

Field Experience (Student Teaching) Background Checks

All Wartburg students completing field experience through an Education course must complete a Criminal Watch Dog background check before participating in any fieldwork or practicums through Wartburg College. This is a one-time requirement, paired with self-reporting of subsequent criminal charges, which will cover students through the Teacher Education Program (TEP). At the time of Licensure, candidates are required to complete a separate national FBI background check.

The Criminal Watch Dog background check is an online Standard Criminal Check. By completing and signing the release form provided, you are agreeing for our department to do a State Criminal Search, State Sex Offender Search, OIG Medical Exclusion List, Real-time Case Verification, FCRA Compliance. The cost of this background check is assessed as a course fee for ED 100/181 Foundations of American Education FE.

Forms will be handed out in ED 100/181, Foundations of American Education, or in a student's first education course at Wartburg. Read the form carefully and complete as directed. Print neatly. All forms and results are kept in the student's personal file. Details of the Criminal Watch Dog background check will not be shared with any third party but will be accessible to the Wartburg Teacher Education Unit authorized personnel.

Self-Reporting Policy

The purpose of this policy is to address incidents of past criminal misconduct that are identified during the Criminal Watch Dog background check as well as incidents of alleged criminal misconduct by teacher education candidates that occur after this first check and before the formal background check done at Licensure. Students are required to report any prior or pending criminal convictions including deferred judgements and criminal activities that occurred while a minor. (This does not include parking or speeding violations.)

During the time interval following the Criminal Watchdog 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 do 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

The Wartburg College Teacher Education Program (TEP) maintains high standards for future teachers and takes all reasonable efforts to guard the safety and protection of children in partner schools.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

If charges were dropped, do I still need to report? Yes. If you do not 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 (underage of 18)? Yes. Report all charges regardless of your age at the time of the incident.

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

Do I need to report on 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 is 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 Criminal Watch Dog check as proof.

If I am a transfer student who completed my first field experience with a background check before coming to Wartburg, do I need another background check? Yes. It is 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).

Is a deferred judgment a conviction? Not necessarily. If the subject successfully completes a probationary period they are not convicted of the charges. The court should have notified them 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 (TEP). 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