

Interim Criminal Background Check Policy  
To be Implemented Immediately  
February 2005

## RATIONALE

It has recently come to the attention of the School of Medicine that our affiliated VA Medical Center and Central State Hospital are conducting finger printing, and subsequent criminal background checks on all students rotating through their facilities. During these checks, several students have had positive “hits”. The VA is interested in the School of Medicine policy and wishes to turn over the background check information to the School for management.

This year the Association of American Medical Colleges is developing guidance for Schools of Medicine on the issue of criminal background checks. There are four primary drivers for the development of policies:

- Patient Safety and Well-being
- The ability to obtain licensure as a physician
- Liability of the medical school and/or affiliated hospital
- Accreditation requirements for hospitals

It is the desire of the VCU School of Medicine to remain in concert with the AAMC guidelines and therefore the School has deferred development of a final policy until such guidance is available.

Current standards at the school are in compliance with national standards. We rely on the student’s self-report in the application process. In this self-report on the AMCAS application, candidates verify that they have no school institutional action or court convictions.

## INTERIM POLICY

Since the VA Medical Center and Central State hospital are already conducting these checks on our students, it is the intention of the school to provide a transition policy to be in place until the formal policy is developed.

Students will be made aware of the institution of these criminal background checks through an on-line notice developed by the Associate Dean of Student Activities.

All information provided to the School by the VA Medical Center will be reviewed by a small committee of the Associate Dean of Students (Dr. Isaac Wood), the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (Dr. James Messmer), the Assistant Dean for Medical Education (Dr. Elizabeth Waterhouse) and the Associate Dean for Admissions (Dr. Cynthia Heldberg) in consultation with University Counsel. The affected student will be invited to meet with this committee to discuss the circumstances. The committee

will then make recommendations to the Dean of the School of Medicine for possible action based on criteria which will include the nature and frequency of any offense(s), the length of time since the offense(s), documented successful rehabilitation, any possible violation of University or School of Medicine policy regarding the occurrence of criminal behavior and the accuracy of the information provided by the applicant in his/her application materials.

Information gained through this process would NOT become part of the student's academic file and would remain confidential unless the findings result in an institutional action by the School of Medicine.

Students will be counseled on the potential long term ramifications of the findings including eligibility for other clinical rotations outside the VA and potential licensure issues.

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12/3/04 revised 12/21/04

revised 2/10/05