



College of Health Sciences Student Background Check and Drug Screen Testing Policy

Policy #:	CH001.1
Policy Type:	University
Responsible Executive:	VP for Academic Affairs
Responsible Office:	Office of the Dean, CHS
Originally Issued:	August 15, 2018
Latest Revision:	May 29, 2020
Effective Date:	

I. Policy Statement

The ULM College of Health Sciences (CHS), the School of Allied Health (SOAH), and the Kitty Degree School of Nursing (KDSNUR) Student Background Check and Drug Screen Testing Policy and Procedures exist to provide guidance on student background checks and drug testing to CHS students, faculty, and administrators.

The Background Check and Drug Screen Testing Policy, and consequences resulting from a positive drug screen result, are developed based upon professional best practices and codes of conduct, and/or licensing board requirements. Therefore, each CHS program's procedures may vary.

Information of concern that is revealed through background checks and/or positive drug screen results (including pre-admission, pre-clinical, random, and suspicious behavior initiated tests), may result in inability to begin and/or complete the professional program, inability to practice professionally, inability to become licensed/credentialed, submission of a welfare-concern to the Dean of Students, and/or dismissal from the program.

II. Purpose of Policy

Background Checks

Background checks are required in some SOAH and KDSNUR professional programs before a student can be admitted to the program and/or before a student can participate in required clinicals, which is defined as clinical rotations, practicums, internships, and/or externships. All professional programs require background checks as per the guidelines and criteria set forth by the participating site and/or listed in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or affiliation site agreement. As such, information of concern may result in the student not being eligible to commence to their clinical facility site rotation, practicum, internship, and/or externship.

Pre-admission

Drug screening is required in some SOAH and KDSNUR professional programs before a student can be admitted to the program. In such cases, a positive drug screen will render the applicant ineligible for admission to not only that program, but also possibly others.

Pre-clinical

Drug screening is required in some SOAH and KDSNUR programs before a student can participate in clinicals, which is defined as, clinical rotations, practicums, internships, and/or externships. All professional programs require drug screening as per the guidelines and criteria set forth by the participating site and/or listed in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or affiliation site agreement. As such, positive drug screens may result in the student not being eligible to commence to their clinical facility site rotation, practicum, internship, and/or externship.

III. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to students in CHS professional programs that require a background check and/or drug screen testing.

IV. Definitions

CHS: College of Health Sciences (School of Allied Health and Kitty Degree School of Nursing)

Clinicals: defined as clinical rotation, practicum, internship and/or externship

KDSNUR: Kitty Degree School of Nursing

SOAH: School of Allied Health (Counseling, Dental Hygiene, Health Studies, Kinesiology, Marriage and Family Therapy, Medical Laboratory Science, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Radiologic Technology, Speech-Language Pathology)

V. Policy Procedure

Program Requirements and Procedures

Programs requiring background checks and/or drug screen testing will notify students at application in writing of the requirement and of any other specific program's applicable requirements. The program will maintain copies of signed student acknowledgements of receiving the notification and Policy, of fully understanding the Policy, and of giving the applicable ULM personnel permission to view the results on a secure website and appropriately share internally.

Programs requiring background checks and/or drug screen testing will inform students of the procedures. Procedures may be located in course syllabi, program handbooks, clinical handbooks, and/or on program websites. Unless otherwise noted in the program procedures, payment for all background checks and drug screening is the responsibility of the student.

Programs requiring background checks and/or drug screen testing will have clearly written procedures that detail at a minimum:

1. The college approved provider that will be used to facilitate the background check and/or drug screen testing process
2. Instructions for registering for the initial and subsequent background check and/or drug screen testing
3. Whose responsibility it is for payment of initial and subsequent background check and/or drug screen testing
4. Instructions for paying for the background check and/or drug screen, if applicable
5. Instructions for verifying legally prescribed drugs
6. Who will have access to the results of the background check and/or drug screen testing.
7. How results of the background check and/or drug screen results will be shared and stored.
8. How frequently the student will be checked and/or tested
9. Whether or not random drug screening is, or may be, required, and who is responsible for payment.
10. Procedures that will be followed in the event that an employee of the university or the applicable site observes suspicious behavior

11. How suspicious behavior is defined
12. How soon after suspicious behavior is observed and documented that a student is required to submit for drug screen testing (immediate to up to 2 hours)
13. How self-disclosure of drug use or abuse may be handled differently than a positive drug screen result
14. Procedures and/or consequences that will follow a first positive drug screen result
15. Procedures and/or consequences that will follow a second positive drug screen result
16. Procedures and/or consequences that will follow information of concern revealed by a background check
17. How the student's inability to complete clinical rotation, practicum, internships, and/or externships will impact their ability to complete the degree program and/or professional practice
18. How the student can appeal consequences imposed by the program, college, and/or university student conduct committee as a result of a positive drug screen result
19. The student's rights to refuse testing, and the possible applicable resulting consequences/actions

Positive Drug Screen Results and Background Check Information of Concern

Each incidence of a positive drug screen and/or information of concern revealed by the background check will be reported by the program director or his/her designee to the Dean's representative on the Committee on Ethical and Professional Conduct, who in turn will report the particulars to the Dean. The Dean's representative on the Committee on Ethical and Professional Conduct, in consultation with the Dean, will determine if the case will be heard by the committee or if the penalties of the positive drug screen will be determined by the program (unless otherwise determined by the licensing board).

Committee on Ethical and Professional Conduct

The college or school committee on ethical and professional conduct includes at least a representative from each School Director's Office, a licensed mental health professional, and two faculty members. A representative from the Dean's Office will serve as an ex-officio member. The Dean will appoint all members of the committee.

The committee is responsible for reviewing student ethical and professional issues, such as drug use or abuse, at the request of the Dean's representative. The committee is also responsible for suggesting and implementing preventative approaches to encouraging a drug free campus, such as community support/involvement, and student and faculty education.

Penalties of Positive Drug Screens

Possible actions and penalties for first positive drug screen result (unless otherwise dictated or suggested by program requirements, professional standards, affiliation agreement, or licensing board): Substance abuse assessment, treatment, and education; counseling or therapy; random drug screening; and suspension from academic program for one year with option to return after one year, if no further positive drug screen results, and if evidence is provided of being drug free and successful completion of treatments.

The student is responsible for all costs associated with testing, evaluation, treatment, education, counseling, and therapy that cannot be offered free of charge through the ULM Counseling Center.

Penalties include one or more of the following:

- Documented reprimand
- University community service
- Disciplinary program probation
- Counseling or therapy
- Substance abuse treatment
- Random drug testing
- Suspension from clinical rotation, practicum, internship, externship (with or without conditions)
- Suspension from academic program (with or without conditions)
- Dismissal from academic program with conditions and option to re-apply, if applicable
- Permanent dismissal from academic program

Suspicious Behavior

Drug and/or alcohol screening may be required in cases of suspicious behavior observed by an employee of the university or the applicable site supervisor. Suspicious behavior is defined by, but not limited to, any or all of the following being observed:

- Lack of attendance, frequent absences or tardiness from class, clinical, lab or other program related activity
- Sudden and/or unexplained disappearance from class, clinical, lab or other program related activity
- Isolation
- Withdrawal
- Errors
- Increased poor judgement
- Haphazard and/or illogical case notes, charting, or other written work
- Unusual accidents/incidents
- Unusual behavior, moods, or appearance (such as personality changes, mood swings, aggression, illogical thought patterns, slurred speech, pupil size and/or appearance)
- Changes in motor functioning (such as gait disturbances, impaired dexterity, drowsiness, sleepiness)
- Changes and/or deterioration in personal hygiene
- Detectable odor of alcohol or drugs

In the event that suspicious behavior is suspected, the Suspicious Behavior Checklist (to be hyperlinked) will be used for student assessment. Two university officials will complete and sign the suspicious behavior checklist and inform the student if a drug screen is required. If so, the student will be required to sign the suspicious behavior checklist agreeing or refusing to be tested. In the case of agreement, the program director or designee will inform the closest designated laboratory of the requirement and the student must report to that closest designated laboratory within the required timeframe (immediately to up to 2 hours, depending upon program policy). However, the student may not drive to the screening facility but is responsible for arranging his/her own transportation and transportation costs. In the event a drug screen is required based upon suspicious behavior of a student, the program director or designee must inform the Dean through the Dean's representative of the Committee on Ethical and Professional Conduct. If the representative is not available, the Dean's office should be contacted directly.

The student may not attend class, practicum, clinical rotation, internship, externship, or any other program related activity until approval is granted by the Program Director. Such approval, including excused or unexcused absence status, can only be granted after reviewing the drug screen results and verifying that they are negative and/or otherwise cleared. A positive drug screen will result in the enforcement of appropriate actions and penalties, as per this policy.

Failure to agree to, or show up for, such testing is considered admission of student's drug use and failure to comply with this policy will be sufficient cause for implementation of any and/or all sanctions/consequences allowed as per this Policy. If the student refuses to test, he/she is required to sign a statement to that effect. If he/she refuses to do so, the form will be signed by two university officials with note of student's refusal to sign. Failure to test when required, or refusal to sign the refusal to test statement, is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and referral to the Dean of Students.

Appeals Process

A student who wishes to file an appeal must submit their written appeal to the appropriate University Administrator and follow the appeals procedure in Section 8 of the ULM Student Handbook. The student has the right to appeal decisions and recommendations rendered by the appropriate University Administrator or other specified University Unit as outlined in the "Appeals Procedures," of the ULM Code of Student Conduct.

VI. Enforcement

Each individual CHS Program Director and Dean is responsible for enforcement of this policy.

VII. Policy Management

Upon adoption, the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be the Responsible Executive for the management of this Policy. The Dean of the College of Health Sciences shall be the Responsible Officer for the management of this Policy.

VIII. Exclusions

N/A

IX. Effective Date

The effective date of this Policy is XXXXXXXXXX XX, 2020.

X. Adoption

This Policy is hereby adopted on this XXth day of XXXXXXXXXX 2020.

Recommended for Approval by:

Approved by:

Dr. Alberto Ruiz, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Nick J. Bruno, President

XI. Appendices, References and Related Materials

CHS Suspicious Behavior Checklist (to be linked upon approval)

XII. Revision History

Original adoption date: August 15, 2018

Revised November 26, 2019: Revisions include formatting document using ULM policy template, changing wording of policies to Policy, changing wording of policies to procedures or requirements when referring to specific program procedures or requirements in the CHS. Revision includes adding statement to “Penalties of Positive Drug Screen” for clarification that the student is responsible for all costs. Revision includes clarification to the statement in the “Penalties of Positive Drug Screen” that the student is responsible for of all costs that are not offered free of charge through the ULM Counseling Center.

Revised April 30, 2020: Revisions include defining abbreviations and listing programs in the College of Health Sciences and School of Allied Health. Minor revisions for clarification to “Suspicious Behavior” section include adding the following wording, “If the committee representative is not available, the Dean’s office should be contacted directly” (paragraph 2) and “Such approval, including excused or unexcused absence status” (paragraph 3).

Revised May 6, 2020: Revision includes additional wording to clarify appeal process available to all students.

Revised May 11, 2020: Revision includes clarification of appeals process as recommended by the ULM Dean of Students.

Revised May 29, 2020: Revision includes formatting document for ULM policy template.