

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Title: Clearances Policy for Students Enrolled in CEHD Courses

Policy Number: 3-100

Date Approved: January 1, 2021

Date Last Amended/Reviewed: February 16, 2022

Date Scheduled for Review: January 1, 2026

Scope of Policy & Rationale: Background checks for individual working with minors are mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Act 24 of 2011, Act 34 of 1985, and Act 114 and Act 151 of 2006. The College of Education and Human Development currently has a policy requiring all students enrolled in courses with assigned fieldwork complete background checks each summer. The revised policy provides options for students who are employed in a location that meet the criteria for their required fieldwork.

Definitions:

On-the-Job Fieldwork - In limited circumstances, a student's place of employment may be approved by their program as their site to complete course or program required field hours and assignments.

Policy Statement:

The College of Education and Human Development's Clearances Policy requires that all students enrolled in College of Education and Human Development ("CEHD") courses with fieldwork submit annual documentation of updated clearances to the College each summer, by July 1st, via its online platform, [EdPortal](#).

- For the majority of students taking CEHD courses with fieldwork, this means that all four clearances must be renewed and submitted each year by July 1st.

Four Required Clearances:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Record (Act 34),
 - Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151),
 - Federal Criminal History Background Check (FBI/fingerprint check) (Act 114), and
 - P.P.D. (TB) Test (School Health regulations, 28 PA Code, Section 23.44).
- In limited circumstances, a student's place of employment may be approved by their program as their site to complete their fieldwork. Students who have been approved by their program to complete their fieldwork in their place of employment may submit an [Employer Clearances](#)

[Verification for On-the-Job Fieldwork form](#) in lieu of annually renewed clearances (see **On-the-Job Fieldwork** for details).

Submitting Clearances to CEHD

Students must submit their clearance documentation online at [Edportal](#) (login as student and then select "Clearances" from the list.) Each clearance document must be scanned individually to upload. Staff members in the Office of Field Placement and graduate program faculty review all clearances submitted to EdPortal on a rolling basis and approve (or "clear") students for fieldwork. Once students have successfully submitted their updated clearances to EdPortal, no further action is necessary. The approval process can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, depending on the time of year and the volume of submissions to EdPortal. Clearances will be set to expire by May 1st of each year.

Students Required to Comply with Policy

All undergraduate, graduate, and non-matriculated students who will be enrolled in any CEHD course requiring fieldwork during the academic year, including students who received approval to complete fieldwork / field projects with minors at a site in which they are currently employed full-time (see [On-the-Job Fieldwork](#) below).

A list of current CEHD courses that require fieldwork and clearances can be found on the CEHD website at [Courses Requiring Clearances](#).

Student with Criminal History on Clearance

A student with criminal history on his/her/their clearance(s) must also immediately submit a hard copy of the clearance that lists the offense/incident to the Office of Field Placement. The Office is located in the Shimada Resource Center -- Ritter Annex 150. Clearances with criminal history require additional review and approval.

On-the-Job Fieldwork

In limited circumstances, a student's place of employment may be approved by their program as their site to complete their fieldwork. Typically, students who receive this approval are enrolled in Career and Technical Education, select post-baccalaureate certification programs, emergency certification programs, and add-on certification programs.

The following only applies to students who have received approval from their program to complete their fieldwork requirements at their employment site.

- Students who are approved to complete fieldwork in their place of employment must submit copies of the current, valid clearances that they have on file with their school when they register for their first class(es). School employee clearances are typically valid for 5 years.

- If the clearances are more than one year old, the student must also submit a signed [Employer Clearances Verification for On-the-Job Fieldwork form](#) from their school or district verifying that the clearances are valid for the next 12 months and that this student is permitted to complete fieldwork in their place of employment.
- Each subsequent summer, by July 1st, the student will need to submit a new signed [Employer Clearances Verification for On-the-Job Fieldwork form](#) from their organization, school or district verifying that they are still employed, that their clearances are valid for at least the next 12 months, and that the student is permitted to do fieldwork in their place of employment. Not having an updated verification form will result in the same consequences as not having updated clearances.
- On-the-Job students are prohibited from engaging in field-related assignments or other field requirements without updated clearances or a newly signed verification form. Therefore, if an on-the-job student does not provide a valid verification letter by July 1st for any reason, including delays from their employer, the student must immediately initiate the process for obtaining new clearances and upload these prior to the first day of classes. (See [Consequences for Not Having Updated Clearances](#))
- If a student chooses, and/or is expected to complete fieldwork for a course in a school building other than the school where they are currently employed, they will be required to submit new clearances before registering for the field course.

Consequences for Not Having Updated Clearances

After students submit their clearance documentation on EdPortal, they will be checked by Office of Field Experiences staff and marked as “CLEARED” or “OTJ CLEARED” (on-the-job) when accepted as complete. Students must have the note of “CLEARED” or “OTJ CLEARED” next to all four of their clearances. Students without “CLEARED” or “OTJ CLEARED” status are **prohibited from engaging in fieldwork until their clearance documentation is approved.**

- Not having required clearance documentation uploaded on EdPortal and approved by either the Office of Field Placement or graduate program faculty by the applicable semester’s deadline (i.e. “CLEARED” status on EdPortal) will prevent a student from beginning any field hours or field-based assignments for a course. This requirement applies to in-person clinical work and remote fieldwork, synchronous or asynchronous.
- Any coursework (e.g., field observations of classrooms) that is not completed due to lack of clearance renewal or verification cannot be made up or submitted late. A grade of zero (0) will be given for these assignments. The instructor will provide the list of field-related assignments that will be impacted by this policy.

- Students who do not complete 100% of the field component cannot earn a grade higher than a B-in that course. Students who do not complete a minimum of 75% of the field component will receive an F for the course.
- Students who engage in fieldwork without approved clearances will not receive credit for that fieldwork in the course, will possibly fail the course, and will be subject to disciplinary action by the College of Education and Human Development for lack of professionalism.
- If updated clearances or a verification letter are not uploaded to EdPortal prior to registration, students will not be able to enroll in courses that require fieldwork. If clearances are up-to-date at the time of registration, but not renewed by the summer deadline, the student may be dropped from courses with fieldwork.