



Criminal Background Check:

What is the Centralized Criminal Background Check (CBC) Service?

Many optometry schools and colleges require a national background check upon an applicant's initial, conditional acceptance to optometry school. The rationale for performing criminal background checks on accepted optometry school applicants is to ascertain the ability of a student to meet the requirements of clinical education sites and to become licensed optometrists.

How will the Criminal Background Check work?

A Criminal Background Check is mandatory for all applicants offered a seat in the incoming class. After the interview, decisions will be sent to all interviewed applicants within one week of their interview date. Official acceptance into the program is contingent on three things being completed within two weeks of acceptance:

1. Submit a signed Matriculation Agreement
2. Pay the Matriculation Fee (deposit)
3. Initiate the CBC

Timeline and details about the CBC:

- OptomCAS will be notified of a provisional acceptance decision at the same time the applicant is notified.
- An email will be sent from Certiphi, the company handling the CBC, to the provisionally accepted applicant prompting them to initiate the CBC process.
- Students will have 2 weeks to initiate the CBC process. After 2 weeks, if you have not initiated the CBC the provisional acceptance will be withdrawn by SCCO.
- The CBC process will not begin until you submit your information to Certiphi.
- Once your CBC is completed, Certiphi will email you once again prompting you to review the CBC results for completeness and accuracy.
- If you find any issues with your CBC report, you have 10 days to dispute the content before Certiphi will automatically release the CBC to SCCO.
- If you do not find any issues with your CBC report, you are encouraged to expedite the process of your official acceptance by giving your permission to Certiphi to release the CBC to SCCO.
- Once a clear CBC report is received by SCCO (this usually takes two to four weeks), you will be notified that the acceptance is valid.
- If your CBC report contains information we feel is detrimental to being a responsible health care professional, SCCO reserves the right to withdrawal the offer of acceptance and will make a full refund of the Matriculation Fee.

Will I have to get a CBC for every school to which I apply?

- No, not all schools require a CBC. For those schools that do require CBCs and utilize Certiphi to perform this service, you will only need to have the CBC done once.
- For schools that use another agency to perform the CBC, you will have to have the CBC performed again if you do receive an acceptance.
- Check with each optometry program for their policy on CBCs.

How much will it cost to the applicant?

The background check fee will vary (based on the number of addresses where an applicant has lived). If an applicant is accepted by multiple schools and colleges of optometry that require a background check through Certiphi, they will only undergo a single search and pay a single fee.

What does the background check include?

Below is a description of checks conducted by Certiphi Screening, Inc. The results of the background search do not include juvenile records.

- Social Security Number Search: A search of credit report to help confirm the applicant's identity.
- Criminal Records Search: A direct search of county, state, and federal courthouse records for any felony or misdemeanor criminal history.
- National Sexual Offender Database Search: A search of a national private database which contains sex offender data
- Search for dishonourable discharge from the Armed Forces: Military records are verified through either telephone interviews with the subject's former commander or by obtaining the applicant's DD-214 form.
- National Criminal Database: A search of a national private database which contains over 375 million criminal records from across the United States.
- Office of Inspector General/System for Awards Management Excluded Parties Search: A search for persons excluded from federal Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement programs.
- Sanctions Screen: A private database that maintains state Medicare and Medicaid excluded parties lists and other federal, state, and international exclusion, debarment and sanction lists.

Can an applicant order a background check in advance?

An applicant may order a background check in advance of being accepted to a participating school or college. This can be done at the expense of the applicant. This self-order report is only intended for personal use. In the event that an applicant is accepted to a school or college that participates in the OptomCAS criminal background check process, a new background check will need to be performed and paid for at this time, regardless of whether a self-order was also placed.

What will happen to the criminal background check report if an offer is rescinded or an applicant withdraws?

The report will be removed from the criminal background check portal.

How long is the criminal background check report good for?

The CBC is good for one application cycle. If an applicant gets accepted to one school in October and another one in February, the same report would be delivered to any subsequent school that accepts the student, unless there is derogatory information. Any derogatory information older than 30 days must be re-verified with the courts.

Revised 31Aug2016 JAM