will be provided to the university in a manner stipulated by the dean in accordance with paragraph (C)(1) of this policy. Candidates who fail to provide the proper clearances, as stipulated, before the fourth day of classes of the semester will have their enrollment in the class revoked.

C. Delegation of Responsibility

1. The Dean of the College of Education, as Head of the Professional Education Unit at West Chester University, will delegate responsibility for the collection, examination, and maintenance of criminal clearances as is necessary. The Unit Head will provide authority for the removal of candidates from classes when their removal is stipulated by this policy.