

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

### **Why are background checks necessary?**

OHSU is committed to providing the safest possible environment for its entire community of employees, students, volunteers, patients, visitors, and others. When someone is given access to OHSU's resources, it is OHSU's responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure that the person will use the access appropriately. Background checks are necessary so that all of us can work together in an environment of trust and collegiality, and to protect OHSU from those few individuals who may try to exploit OHSU's vast and valuable resources.

### **Who needs a background check?**

Generally, all employees, volunteers, most students, anyone who will be given a standard OHSU I.D. badge, and/or anyone who will be allowed to access sensitive or confidential information (e.g., Protected Health Information). For a comprehensive list, see the links attached to the policy or contact the Public Safety Department at 4-0258.

### **If someone is already employed at OHSU and is just transferring to a new position, does he/she need a new background check?**

Possibly. Employees who were hired prior to July 1998 or who are transferring to a position with certain job responsibilities may require a background check. [Click here](#) to determine if a background check is required in conjunction with a transfer.

### **Will my credit history be checked? Some of the forms have "Credit" in the title.**

Only a very few selected positions require credit history checks (e.g., Public Safety officers). The name of the federal law governing certain kinds of checks is "The Fair Credit Reporting Act," but credit history checks are not a routine part of most background checks at OHSU. You will be told in advance if your position requires a credit history check.

### **What records will be checked?**

The "standard" background check performed for the vast majority of Applicants includes the following:

- Criminal History (all)
- Address record (all)
- References (personal and professional) as applicable
- Employment record (as applicable)
- Academic credentials (as applicable)
- Driving record (for positions that require driving)

Some selected positions may receive an "enhanced" background check that could involve many more components, including a credit history check, more detailed reference checks, and a drug screen. However, Applicants will be informed if any of these checks are required.

For a comprehensive listing of the components of the various checks, see the links attached to the policy or contact the Public Safety Department at 4-0258.

**How long will it take to complete the check?**

Most checks are completed within 3-5 business days with many taking less than three days. However, the length of time it takes to complete a background check may vary depending on several variables, including whether or not an applicant has lived outside of Oregon, how many places an applicant has lived, whether or not an applicant has a common name, the type of checks being performed, and other factors. Every attempt is made to process the checks as fast as possible.

**Is there any way to start work before the check is completed?**

Applicants may not start work or be granted access until Public Safety has approved the background check. Managers who allow applicants to do so may be subject to disciplinary action. In rare cases where allowing someone to start work or have access is time-critical and the check may delay this, the Vice President of Human Resources or other responsible person, in consultation with the Director of Public Safety, may approve a contingency hire, subject to the final background check being completed.

**Who will find out about the results of a background check?**

The results of a background check will only be shared with the minimum number of people who need to know the information in order to review the results and make a hiring decision. Typically, disclosure of information is limited to the Hiring Manager in the unit, department, or work area, the Public Safety Department staff processing the check, and the Human Resources Department or, for students, the Executive Committee member, Dean or Director primarily responsible for the Applicant's position or access. However, in some cases, other managers/directors may need to review the information, as well as the Legal Department, and administrative directors, particularly if there are potentially disqualifying factors. In all cases, however, the information is considered confidential and will be restricted to the absolute minimum number of people necessary to adequately review it.

**What if inaccurate information comes up under my name? Will I get a chance to dispute it?**

If any information comes up during a background check that may disqualify an Applicant, the individual will be notified in writing, and given an opportunity to dispute the information. While most records are accurate, errors are occasionally found and all Applicants with potentially disqualifying information are reviewed individually.

**Can I receive a copy of the background check information?**

If there is no potentially disqualifying information, the specific information reviewed is not kept and only an approval is communicated to the hiring manager, so these records are not available. If potentially disqualifying information is discovered during a background check, the Applicant will be given the opportunity to view this information and respond to it or dispute it before a final decision is made.

**Who performs the actual checks?**

The Department of Public Safety performs the address verification and criminal history checks, and may perform a driving record and/or credit history check in the cases where they are required. Checks of references, credentials, and work histories are typically performed by the hiring manager or department. Drug screenings are performed by an independent laboratory under contract with OHSU and processed through the Human Resources Department.

**Why do visiting students and scientists need background checks when they will only be here for a short time?**

The requirements for background checks are based primarily on what type of access an Applicant will have, not their status, title, or the length of their affiliation with OHSU. OHSU houses vast amounts of confidential and proprietary information and any improper access—for even a moment—can lead to severe liabilities for OHSU and the person(s) involved.