

North Carolina School of the Arts Admissions File Review Policy and Procedures

Authority: Chief Academic Officer

Sources of Authority: UNC Board of Governors

History: Adopted October 2006

Related Policies: Admissions Procedures; Student Code of Conduct

Responsible Offices: Admissions, Student Life

Introduction

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for all students, the North Carolina School of the Arts needs to ensure that it is accepting into enrollment students who make such an environment possible. Background checks and conditional enrollment are two measures that help assure a safe campus.

Policy

It is the policy of the North Carolina School of the Arts that all admission files be reviewed for clues regarding criminal histories, counselor mandatory statements and overall gaps in addresses and timelines presenting "red flags" that would trigger criminal background checks. Outcomes include calling together the admissions review team to conduct a threat analysis, determine terms for a conditional acceptance or deny the applicant admission to the North Carolina School of the Arts.

Scope and Limitations

The North Carolina School of the Arts reviews the official application file for admission along with all mandatory forms and recommendation letters to ascertain if there are any existing issues involving criminal history, serious disciplinary actions at prior schools or deception on the documents pertaining to such topics. Such indicators will result in a request for a full criminal background check. The applicant will be contacted and asked for a release. Refusal to grant the release will result in the termination of the application.

The existence of prior school disciplinary actions, a conviction, plea or pending charge is not an automatic exclusion from enrollment. The Admissions Team shall consider factors such as the nature of the crime, circumstances surrounding the crime, the existence or nature of other charges, the time that has lapsed, the actions and activities of the individual since the crime, any rehabilitation record of the applicant, any related information and the truthfulness of the applicant in disclosing the conviction or plea.

As part of the screening process, the applicant will be asked to provide information about his or her criminal or disciplinary record. Having this information is critical and a failure by the applicant to provide this data or to provide it accurately will result in a rejection of the candidacy for enrollment at the North Carolina School of the Arts.

Safety Review Officer (SRO)

Vice Chancellor for Student Life

Admissions Review Team Membership

Director of Admissions

Art School Admission Counselor

Arts Dean or Program Director

Director of Student Counseling representative

High School guidance counselor (high school applicant)

Associate VC undergraduate/graduate programs (post secondary applicant)

Procedures

Once an application is ready for final acceptance, the SRO reviews all documents, including the original application, letters of reference, mandatory statement and transcripts. Elements such as addresses, dates, ages, school attendance and locations, timelines and criminal mandatory statements are reviewed. One of the following actions is taken:

1. If application is satisfactory, with no red flags, the SRO will sign routing sheet, mark student accepted and date.
2. Request for clarification on a specific question and response.
3. Request for a full explanation of a "yes" answer to one of the seven mandatory questions
4. Note omitted answers without an acceptable explanation for the omission or an inconsistency in the answers to the mandatory questions on the application as compared to the same set of questions on the mandatory guidance form.
5. The application has an unexplained time period since graduation from high school during which the applicant was not, for example, enrolled in higher education, enlisted in the military, or employed full time; or for any other reason sufficient to request a background check.
6. Run a background check on the applicant if #2 or #3 are necessary or if #4 or #5 occurs.
7. The SRO will call the Admissions Review Team on cases where past history of discipline issues in a prior school is present to determine threat analysis and conditions for enrollment.

The North Carolina School of the Arts will not perform criminal background checks on applicants who are younger than 16 years old at the time of the acceptance or on residents of North Carolina who have attained the age of 65 and are entitled to a tuition waiver under G.S. §115B-2.

All admissions letters for applicants who are to have criminal background checks performed will state that the admission is conditional on the results of a criminal check.

In order to conduct a criminal background check the North Carolina School of the Arts must obtain the applicant's consent, either in writing or electronically, to the criminal background check and to the use of the applicant's social security number for purposes of the check. The North Carolina School of the Arts will require the applicant to list the places the applicant has lived or gone to school outside North Carolina for more than 6 months in the last 7 years at a time that the applicant was at least 16 years old.

The scope of the criminal background check will depend on the residential history of the applicant:

- For current NC residents whose applications and release forms do not disclose more than 6 months out of NC, a North Carolina criminal background check will be conducted.
- For non-residents and NC residents whose applications or release forms disclose significant time outside NC, a residence check will be conducted, and then a criminal background check

will be conducted for all appropriate states unless the applicant opts for a national FBI fingerprint check.

- For international students, a criminal background check of appropriate scope will be conducted.
- Students who are admitted within 2 weeks before classes begin and who are subject to having a criminal background check pursuant to above are allowed to be conditionally admitted and are allowed to matriculate pending the results of a criminal background check.

If an applicant has a positive criminal or disciplinary record, NCSA must:

- Compare the results of the checks to the application and supplemental information supplied by the applicant to determine discrepancies. If there are no discrepancies and if the constituent institution has made an individual determination that the applicant does not pose a significant threat to campus safety, and there is no additional information indicating that a decision to admit should be modified, the applicant may be admitted or a previous decision to admit may stand.
- If there are discrepancies, or if there is information indicating that admission decision should be further examined, the NCSA must provide the applicant an opportunity either to demonstrate that the report of criminal, disciplinary or other relevant history was erroneous (e.g. wrong person) or to explain the discrepancy.
- If the report is determined to be accurate and there is a discrepancy between the reported information and the application or supporting material the applicant submitted, or there is additional information that amplifies the application information or otherwise indicates that the admission should be examined further. The presumption is that the admission will be denied or withdrawn if the applicant has failed accurately to disclose relevant information in response to a question on the application.
- The burden is on the applicant to demonstrate that the omission or misinformation was the result of an honest mistake, that it was not intended to mislead, and that the applicant should be admitted in spite of the failure to disclose;
- If the failure to disclose accurate information does not result in the denial of or withdrawal of the offer of admission, but there is information that draws the decision to admit into question, Then before the student may matriculate, the Admissions Review Team must make an individual determination as to whether the nature of any crime committed or other behavior disclosed, together with other available information, suggests that the applicant will pose a significant threat to campus safety.
- If determined that there is a significant threat, the admission must be denied or withdrawn. If not, the student may be admitted in accordance with the normal admission process.
- NCSA maintain a record of the kinds of background checks, if any, conducted on each applicant and the results of those checks. If an applicant's record shows a history of conviction of, guilty plea to, or acceptance of responsibility for a crime or a significant disciplinary sanction at another educational institution, the constituent institution must maintain a record of the process used to determine whether or not the student posed a significant threat to campus safety and of the basis for that determination.

Reported criminal offenses by an applicant after the submission of an application or offer of admission will be reported to the SRO who will do a threat analysis and determine whether to withdraw the acceptance or have the Admissions Review Team called to determine conditions for enrollment.

All applications will be run again the UNC database for Expulsion/Suspension and the National Student Clearinghouse. If there is a discrepancy from application then the SRO will determine if the discrepancy warrant denial of admission.

The North Carolina School of the Arts reserves the right to conduct a criminal background check or other background review for a current student if circumstances indicate criminal activity by the student may have occurred. An enrolled student found to have lied about his discipline and criminal background will be dismissed from North Carolina School of the Arts.