

# UGA College of Pharmacy

## Policy on Criminal Background Checks

### Policy Statement:

The University College of Pharmacy will conduct criminal background checks on all applicants accepted for admission to the Doctor of Pharmacy professional program.

### Rationale:

Many universities and colleges who educate health professionals, including The Georgia Health Sciences University's Medical College of Georgia program on this campus, require criminal background checks on all applicants accepted for admission. The purposes of such requirements include:

- To assure the public's continuing trust in the medical profession regarding the safety and well-being of patients;
- To identify accepted applicants who have a criminal history that may preclude them from participating in clinical training programs, including but not limited to, care of patients in vulnerable populations; and
- To put applicants with a criminal history on notice that there may be an issue with respective licensing boards regarding the impact of the criminal history on their ability to obtain professional licensure.

This same rationale can be applied to the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy's Doctor of Pharmacy program; it is in the best interest of our patients, our students, and our profession to require criminal background checks for all accepted applicants prior to matriculation. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) recommends that all United States pharmacy schools procure a background check on all applicants accepted to pharmacy school and more than fifty percent of schools currently require such checks.

### Process/Procedures:

Criminal background checks will be required for all applicants accepted for admission to the University of Georgia (UGA) College of Pharmacy's Doctor of Pharmacy program. Such checks will not be a component of the application or selection processes, but will be a mandatory component of the pre-matriculation process for each accepted applicant. The status of an admitted applicant will be conditional pending completion and review of a criminal background check.

#### (1) Authorization process and the criminal background check

The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy facilitates a national background check service through the Pharmacy College Application Service (PharmCAS) and the vendor selected by PharmCAS will be utilized by the UGA College of Pharmacy. Upon initial, conditional acceptance to the Doctor of Pharmacy program, the PharmCAS-

selected vendor will send an e-mail notification to the applicant to obtain consent for a criminal background report to be procured.

Once consent has been provided, the PharmCAS-selected vendor will conduct a criminal record check and produce a report. When the report is complete, the vendor will send an e-mail to the conditionally accepted applicant requesting that he/she review the report prior to its distribution. The applicant will have ten calendar days from the date this e-mail is sent to review that report and will be provided an opportunity to contest the accuracy of the contents of the report within that ten day period. The vendor will not distribute a report to the College of Pharmacy until any dispute has been resolved. If the applicant has no objection to the report or does not review the report, it will be distributed after the ten day period elapses.

Omission of required information, including failure to provide consent for the background check, or submitting false or misleading information by an individual in any communication with the College of Pharmacy may result in withdrawal of conditional acceptance. The College of Pharmacy will respect the laws of the state of Georgia or other state laws with regard to an individual having a sealed juvenile record and having no obligation to reveal records within the juvenile court system.

## (2) Review of background check reports

A criminal background review committee (CBRC) shall meet as needed to review applicants for whom background check reports are received from the vendor. The CBRC's membership will consist of the chair of the Admissions Committee, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean, the Assistant Dean for Experience Programs, and the Diversity Programs Coordinator.

Each CBRC member shall have one vote and all decisions will be made by a majority vote of the members present at the meeting at which an applicant is discussed. In the event of a tie vote, the matter will be referred to the Dean of the College of Pharmacy for a final decision. Committee members will act in the best interest of the pharmacy profession, potential patients of the applicant, and the UGA community when serving on the committee. They will abstain from acting or voting in instances where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to an applicant before the committee. In a case where such a conflict does exist for a member of the CBRC, the Dean will name a substitute committee member for the purpose of voting on that specific case.

## (3) Handling adverse reports

In the event of a criminal background check report which shows a history of criminal activity, the CBRC may require the applicant to provide a detailed, written description and explanation of the information contained in that report along with appropriate documentation, such as police reports, certified court records, and any institutional

correspondence and orders. Requests for such information will be made via e-mail. This information must be returned to the College of Pharmacy within ten working days of the date the communication is sent to the applicant. Any extension of this ten-day period must be set forth in writing and signed by an authorized representative of the Dean of the College of Pharmacy's office. The College of Pharmacy may also independently seek to obtain additional information, such as a copy of the original criminal charge, in order to corroborate the applicant's explanation.

The CBRC will review any criminal background check report which shows a history of criminal activity and the applicant's explanation. No information provided in a report will automatically result in the revocation of acceptance. A final decision with regard to matriculation will be made only after careful review of factors including but not limited to:

- The seriousness, circumstances, and frequency of the offense(s);
- The relationship between the duties to be performed as part of the educational program and the offense(s);
- The length of time that has passed since the offense(s);
- Evidence of successful rehabilitation; and
- The accuracy of any information provided by the applicant.

When the CBRC considers a report on an accepted applicant, the focus of this consideration will be on whether to finalize the conditional offer of acceptance tendered by the Admissions Committee. Accepted applicants will be informed that acceptance into the Doctor of Pharmacy program does not guarantee the ability to complete all aspects of the program including practice experiences, obtain proper licensing through a state board of pharmacy, or meet other rehabilitation requirements under particular state laws. If a decision is reached to withdraw a conditional acceptance, the applicant will be notified in writing of the decision and that the criminal background check report was used in making that decision.

#### (4) Record keeping

All criminal background information that is maintained by the College of Pharmacy will be kept in a locked file, in the office of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, that is located separately from the records in an accepted applicant's admission and permanent academic files. Criminal background check reports will be maintained for a period of time consistent with the Board of Regents' retention schedule.