

**FACULTY BOARDS OF BIOLOGY, CLINICAL MEDICINE
and CLINICAL VETERINARY MEDICINE MEDICAL and VETERINARY
EDUCATION COMMITTEES
CRIMINAL RECORDS PANEL**

Admission to the pre-clinical medical and veterinary courses
Disclosure of criminal records - Policy and procedure

Terms of Reference

1. The Criminal Records Panel (CRP) has been established by the Medical and Veterinary Education Committees, with the agreement of the Senior Tutors' Committee and the Fitness for Medical Practice Committee, to review all cases of students who have been offered a place on the medical or veterinary course but are found by way of Disclosure by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or otherwise, to be the subject of a criminal conviction, caution, reprimand or final warning. The Panel will decide whether or not the individual should be permitted to enter onto the Medical Students Register in the case of medical students, or the Veterinary Students Register in the case of veterinary students.

Membership

2 The Criminal Records Panel shall consist of (or their deputies):

- i. the Director of Education (MVST) in the Faculty of Biology who shall be Chairman;
- ii. the Director of Medical Education in the Faculty of Clinical Medicine;
- iii. the Dean of the Veterinary School;
- iv. the Head of Education Services at the University as authorised counter-signatory for DBS checks;
- v. the University's legal representative;
- vi. one person nominated by the Senior Tutors Committee;
- vii. The Secretary of the Faculty Board of Biology who shall act as Secretary to the Panel.

3 The member in class (vi) shall be appointed in the Michaelmas Term to serve for four years from 1 January following his or her appointment.

Conduct of business

4 The Panel shall convene at need. Given that this may be at short notice, the Chairman may, at his or her discretion, direct that having received the appropriate documentation, the Panel should conduct its business by meeting in person, by teleconference or by email. No business shall be transacted unless at least four members contribute to the discussions.

Policy statement

5. Medical and veterinary students follow a programme that will lead them to an automatic right to practise medicine/veterinary medicine. Pre-clinical medical or veterinary students at Cambridge have contact with patients in the community from the first weeks of the course, and are entered on the Medical or Veterinary Students Register from day one. The University and Colleges jointly have a responsibility to ensure that any matters that could bear on a student's suitability or fitness to practise, or to deal

with patients and colleagues, are handled properly. Before admission, all medical and veterinary students are therefore required to undergo, through the DBS, an Enhanced Disclosure of any unfiltered criminal record.

6 Standard Disclosures contain information about spent and unspent convictions, as well as cautions, reprimands and final warnings held on the Police National Computer. Enhanced Disclosures involve an additional level of check to those carried out for the Standard Disclosure. An Enhanced Disclosure includes a check on local police records. Where local police records contain additional information that might be relevant to the post the applicant is being considered for, the Chief Officer of Police may release information for inclusion in an Enhanced Disclosure. Exceptionally, and in a very small number of circumstances (typically to protect the integrity of current police investigations), additional information may be sent under separate cover to the counter-signatory and will not be revealed to the applicant. Thus Colleges accepting Enhanced Disclosures prepared for other organisations should contact the relevant local police force to check for additional information.

7. Students from outside the UK, and those who have spent significant periods abroad in the five years before being offered a place, are required to sign a self-declaration and to provide the result of such criminal record check or such equivalent documentation as is available in the relevant country or countries of residence. In signing the declaration, students are asked to disclose the same level of criminal record as would be disclosed under a Standard/Enhanced DBS Disclosure, as appropriate. Positive declarations will be considered in the same way as positive DBS Disclosures.

8. No separate DBS screening is required for entry to the clinical course for standard students who progress directly from the pre-clinical course in Cambridge. However, if a student takes a gap year between pre-clinical and clinical courses, they are required to undergo further DBS screening. Cambridge pre-clinical students who degrade for up to a year during the first three years are not required to undergo another DBS check. However, students who degrade for longer periods will be required to undergo a further check. Students transferring to Cambridge for clinical studies also require DBS screening even if this has been undertaken previously at their original university.

9. The University of Cambridge aims to promote equality of opportunity for all, and applicants are treated equally and assessed fairly whatever their background. To ensure that Disclosure information is not used to discriminate unfairly against applicants, DBS checks are only performed after an offer of a place has been made.

10. The University takes any criminal record seriously, and will consider each case individually and in detail. Failure to disclose information about criminal records will result in automatic referral to the University's Fitness for Medical Practice procedures.

Procedure

11. All offers of a place to read medicine/veterinary medicine will be conditional on satisfactory DBS or equivalent screening. Applicants firmly accepting a conditional or unconditional offer of a place will be issued with the appropriate CRB form and information about the Disclosure process and how positive Disclosures will be handled by the University. The DBS pack will include a self-declaration form for students who have spent significant periods overseas. Packs will normally be distributed in April.

12. Students will be required to complete the DBS form or self-declaration form and return it with supporting documents to the Senior Tutor's Office of the College making the offer as soon as possible. The College will check the form, resolve any problems with it, and forward the completed form to the Head of Student Administration and

Records Section for it to be officially countersigned and despatched to the DBS. The supporting documents will be returned to the applicant by the College.

13. Students from outside the UK, and those who have spent significant periods abroad in the five years before being offered a place, will be asked to sign a self-declaration and to provide the result of such criminal record check or such equivalent documentation as is available in the country or countries of residence. The DBS can advise on the availability of criminal record information from some countries.

14. Students will be required to meet the fee for the DBS Disclosure. The rate at July 2020 is £52.55 for an Enhanced Disclosure. Those requiring documentation from overseas will be required to meet any fee themselves. Students should submit proof of their online payment or send a cheque made payable to "The University of Cambridge" with their completed form and supporting documents to their college. Cheques will be collected and banked by the Student Administration and Records Section.

15. The DBS check takes a minimum of six weeks. The DBS will send applicants a copy of the Disclosure at the same time as it is sent to the University. If the Disclosure reveals any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings it will be referred to the Criminal Records Panel (CRP) for consideration. The applicant's College will be informed and should advise the applicant accordingly, inviting submission in writing of any relevant information about the circumstances that led to the offence being committed, together with any additional details of the nature of the offence for consideration by the CRP. The applicant's College should send these documents together with a statement from the College Senior Tutor to the Secretary of the CRP. The CRP may seek a statement from the Courts or other appropriate source as to the nature of the offence. The CRP may call the student for interview to discuss the nature and circumstances of the offence. Where the Chair of the CRP considers that the nature of the offence or issues raised in this information are likely to lead to withdrawal of the offer of a place to read medicine/veterinary medicine, then the applicant (and an advisor of their choosing) will be offered the opportunity to attend for interview with the CRP.

16. In deciding whether to permit a student to enter onto the Medical or Veterinary Students Register, the Panel will consider the following factors:

- The seriousness of the offence and its potential relevance to the practice of medicine
- The length of time since the offence occurred
- Any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- Any relevant information provided by the College
- Whether the offence was a one-off, or part of a history of offending
- The degree of remorse, or otherwise expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change

17. The CRP will inform the College and applicant of its decision. Normally this will be before the start of the Michaelmas term. In the event of the CRP deciding that an individual should not be permitted to enter onto the Medical or Veterinary Students Register, the College will advise the applicant that they have failed to meet a condition of their offer of a place and that the offer of a place to read medicine/veterinary medicine is withdrawn. The College will make it clear that this is on the basis of the Disclosure, the CRP's consideration of it, and its relevance.

18. In the event of a disclosure being received too late to allow the completion of the procedure (including any appeal) before the start of the Michaelmas term then it may be necessary to defer the applicant's entry for a year.

19. In the event of a positive disclosure being received after the student has been admitted to the Medical or Veterinary Student Register, the CRP will consider the case as above. If the CRP considers that the disclosure raises serious concerns about the student remaining on the Medical or Veterinary Student's Register, it will then refer the case to the appropriate University Fitness for Practice Committee.

20. Current medical or veterinary students who acquire criminal records during the course of their studies will be subject to the University's Fitness for Medical or Veterinary Practice Procedures.

Appeals

21. A decision taken by the CRP will not normally be reviewed unless it appears that a serious procedural error or irregularity has occurred.

22. Applicants who believe that a procedural error or irregularity may have occurred during the consideration of their case and therefore wishing to appeal the decision of the Criminal Records Panel should notify their College within two weeks of receiving notification that they have failed to meet a condition of their offer of a place to read medicine/veterinary medicine.

23. The College will then submit the original documentation, the decision of the CRP and the applicant's representations to a person who has been appointed by the Medical Education Committee to consider appeals on CRP matters. Having reviewed the evidence, this person may either:

- a) dismiss the applicant's appeal; or
- b) if evidence exists that procedural irregularities have occurred during consideration of the case, refer the matter back to the CRP for reconsideration.

24. Students wishing to appeal decisions taken under the University's Fitness for Medical or Veterinary Practice Procedures should follow the appeals process set down in those Procedures.

Handling of Disclosure information

25. All Disclosure information will be kept confidential to the CRP and appropriate University and College Officers, and will be stored securely.

26. In the case of a decision by the CRP to prohibit a student from entering onto the Medical or Veterinary Students Register neither Disclosure information nor a record of Disclosure information contained within them will be retained after admission.

27. However, information about past history could have an important bearing on consideration of fitness to practise and for each medical and veterinary student admitted: a record of the date of the DBS Disclosure, the DBS reference number, whether the disclosure was positive or negative, and any action taken will be recorded. This information will be passed to the medical or veterinary Student Progress Committee to hold. If an individual student's fitness to practise comes into question at any stage in their student career, this information will be made available under the Fitness for Medical Practice procedures, and a copy of the original Disclosure requested from the DBS.

Minor revisions approved by:

Medical Education Committee, 25th May 2021