

## *Statement and policy on drug abuse, background checks, and related issues*

Issue date: August 11, 2006

Effective date: August 11, 2006

Version: 1.0

### Background:

While a student's past and behaviors outside of the classroom are private matters, those who are seeking careers in forensic science and related fields are pursuing careers in which they will work with sensitive information. These careers demand the highest level of trust, ethics, and professionalism. As such, students admitted to the program are expected to conduct themselves accordingly.

Anyone pursuing a career in forensic science, law enforcement, homeland security, or related areas can expect an extensive background check as part of internships and employment. Such background screenings typically include (but are not limited to) examination of arrest records, convictions, drug and alcohol use and abuse testing, credit reports, interviews of friends, teachers, supervisors, and polygraph examinations. Problems uncovered during this check often preclude internships and employment in the forensic or related fields.

Students and those supporting them must have no illusions about the importance or thoroughness of a background check. Even with a stellar academic record, a failed background check will have significant and lasting adverse impacts on the student, the WVU Forensic and Investigative Science program, employers, and the forensic science profession. While agencies differ in specific policies, tolerance, and forgiveness practices, the competitiveness of the job market makes it unlikely that a candidate failing a background check will be able to secure employment in the field.

These policies are designed to prevent such problems and to specify procedures that will be implemented if the need arises.

Administrative responsibility:

The primary administrative responsibility for the internship program lies with the assistant director, who will oversee implementation of this policy.

Specific policy and procedures:

1. Students will be informed verbally of issues related to background checks at initial orientation sessions. A formal attendance register will be taken at all such sessions.

2. The policy will be posted on the forensic sciences website and included in the student handbook and internship materials.

3. Any student admitted, pre-admitted, or declaring an interest in the program will receive annual email announcements re-iterating the policy.

4. During admission interviews, students will be asked to summarize the policy and will be reminded of the procedures described here. They will also sign the form below.

5. Parents will be notified of this policy in writing when students are admitted to the program.

6. If after admission to the program, a student reveals information concerning drug use, arrests, DUIs, or other matters that may impact a background check, that information will be relayed immediately to the assistant director. This includes disclosures made to any faculty, staff, or instructor associated with the forensic program. While each case will be handled in the strictest confidence and in private consultations with the student and assistant director, students can expect the following consequences:

a) Loss of internship placement and any future placement privileges

b) Students will be responsible for securing an alternative that is acceptable. Acceptability will be determined by agreement made between the student, the assistant director, and the director.

c) Students will be strongly encouraged to change majors and will be given reasonable and appropriate counseling and referrals in this regard.

7. Any student placed in an internship and subsequently denied the position due to failing a background check will face the same consequences outlined in Item 6 above.

8. Any discussions related to this policy that takes place between the student and forensic program personnel will be treated as confidential personal information.

## Student acknowledgement:

The signatures below are acknowledgement that I have read and understood the program's policies and procedures entitled *Statement and policy on drug abuse, background checks, and related issues* and that I understand the consequences of a failed background check or revelation of past or current drug use or related issues as specified in this document.

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Signature of Student

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Date

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Director/Assistant Director

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Date