

**UNI Teacher Education Program**  
**Student Self-Reporting of Alleged Criminal Misconduct Policy**  
**July 30, 2013**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to address those incidents of past criminal misconduct that are identified during the Single Contact Repository (SING) background check as well as incidents of alleged criminal misconduct by teacher education candidates that occur after the initial SING background check and before the formal background check required for licensure.

The SING background check is an online system that completes an Iowa background check for criminal convictions, including deferred judgments, through the Iowa Department of Criminal Investigation (DCI). The SING also verifies that the student is NOT on either the Iowa Child Abuse Registry or the Sex Offender Registry. All UNI students who will be doing a field experience associated with a teacher education course or content methods course, or if an Early Childhood major plans to work in a preschool or day care center must complete the SING background check process. In most cases, this background check will take place prior to the start of the student's first field experiences (or in a few cases, during their first field experience), and will include a Department of Human Services [DHS] review of convictions, etc.

As part of the SING process, the Iowa Department of Human Services reviews criminal history and makes a determination whether the candidate is allowed access to DHS childcare facilities. If the candidate is cleared for DHS childcare facilities, UNI will also clear the candidate for experiences in PK-12 schools. If DHS does not clear the candidate, but the criminal offense would not prevent the candidate from earning an Iowa teaching license under the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics 282-25.3(1), further review by and consultation with the UNI Teacher Candidate Professional Review Committee will be conducted to determine access to field experiences.

**During the time interval between the initial SING background check and the fingerprinting and national background check required for licensure, it is imperative that all criminal misconduct incidents be reported by the teacher education candidate.** The UNI Elementary and Secondary Senates reserve the right to investigate any criminal misconduct of its teacher education candidates, which is necessary to assure a safe school environment in all field placements. This policy is congruent with the UNI student statement of rights and responsibilities found at <http://www.uni.edu/deanofstudents/handbook/> and the student conduct code found at <http://www.uni.edu/policies/302>. Formal sanctions, if ultimately imposed, are intended to support the goals and mission of the teacher education program. Generally, sanctions are progressive as well as educational in nature, promoting learning opportunities for individuals while preserving a safe learning environment in the PK-12 school community. Should the student wish to appeal any sanction(s), the student will use the appeals process found at <http://www.uni.edu/teachered/appeal>.

## **Early Field Experience**

Prior to the start of any field experiences, students are required to undergo a SING background check. The background check policy, request forms, and waivers are distributed through the Office of Teacher Education (159A SEC) and via the Level I field experience course. At the time of this background check, students will also be required to report any prior criminal convictions or pending criminal charges. Any criminal misconduct charge other than parking or speeding violations must be reported. This includes all deferred judgments and criminal activities including activities that occurred while a minor (see <http://www.state.ia.us/boee/backgrnd.html>). Also see “Student Self-Reporting Letter Guidelines” posted on the teacher education webpage under “Information for Students: Background Checks”. Failure to accurately self-disclose to the appropriate UNI Office of Teacher Education personnel may prevent the student from engaging in a field experience or result in the removal of the student if already placed in a field experience.

Details of the criminal misconduct activity(ies) will not be shared with any third party but will be accessible to the UNI Teacher Education authorized personnel. When the student is enrolled in any field experience or anticipates commencing a field experience within 30 days, any criminal misconduct charge a student receives after the background check is completed must be reported immediately to either the Elementary Coordinator of Teacher Education or the Secondary Coordinator of Teacher Education through the “Student Self-Reporting Letter” process. When the student is not enrolled in any field experience, the charge must be reported to either the Elementary Coordinator of Teacher Education or the Secondary Coordinator of Teacher Education as soon as possible, but no later than five working days after the incident. Failure to do so may result in discharge of the student from the teacher education program. The contacted coordinator of teacher education will notify the Teacher Candidate Professional Review Committee, an ad-hoc committee of Elementary and Secondary Senates, of the need to review the newly reported incident and provide advice on continuation in the program or to decide that termination in the program is warranted.

## **Admission to Teacher Education**

A formal background check is required prior to involvement in any field experiences in the Teacher Education program at UNI. A formal background check will not be required at admission to the Teacher Education program if no criminal misconduct or alleged criminal misconduct has occurred since the original SING background check was conducted at the time of the first early field experience.

At the time of admission to the UNI Teacher Education Program, each student will be asked to indicate if incidents of misconduct were evident on the SING background check. If such incidents are evident the student must attach a “Student Self-Reporting Letter” to their application listing any prior or current incidents of criminal misconduct. An application for admission will be considered fraudulent, and may be denied, if it contains any false representation or omission of material fact, or if false records are submitted in support of the application. The self-reporting letters are taken into consideration in the admissions process.

Admission to the UNI Teacher Education program can be revoked if subsequent self-reports of criminal misconduct warrant exclusion from the program.

To self-report, the student must write a self-reporting letter and attach it to the Application for Admission to Teacher Education. The respective coordinator of teacher education will review the letter and forward it to the appropriate (Elementary or Secondary) Teacher Candidate Professional Review Committee for review and action. Any decision by the Teacher Candidate Professional Review Committee pertains only to the student's status in the teacher education program and results will be reported back to the coordinator. The student may appeal the decision through the established appeal procedure: <http://www.uni.edu/teachered/appeal>.

### **Licensure**

Prior to receiving an Iowa teaching license, all candidates will undergo a national FBI criminal history background check that includes fingerprinting. A signed waiver for the background check and a self-reporting letter are required. An application for a license will be considered fraudulent, and may be denied, if it contains any false representation or omission of material fact, or if false records are submitted in support of the application. See the IAC Chapter 25-Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (<http://www.boee.iowa.gov/doc/ethHndot.pdf>), Standard 3 "misrepresentation, falsification of information."

**NOTE:** The University of Northern Iowa's recommendation for licensure does not guarantee that the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners will issue the Iowa teaching license.