



I. Applicability

This policy applies to applicants who have received an offer of admission to the program or students enrolled in ACU's Marriage and Family Therapy graduate program that includes practicum/internship hours that are completed at the Marriage and Family Institute. Graduate students completing practicum/internship requirements at an off-site placement will be subject to the background check requirements of the placement organization. This policy is governed by ACU's background check policy as detailed in the Employee Handbook.

II. Policy

Applicants who have received an offer of admission must satisfactorily complete a background check as a condition to matriculation to the Marriage and Family Therapy graduate program. An offer of admission will not be final until the completion of the background check(s) with results deemed as satisfactory. Admission may be denied or rescinded based on a review of the background check.

Additionally, students who are currently enrolled in ACU's Marriage and Family Therapy graduate program with on-site practicum/internship requirements and who do not have a valid background check must satisfactorily complete a background check review as a condition to continued enrollment the program.

Students who refuse to submit to a background check or do not pass the background check review may be dismissed from the program. Applicants who have received an offer of admission or students who are dismissed may seek admission into another ACU graduate program that does not require an on-site practicum/internship.

III. Rationale

Those who provide care and assistance to others through on-site practicums/internships are entrusted with the safety and welfare of clients, have access to confidential information, and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior. Thus, an assessment of a student's or applicant's suitability to function in such a setting is imperative to promote the highest level of integrity in the services provided. In addition, it is especially necessary to protect minors who receive services on campus from those who may do them harm.

IV. Obtaining a Background Check Report

Students who are offered provisional admission to the Marriage and Family Therapy program will receive an email from ACU Human Resources with instructions for completing the background check. There is no cost to the student for the background check.

V. Rights of the Applicant/Student

Students and applicants who have received an offer of admission have the right to review the information reported by the designated company for accuracy and completeness and to request that the designated company verify that the background information provided is correct. Prior to making a final determination that will adversely affect the applicant or student, ACU will provide applicants or students a copy of or access to the background check report issued by the designated company, and inform them of their rights, how to contact the designated company to challenge the accuracy of the report, and that the designated company was not involved in any decisions made by ACU.



VI. Procedure

A. Committee Review Standards

In reviewing the background check reports and any information submitted, the Marriage and Family Therapy Program Director may consider the following factors in making its determinations: the nature and seriousness of the offense or event, the circumstances surrounding the offense or event, the relationship between the duties to be performed as part of the graduate 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 successful rehabilitation, and the accuracy of the information provided by the applicant who has received an offer of admission or student in the application materials, disclosure forms, or other materials. The Program Director should bear in mind both the safety interests of clients/patients and the workplace, as well as the educational interest of the student. In reviewing background checks and supplementary information, advice may be obtained from university counsel, university police, or other appropriate advisors.

B. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Background check reports and other submitted information are confidential and may only be reviewed by university officials and on-site clinical facilities in accordance with the Family Educational Records and Privacy Act (FERPA). Background check reports and other submitted information of students will be maintained in accordance with the university's record retention policy for student records. Background check reports and other submitted information of applicants denied admission into the program will be maintained in accordance with the university's record retention policy.