

School of Dental Medicine Background Check Policy

Disclaimer

The background check (BC) process does not guarantee the safety of students, patients, faculty or staff. An acceptable BC does not guarantee the student will be eligible to complete the DDS program or obtain a license to practice dentistry upon graduation. Experiential sites and/or state boards of dentistry make their own determinations on qualifications to practice dentistry and may treat information differently or uncover newer information not revealed in previous record searches. The School of Dental Medicine (“SDM”) is not responsible for any determination by an experiential site and/or state board of dentistry.

Introduction and Rationale

Dentists are required to be of good moral character and work to the highest levels of ethical and legal conduct. They are entrusted with the health, welfare and safety of the patients they serve. Dentists and dental students have the ethical and legal responsibility to safeguard patient information, which requires the utmost levels of integrity.

Many employers including independents, chains, health systems and federal and state governments require the use of BC’s and/or drug testing for employment purposes. Although the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) (www.jcaho.org) does not specifically require background checks, its standards reinforce any state, local or organizational policies which do.

Policy

All provisionally accepted applicants to the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine (SDM) doctor of dental surgery program (DDS) must submit to and complete a BC from a vendor approved by SDM at the student’s expense. Students who refuse to submit to the BC may be dismissed from the program. A provisionally accepted applicant must initiate the BC review within 15 days of receiving the notice of this policy. Failure to request a BC review in a timely manner is grounds for SDM to withdraw the offer for admission.

A background check will be honored for the duration of enrollment if the student is continuously enrolled. A student who has a break in enrollment is required to complete a new background check. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment of at least one semester in the DDS curriculum, regardless of whether an official Leave of Absence has been approved for that time period.

Falsification of information, including omission of relevant information, may result in denial of admission or dismissal from the SDM.

Criminal activity that occurs while a student is in attendance at SDM may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal, and will be addressed pursuant to the policies and procedures set forth in the SDM Student Handbook.

Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

Background check reports and other submitted information are confidential and will be kept in the student's academic file under the direction of the Background Check Review Committee. The information contained in the BC section of the student's file may only be reviewed by university officials, the designated background check provider, and affiliated clinical facilities in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The SDM will designate the provider to conduct the BC. It is student's responsibility to pay for all charges incurred by the designated company and for providing a copy of the results to the SDM by the specified deadlines.

The BC may include a review of the student's or provisionally accepted applicant's criminal history for at least seven years prior to the requesting date. The BC may include, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:

- Social Security number validation
- Criminal Records:
 - Federal criminal history
 - State and county criminal history.
 - Felonies, deferred adjudications, pending charges.
- Civil searches
- Sex offender and predatory registry search
- Adult and child abuse registries
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG) List of Excluded Individuals/Entities
- General Services Administration (GSA) List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs
- Fraud and Abuse Control Information System
- Nationwide Healthcare Fraud and Abuse scan
- Interpol or country of origin checks for international students
- Patriot Act/Terrorist Watch List

Background Check Review Committee

Professional dental students who have been arrested and/or charged with any criminal activity must report this activity in writing and include the appropriate information including court documents, arrest records, and a detailed description of the incident to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs no later than five days following the charge of any crime. The Background Check Review Committee (BCRC) will meet to discuss those findings and may request additional information from the student or request an additional BC. Students who fail to provide this information within the required time frame will be subject to dismissal from the SDM. If the student's BC includes adverse information, the BCRC will meet to discuss those findings and may require additional information from the student (e.g., court documents, arrest record etc.).

Adverse information may lead to withdrawal of the offer for admission or a dismissal from the SDM.

Any student or provisionally accepted applicant who elects to dispute any aspect of their BC with the vendor is responsible for notifying the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in writing at the time of submission of the dispute and at the time of resolution of the dispute. The vendor does not notify the SDM of disputes, and therefore student failure to notify the SDM will result in review of existing BC reports and may lead to withdrawal of the offer for admission or a dismissal from the SDM.

In reviewing the background check reports and any information submitted, the BCRC may consider the following factors in making its decision:

- The nature and seriousness of the offense or event
- The circumstances surrounding the offense or event
- The relationship between duties to be performed as a part of the educational program and the offense committed
- The age of the person when the offense or event occurred
- Whether the offense or event was an isolated or repeated incident
- The length of time that has passed since the offense or event
- Past employment and history of academic or disciplinary misconduct
- Evidence of rehabilitation
- The accuracy of the information provided by the candidate who has received an offer of admission
- The accuracy of the information provided by the student in the application materials, disclosure forms and other materials
- Experiential site or state board licensure policies.

The BCRC reserves the right to request a repeat BC at any time for any student from the current vendor or any alternate vendor at the student's expense. Students who fail to submit to a repeat BC may be dismissed from the SDM.

Rights of Appeal

Provisionally Accepted Students

All students completing the BC upon conditional admission to the SDM will be informed of the BCRC decision upon review of their BC. These decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

Continuing Students

All students completing the BC after a break in enrollment will be informed of the BCRC decision upon review of their BC. A student who wishes to appeal a decision of the BCRC must submit a letter of appeal to the Dean of the School of Dental Medicine within five (5) school days of notification of the BCRC decision. The Dean shall consider the students' appeal request, BC results, and BCRC decision and render a final decision. This final decision from the Dean shall be submitted in writing to the student within ten (10) school days from receiving the letter of appeal.