

**West Chester University
Criminal Convictions in Admissions
Degree Seeking and Non-Degree
Policy and Procedure**

A. Purpose and Intent

West Chester University of Pennsylvania has determined that all applicants for admissions or individuals intending to take classes non-degree must disclose information regarding criminal convictions. West Chester University is committed to promoting a safe and secure work and learning environment for all members of the University community. The policy and procedures outlined below have been established to protect the university and its populations.

The Criminal Convictions in Admissions and Non-degree policy has been adopted for the following reasons:

1. To promote a safe environment for all members of the community and their property.
2. To assist the university in making an evaluation of the character, maturity, and responsibility of the applicant.
3. To assist the university in determining the appropriateness of placing an applicant in university housing.
4. To assist the university in providing better academic advisement regarding possible difficulties in obtaining such matters as internship placement, professional licensure and employment because of laws, regulations, or policies that exclude persons who have certain convictions.

B. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a “criminal conviction” has the following meaning:

“Any instance in any state or national jurisdiction where you have plead guilty or been found guilty by a judge or jury to charges that you committed a ***felony offense***. This includes any plea of ‘no contest’ or ‘nolo contendere’, and any conviction that may be under current appeal.”

It does not include an arrest that does not result in a charge, or charges being dropped, or being found not guilty, or a conviction overturned on appeal, or convictions that have been expunged, or convictions that have been executively pardoned.

C. Policy

1. Distribution of Policy.

If an applicant has met all criteria for general university admission and for the specific program to which they applied or non-degree admission, and s/he answered in the affirmative that s/he has a criminal conviction, the applicant will receive this document that details the policy and the procedures of the University. The applicant

will also be provided with a copy of a *Consent and Authorization to Access Additional Information* form that the applicant must complete and return.

2. Required Disclosure of Information.

On as many separate sheets as are necessary, the applicant must provide a written, detailed explanation of each incident that led to a conviction. The applicant's summary shall include the following:

1. Offense(s)
2. Date(s) Committed
3. Name(s) and Location(s) of Court(s)
4. Penalty or Punishment(s) Imposed
5. A description of the Terms or Conditions of past and current sentence(s), probation(s), or parole(s)

In addition, the applicant is required to submit a copy of the following court records:

1. The criminal complaint(s) that initiated his or her criminal case(s);
2. The guilty plea(s) or verdict form(s) that establish his or her guilt; and
3. All sentencing agreement(s) or orders that establish his or her criminal sentence.

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to Undergraduate Admissions: (610) 436-3479, Graduate Admissions: (610) 436-2462, or Registrar for Quick Admit applicants: (610) 436-3541.

3. Consideration of Applicant's Information

The university will not necessarily deny admission to the university in general or a particular academic program or to housing because of the presence of a conviction. **This information will only be considered after it has been determined that the student has met all admission criteria for the university and the specific program to which they applied.** Each case will be separately evaluated based upon the rational relationship of interests and needs of the university to the nature, severity, recency of the crime; circumstances surrounding the crime; records of other convictions; the responsibility and repentance of the applicant; and any other relevant factors. **Generally, the university does not accept anyone who has not completed their criminal sentence, absent any extraordinary circumstances.** All of these factors will be carefully considered and weighed. The disclosure of conviction information and access to related additional information will be made to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs as appropriate.

4. Procedure

a. In order to be considered for admission, the applicant must complete the form to the best of his/her ability by answering truthfully, accurately, and completely.

b. A student's previous conviction or conduct does not automatically warrant denial of admission to the University, but may require further review to determine whether conditions to acceptance are warranted. Determinations as to the imposition of conditions will be based upon the nature and severity of the offense(s); the period of time that has lapsed between the completion of a sentence, if

applicable; whether the student has other criminal conduct; the applicant's attitude toward the criminal offense(s); and the extent to which the conduct would be relevant to the student's participation in the University community.

c. Students should note that some state professional standards prohibit the issuing of a license to a convicted felon or to an individual convicted of certain non-felony criminal offenses. As a result, applicants with a conviction who apply for specific academic programs governed by state professional standards may not be eligible for admission to that program. The applicant should disclose information that s/he may be uncertain about whether it must be disclosed—for example, other non-felony criminal offenses--so that the university will be able to make such eligibility determinations.

d. By the applicant's signature on the *Consent and Authorization to Access Additional Information* form, the applicant certifies that s/he understands and agrees to all requirements in this Policy. The signature also certifies that the applicant understands and agrees that failure to disclose material information or the failure to be fully truthful in the inquiry process may result in (1) denial of admission, or (2) if the applicant has been admitted, immediate suspension or expulsion from a course, program, housing, and/or the university.

Members of the Criminal Convictions Review Committee include:

- Vice Provost representative
- Assistant Provost and Assistant Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management
- Director of Public Safety
- Reporting Compliance, Threat Assessment & Intolerance Investigations - Detective
- Director of Judicial Affairs
- Title IX Coordinator
- Associate Director of Transfer Admissions
- Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs
- Assistant Vice President for Academic Systems & University Registrar

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Questions regarding this policy may be directed to:

Undergraduate Admissions: (610) 436-3479

Graduate Admissions: (610) 436-2462

Registrar's Office (non-degree): (610) 436-3541