Graduate Assistant Background Check Process

1. Currently, FSU’s background check policy does not require background checks for all GAs. Per the policy, only GAs performing the following duties are likely to trigger the need for a background check (reference section A. Pre-Employment, 3., a.- i. of the Criminal History Background Check Policy):
   a. Level 2 Fingerprinting Background Check
      1. Working with Vulnerable Populations
      2. Access/Use of regulated materials as defined in policy
         a. Includes all GAs assigned to a professor conducting research using regulated materials
      3. If required by a contract or grant
   b. Standard Background Check
      1. Cash handling/financial responsibilities
      2. Master/Grand Master Key or Card access
      3. Access to sensitive information (SSN, DOB, etc.)

2. Questionnaires: Departments need to complete a Background Check Questionnaire using the Background Check Forms Portal for all GA appointments who are new to the department.
   a. When should background checks be run on GAs: Complete the Questionnaire when the GA is originally appointed to the department. If the GA is likely to perform any of the duties listed on the Questionnaire at any time during their work with the Department, then select "Yes" to that duty and complete the level of check indicated by the completed Questionnaire. (e.g., if the GA is hired into Chemistry and will teach for the first 2 semesters, but will most likely be responsible for labs and chemicals the following summer, complete the Level 2 check upon original appointment. The Level 2 check completed will be *good for the life of the GA appointment.)
   b. Number of Questionnaires Required for GA appointments: A single, Blanket Questionnaire may be used to cover more than one appointment, when the duties that would trigger a background check are the same for all GA’s being appointed. A Blanket Questionnaire can be completed within the Background Check Forms Portal. (e.g., one Questionnaire could be submitted for all GAs that will work in the Chemistry labs).
   c. If a GA Switches Departments: If a current GA moves between departments, the department they are entering should include the incoming GA on their “new to your department” Blanket Questionnaire submitted to Human Resources. This will catch any changes in duties that could require a background check or higher level background check on a GA moving to a new department. Also, this will trigger HR to review for previously completed checks on file for the student that could be used for the new appointment.
   d. If the Questionnaire indicates that no background check is required, the Questionnaire will be logged by HR and the department notified. No further action is required on the department’s part.
3. **Background Check Request Forms**: If the Questionnaire indicates that a background check is required, then the department needs to complete a Background Check Request Form using the Background Check Forms Portal for each GA on the list attached to the Questionnaire.

4. **Duration of Background Check Results for GAs**: Once a check is completed on a GA, outside of the exceptions listed in section “a.” below, it is valid for the life of the student’s GA employment with the University, regardless of days unfunded.
   
   a. A new check will be required only if the GA:
      1. Switches appointments, triggering a higher level check.
      2. Will be working in a summer camp, in which case a DCF Level 2 check must be done prior to the summer camp work, but not more than 60 days prior to start of the camp.
      3. There is a true break in service (terminated from OMNI for 31 days or more) and the individual is being considered for rehire.

All new hires sign a form (part of the New Employee Wizards) acknowledging that under the Criminal History Background Check Policy, all current A&P, USPS, and OPS (including Graduate Assistants, Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants) employees must inform their supervisor within two (2) business days if arrested for any felonies or first degree misdemeanors (or the equivalent thereof in another state). The employee must also notify their supervisor of the final disposition of their case within two (2) business days. In both circumstances, the supervisor must immediately consult with Employee & Labor Relations in the Office of Human Resources to determine if the offense is job related and for additional guidance.

5. **Contingent language**: Contingent language should be included in the original offer letter to provide the GA adequate notice that a background check may be required of his/her appointment at any time based upon assigned duties.

**Process Note**: Because HR won’t be requiring a Questionnaire for all GA actions, the department must be proactive in submitting a Background Check Request Form should a GA who has not been screened before change roles requiring a check or a GA changing roles require a higher level of check.

*Updated 10/8/15*