

Field Experience Background Checks

All education students must complete the Single Contact Repository (SING) background check before they participate in any field experience or practicum. SING is a onetime requirement that, paired with self-reporting of subsequent criminal charges, will cover students through the Teacher Education Program until the national FBI background check required before licensure.

The SING background check is an online system that completes an Iowa background check for 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. The cost of this background check is \$15 assessed as a class fee in ED 100.

Exceptions

Students who have already received a coaching or substitute authorization from the Board of Educational Examiners do not need to complete a SING background check. You should have a copy of your authorization available to show to your field experience teachers.

Instructions

- SING forms are available at <http://info.wartburg.edu/Academics/Office-of-Student-Field-Experiences.aspx>
- Print off the *State of Iowa Criminal History Record Check Request Form* and the *Request for Child and Dependent Adult Abuse Information Form*.
- Read the forms carefully and complete as directed, **printing** extremely legibly. Background check errors due to illegible writing will need to be redone at the student's expense.
 - *State of Iowa Criminal History Record Check Request Form*: Complete ONLY the section following "I am requesting an Iowa Criminal History Record Check on" and sign on the line after "Waiver Signature."
 - *Request for Child and Dependent Adult Abuse Information Form*: Complete ONLY **Section 2** and the "Signature of Registry or Designee" and "Date" boxes at the bottom of the form.
- Report any prior or pending criminal convictions. Any criminal misconduct charge other than parking or speeding violations must be reported. This includes all deferred judgments and criminal activities including those that occurred while a minor. See Self-Reporting Policy and instructions below.
- Submit the completed forms and self-reporting letter if needed to Jean Kampman, Old Main 316.

Results

Once the SING background check is requested, it can take a week or more for the results to be received. A certificate with the outcome will be emailed to you so be sure to watch your email. Students should carry a copy of their background check report with them whenever they are at a field experience. The Education Office will not provide additional copies - **it is your responsibility to keep a record of the results.**

Details of the SING background check will not be shared with any third party but will be accessible to the Wartburg Teacher Education Unit authorized personnel. It's prohibited by Iowa Code 692.2(5) for a group conducting the background check to share with a third party. Students who have their coaching or substitute authorization should carry a copy of their authorization with them whenever they are at a field experience.

Self-Reporting Policy

The purpose of this policy is to address those incidents of past criminal misconduct that are identified during the 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. Students are required to report any prior or pending criminal convictions including deferred judgments and criminal activities that occurred while a minor. This does not include parking or speeding violations.

During the time interval following the SING Background check and before the formal background check required for licensure, it is imperative that all criminal misconduct incidents other than parking or speeding violations must be reported **immediately** by the teacher education student. Failure to accurately self-disclose any criminal misconduct may prevent the student from continuing in the Teacher Education Program.

To self-report, the student must type a letter and deliver it to the Education Department including the following information:

- A statement of the exact charge
- Date of occurrence
- Judgment/disposition
- Timeline of restitution if applicable
- Attach a copy of counseling evaluation or treatment program if either was recommended
- Include any prior incidents

FAQ

If charges were dropped, do I still need to report? Yes. If you don't report an incident and it appears in a background check, it could be considered fraud.

Do I need to report incidents that happened when I was a minor (under age of 18)? Yes. Report all charges regardless of your age at the time of the incident.

Do car accidents count? Yes. If you received a ticket for the charge then you have to report it.

Do I need to report a parking or speeding ticket? No.

If I did a background check for a daycare/preschool that I work at, do I have to do another one for Wartburg? Yes. It's prohibited by Iowa Code 692.2(5) for a group conducting the background check to share with a third party.

Can the information found on the SING background check be shared with a local school district? No. It's prohibited by Iowa Code 692.2(5) for a group conducting the background check to share with a third party. A school district may ask for a background check at which point you may provide your SING Background check.

If I have a current coaching or substitute authorization, do I need to do a background check for Wartburg? No, please have a copy of your authorization for your field experience teachers.

If I have already been accepted into the Wartburg Teacher Education Program and have participated in field experiences, do I need to complete the SING Background check? Yes. This is a new policy effective Fall Term 2016 and every teacher education student must have a SING background check before the formal background check required for licensure. The Wartburg College Teacher Education Program maintains high

standards for future teachers and takes all reasonable effort to guard the safety and protection of children in partner schools.

If I am a transfer student who complete my first field experience with a background check before coming to Wartburg, do I need another background check? Yes. It's prohibited by Iowa Code 692.2(5) for a group conducting the background check to share with a third party.

Is a deferred sentence a conviction? Yes. This disposition means that the judge deferred imposing a sentence after the person was convicted of or pled guilty to the charge(s).

Why is there a fee for the SING Background check? The fee is set by the Iowa Single Contact Repository for conducting the criminal history check. Wartburg does not receive any part of the fee.

Is a deferred judgment a conviction? Not necessarily. If the subject successfully completes a probationary period they are not convicted of the charges. They should have been notified by the court that they have successfully completed probation and have a document to that effect. If DCI receives a copy of that document, their record is flagged and can only be given out to the public if a waiver is signed.

If I have a pending or prior criminal misconduct incident, will I be able to continue in the Wartburg Teacher Education program? Most likely. However the Wartburg Education Unit will reserve the right to review each situation on an individual basis. Failure to report any criminal misconduct incident may result in removal from the Teacher Education Program. Also, a recommendation for licensure from Wartburg College does not guarantee that the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners will issue the Iowa teaching license.

When will I complete the national FBI background check required before licensure? During the academic year in which you will graduate and apply for licensure.

What charges would prevent licensure by the Iowa BOEE? Some examples are:

The licensure applicant

- 1) failed to tell the truth,
- 2) has a criminal history serious enough to warrant a denial,
- 3) failed to provide the BOEE with additional information required,
- 4) provided a fraudulent license, transcript, or other official document,
- 5) has a license, certification, or authorization from another state that is suspended or revoked.