1. Background check reports are requested initially by the hiring department. Requests are processed and managed through the Graduate School dean’s office. Requests are passed to UA’s external reporting agency who will conduct a review of federal court records, municipal court records for all US addresses in the past 10 years, and – for international students – a review of both Interpol databases and the equivalent agency in the potential hire’s home country.

2. Review the official UA policies regarding background checks for employees in general and also for graduate student employees in particular. See Pre-Employment Background Investigation Policy, policy number 201.00 under HR Policy Manual, and Procedures for Securing Criminal Background Reports for Graduate Student Employees before Hiring under Graduate School Administrative Policies.

3. Prior to making any offer to a graduate student for employment of any kind and before starting the hiring process check to see if a background check has already been obtained. Check Banner HR screen PPZCMNT, enter the student’s CWID number, hit tab or enter and verify student name, then select “next block”.

4. If a background check has not been secured previously, then PPZCMNT will not show any record regarding a background check result. Where a background check has been obtained previously the screen will show one of two records:
   a. “GRS – GR. Background CK – Successful”: this means that a background check has been obtained and the results were acceptable. The student may be hired without requiring any further background check, you may simply proceed with the remainder of the hiring process.
   b. “GRU – GR. Background CK – Unsuccessful”: this means that a background check has been obtained but the results were not acceptable. The student may NOT be hired (but see special case provisions below).

5. Once you have determined that a background check is required, send the student a blank Standard Release Form for them to complete and sign. They will need to return the form to you – they may fax or scan and email it to you but you will need to get them to countersign the form with an original signature – or give you the original – when they do come to campus. The form can be downloaded from the Graduate School web site at: http://graduate.ua.edu/faculty-staff/forms/.

6. As soon as you get the release form, enter the information required from the form (and from Banner) into the Standard Spreadsheet for requests. Attach the spreadsheet to an email and send it to me at john.chambers@ua.edu. Also, attach a PDF of all releases related to the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet can be downloaded from the Graduate School website at:
http://graduate.ua.edu/files/2013/07/gs_releaseform.pdf. Please keep the original signed release forms on file in your office as a permanent record.

7. The Graduate School will initiate the checking with the external agency. On average, domestic checks are taking between 10 and 14 business days (i.e. not including weekend and public holidays) however that time may be extended where a student has lived in several different states in the previous 10 years.

8. International students must be background checked in exactly the same way as domestic students, without exception. Depending on the nature of criminal records in a student’s home country additional time may be taken securing a check on an international student – allow up to 4 weeks for international checks.

9. As each report is released to UA, the Graduate School will send an email to the requestor identified as such on the Excel spreadsheet submitted in 6 above and will update the PPZCMNT record screen in Banner. The email will either confirm a successful check and permission to continue with the hire, or confirm an unsuccessful check, in which case the hire may not continue.

10. For an adverse report i.e. ones which contain anything which might compel the Graduate School to not hire that person, the Graduate School will review the results and consider the seriousness and implication for the proposed employment. The Graduate School will then decide whether or not the hire can proceed. If yes, the department will be notified accordingly, banner will be updated, and the hire may proceed.

11. If no, the agency will send the student an email which will include a copy of the report and ask them to confirm the accuracy of the contents or challenge them. Following their response, the agency will then issue a formal letter to their email address and to their mailing address confirming UA’s decision to no hire them.

12. The student will then have 5 business days to appeal the decision in writing. The Graduate School will then convene the Appeal Review Committee and give the student the opportunity to defend their report and offer mitigating or extenuating circumstances. After the appeal meeting, the committee will make a final determination of whether or not the hire may proceed. The student and the hiring department will be notified of their decision and banner PPZCMNT will be updated to record the final decision.

13. Remember, once a student receives a successful background check then no further checking is necessary unless UA becomes aware of any situation or circumstances which might indicate that a renewal background check is required.

14. For any questions about this process, please email the Graduate School at graduate.school@ua.edu.

John Chambers
Director of Administration
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