Policy: Criminal Background Checks and Drug and Alcohol Screening	**Applicability:** PA Sciences Program Students
Policy Owner: PA Sciences Program	**Approved By:** Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research
Effective Date: August 18, 2021	**Last Reviewed:** August 05, 2026
Next Review: August 05, 2027	**Contact:** (615)321-2933

PURPOSE: To inform the MMC PA Sciences students of the institution's policy on Criminal Background Checks

POLICY: Increasing numbers of hospitals and clinical partners of Meharry Medical College are requiring criminal background checks (CBCs) for students assigned to complete clinical rotations, electives at their facilities, summer research and internships.

To meet these additional requirements, standardize the criminal background check process and minimize the need for students to do multiple criminal background checks, Meharry Medical College will facilitate a criminal background check process for students as outlined below. A registration hold will be placed on the student accounts who do not authorize the background check by the deadline communicated. Criminal background checks and drug screenings will be the financial responsibility of the student.

Safe and competent delivery of patient care requires all providers to be free of impairment from drugs and alcohol. Prior to matriculation and prior to beginning SCPEs, students must submit the results of a urine drug screen to the Program. At times, students may also be required to submit additional drug and / or alcohol screens. Students are responsible for the cost of drug and alcohol screens.

Any student with positive findings on post-matriculation drug and alcohol screens are subject actions as outlined in the institutions Substance Abuse Policy: https://home.mmc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-2021-STUDENT-HANDBOOK-Final-July-2020.pdf

Authorization and Fees

First year applicants admitted to the MHS, MSPH, Ph.D., and Physician Assistant Sciences Program will be required to initiate criminal background checks upon notice of conditional admission to the School of Graduate Studies & Research and in March of each year for continuing MSPH, Ph.D., and PA students.

Fees: Assessed to all returning MSPH, Ph.D., and PA students. First-year students will be asked to submit a background check once admitted.

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Scope

The scope of the criminal background check will include:

Social Security Number Validation – The service confirms whether the applicant's social security is valid according to the Social Security Administration's formula. Includes the results of five separate checks: state issued, date issued, date of birth scan, death index search and analysis against the Social Security Administration's algorithm for issuing numbers.

Social Security Number Verification – This service helps verify the applicant's identity by confirming whether the applicant's social security number matches his/her name, address and social security number data obtained through one of the three major credit bureaus. We can provide you with the raw data or analyze the data against the information provided by the applicant.

County Criminal Records Search – A search of county felony and misdemeanor records, directly through the courthouse. Records are verified using key identifiers (name, date of birth, social security number, address) before reporting. Results include accurate and complete, easy-to-read descriptions of all cases located, as well as their final disposition.

Statewide Criminal Records Search – A statewide search of felony and misdemeanor records, directly through state repositories or court systems. Not available in all states. Records are verified using key identifiers (name, date of birth, social security number, address) before reporting. Results include accurate and complete, easy-to-read descriptions of all cases located, as well as their final disposition.

Federal Criminal Records Search – A search of federal felony and misdemeanor records, directly through the PACER system or the federal courts. Records are verified using key identifiers (name, date of birth, social security number, address) before reporting. Results include accurate and complete, easy-to-read descriptions of all cases located, as well as their final disposition.

National Criminal File Search – This search is an instant, multi-jurisdiction database search of more than 194 million criminal records. Most effectively used as a prescreening tool or to supplement standard criminal searches.

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Sexual Offender Registry Search – A name search performed at the national level directly through registries of individuals who have been convicted of certain sexual offenses and are required to register under applicable state laws.

OIG/EPLS Search – Certiphi offers an OIG/EPLS search that includes both the HHS Office of Inspector General's (OIG) List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE) and the General Services Administration's (GSA) Excluded Parties List (EPLS). Our service searches applicants against this list to ensure they are not precluded from being hired by a healthcare organization and provides the tracking and auditing capabilities healthcare organizations need to ensure compliance with applicable federal regulations.

Vendor - Certiphi Screening, Inc. has been retained to perform the student criminal background checks. Certiphi exclusively serves the healthcare industry and is affiliated with the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the American Society for Healthcare Human Resources Association (ASHHRA).

Results Reporting

Results of the criminal background check will be made available to schools, companies, clinical partners and hospitals as students are assigned to each facility, school or company for clinical training, summer research, internships and/or externships. Each company, school or facility will have access to the report results and will make the final determination if a student is eligible to rotate or work with them.

Applicant Information Release

Certiphi will obtain your release and consent electronically. The criminal background checks should be completed within 10 days of Certiphi's receipt of the release form. There may be a few isolated exceptions to this timeframe.

Administration Process

The criminal background check process will be administered through the Department of Student Services under the direction of the Director of Student Life for continuing students and the Director of Admissions and Recruitment for admitted students. You will receive an email

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similar to the message below during the month that your background check will need to be completed.

DEFINITIONS:

Criminal Background Check – is a process a person or company uses to verify that an individual is who they claim to be, and this provides an opportunity to check and confirm the validity of someone's criminal record.

PROCEDURE:

1. Clinic the link below or paste it into your browser: https://www.applicationstation.com/home/home_new.asp?r=Y
2. Enter the Code: MEHARRYDENTAL (dental students) or MEHARRYGRADUATE in the Application Station Code field.
3. If you have not already created an account for yourself, click the "SIIGN UP NOW" button to do so. Otherwise, just click the "SIGN BACK IN" button to login using your username and password.
4. Follow the instructions on the Application Station web site. (The process will include obtaining your release and consent electronically). If you have technical issues visiting the Application Station Site, please contact

Application Station Support at: 888-291-1369 x2006.