

FINGERPRINTING POLICY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why has the background checking policy been changed to include fingerprinting?

The change is necessary to comply with a new Arizona Board of Regents Policy and Arizona Revised Statute that was developed to better protect the campus communities and their assets (including ASU and U of A). Because NAU already had a policy in place which requires a criminal background investigation and employment verification for all benefit eligible employees, we only needed to add the additional levels of background checking for safety/security sensitive positions.

2. When will this policy be implemented?

February 1, 2006.

3. What are safety/security sensitive positions?

Per NAU Policy 1.085, the following criteria are used to identify safety/security sensitive positions:

1. A University administrator who reports directly to the president or to a vice president and who is responsible for planning, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating the activities of a major segment of a university.
2. Positions that have unsupervised contact with minors who are not enrolled students of the university.
3. Positions for which a fingerprint check is prescribed by federal or state law (such as police officers, researchers with direct access to certain amounts of lethal substances, etc.).
4. Positions with unrestricted access to residence hall rooms/apartments.
5. Positions with control over fiscal assets such as final approval authority to generate financial disbursements, direct and regular access to cash or cash equivalents of \$500 or more, or fund custodian supervision.
6. Positions with authority to sign contracts on behalf of the university requiring the expenditure of funds.
7. Positions with oversight and/or management of institutional information systems and/or access to information that poses a significant risk to the University.
8. Finalists who indicate a prior criminal felony offense or other criminal conviction that may indicate unsuitability for university employment.

4. Who will determine whether a position is or should be designated a safety/security sensitive position?

These determinations will be made by Deans, Directors, and Department Heads in conjunction with the Human Resources Department and as approved by the appropriate Vice President/Provost. Safety/security sensitive position designation has been added to the various hiring forms (e.g. PARS, SWEAS, personnel requisitions, etc) to ensure that each position is evaluated against the criteria. A safety/security sensitive position identification tool is available on the Human Resources website for use in making these designations.

5. Who should we call with questions about the safety/security sensitive status of specific positions?

Your [Human Resources Consultant or Analyst](#) can assist you in assessing your positions against the safety/security sensitive criteria.

6. Under what circumstances does an employee need to be fingerprinted and background checked?

When the employee is being hired into a safety-security sensitive position or has disclosed a prior conviction.

7. How does a candidate disclose a prior conviction?

Benefit eligible employees disclose convictions on the employment application and/or as part of the background check process (all benefit eligible positions are subject to background checks). Non-benefit eligible employees who are being newly hired or rehired must complete a conviction disclosure form

<http://hr.nau.edu/m/images/stories/docs/Conviction%20Disclosure%20Form%20Temps%20Students%20GAs.doc> which the department must attach to the appropriate hiring document (PAR, SWEA, etc)

8. Who is responsible for ensuring that a background check and fingerprint are implemented?

The hiring department has this responsibility. Although Human Resources processes do have some checks and balances in place to remind departments that this needs to happen, it is ultimately a department's responsibility to ensure that the process is initiated as required by policy.

9. Does the possession and authorization to use a University purchasing card qualify a position as safety/security sensitive?

Purchasing card use without other types of financial authority as described in the criteria does not, by itself, identify a position as safety/security sensitive.

10. Does access to social security numbers or other personal information qualify a position as safety/security sensitive?

Not usually. Although the confidentiality of personal information is very important, for the purposes of this policy, positions that have *oversight* or *management* responsibilities for information are those that would be subject to a background and fingerprint check.

11. When will a position be identified as safety/security sensitive?

This should happen when a decision is made to fill a vacant position. The [Safety/Security Sensitive Position Identification Tool](#) (found on the Human Resources website) should be completed and kept in the departmental file for each position when it becomes vacant.

12. Does the safety/security sensitive position identification tool need to be attached to the hiring paperwork that we send to HR?

No. This tool should be kept in the departmental file with copies of any other relevant hiring documents. However, a copy may be requested from you at a later date for audit purposes.

13. Are current NAU employees going to be fingerprinted?

Not unless they are transferring into a safety/security sensitive position or obtaining safety/security sensitive functions and have not previously been subject to a fingerprint check by NAU. They will also be subject to a background check in this case if not previously completed.

14. How are the background checking requirements and processes changing?

The background checking requirements and process are not changing – see web information at (<http://hr.nau.edu/m/content/view/128/138/>). Departments will continue to use the existing process for all regular new hires. The addition to this will be temporary employees, student workers, graduate assistants, interns and volunteers who are hired into a safety/security sensitive position, or internal transfers into a safety/security sensitive position who have not previously had a background check, or who self disclose a prior conviction.

15. What will the process be for fingerprinting?

Due to the complicated nature of this process, this function will be centralized in Human Resources and will be coordinated by Human Resources Specialist, Kevin Spingola (NAU extension 3-1158). Kevin will contact the hiring supervisor to coordinate fingerprinting of the candidate, billing, etc.

16. What is the difference between the criminal background investigation and the fingerprint check?

The criminal background investigation reports seven years of arrests, charges, and convictions and their outcomes by counties of residence and/or employment. Fingerprint checks consist of a national FBI scan and reports up to 99 years of all arrests and their outcomes.

17. I was told that it is necessary to include 10 years of employment history when faxing my request to American Background. Is this true?

Yes, the Background Check that is performed by American Background includes a 10 year employment check. If a candidate does not have ten years of employment history, that should be indicated on the application materials. Any gaps between jobs should also be accounted for.

18. Will we need to wait for fingerprinting results prior to the first day of employment?

No. Although you will need to continue to wait for the background investigation results prior to the applicant's first day of employment, you will not have to wait for the fingerprint results. *However, if hiring prior to fingerprint results being received, you will need to use specific contingent job offer letters that can be found on the HR Web Site. Sample Letters - <http://hr.nau.edu/m/content/view/179/190/>*

19. What other process changes will be implemented due to the new policy?

Because the policy requires us to fingerprint and background ANY applicant who discloses a prior conviction, we will be asking all candidates to reveal conviction records on the personal data form.

20. Is a disclosure form required for work performed under a stipend or one time pay?

No. Typically stipends are the method of payment for very short term work (a few days). This type of work or any supplemental work performed by an existing employee does not require a conviction disclosure form.

21. Is a conviction disclosure form required for a transfer to another position? No, only new hires or rehires need to complete a conviction disclosure.

22. How will the hiring department know that a candidate has disclosed a conviction?

HR Specialist, Kevin Spingola, will contact the hiring authority to inform them of the disclosure and begin the fingerprinting process.

23. How will a hiring department receive the results of a candidate's fingerprint check?

A Human Resources representative will discuss those results with the hiring official for the position, identical to the current process for the disclosure of background investigation results.

24. Is a candidate automatically disqualified if they disclose a prior conviction?

No. HR will consider the nature of the offense, the relationship of the offense to the position, the time elapsed since the conviction, and all other relevant facts and circumstances in determining whether or not to recommend disqualification of a candidate.

25. If someone who has been through a fingerprint check with a prior employer presents us with a fingerprint clearance card, do we still require the fingerprint check?

Yes. The Arizona Revised Statute is very clear in requiring that "finalists shall be fingerprinted...shall submit a full set of fingerprints..." By not requiring fingerprints, we would not be compliant with the law.

26. If an employee in a safety/security sensitive position leaves the University and returns to a safety/security sensitive position at a later date, do we have to redo the background and fingerprint checks?

Yes. Anytime an employee breaks employment with the University and is taken off the payroll system for any amount of time, any normally required background and fingerprint checks will need to be performed.

27. We accidentally had a candidate complete a conviction disclosure who did not need to do so, but they indicated a prior conviction. Can we just disregard this information?

No, you should not disregard the information. Once we are aware of a prior conviction, we are obligated to follow our policy and complete a background and fingerprint check. You should forward all completed conviction disclosures to Human Resources.

28. How much will a fingerprint check cost and who will pay for it?

The cost will be \$40 per fingerprint check and will be charged to the hiring department. This is in addition to the current background investigation charges.

29. Where do candidates go to have fingerprints taken?

The Human Resources Department will have personnel trained to take fingerprints. Where this is not feasible for a candidate, e.g., someone from out of town/out of state, other arrangements will be made through Human Resources. This function will be coordinated by HR Specialist, Kevin Spingola (NAU ext 3-1158)