Vanderbilt University Faculty Background Check Policy
Frequently Asked Questions

Q 1: Why is Vanderbilt University implementing background checks?
A: Vanderbilt University is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the campus community in support of its educational, research and health care missions. One aspect of this commitment is the background check program.

Q 2: Who must complete a background check?
A: All final candidates for full-time or part-time faculty positions in the College of Arts and Science, Blair School of Music, Divinity School, School of Engineering, Graduate School, Law School, Owen Graduate School of Management, Peabody College of Education and Human Development, School of Medicine, and School of Nursing.

Q 3: Do volunteer faculty members need to complete the background check?
A: Background checks for volunteer faculty are only required if they will work with minors and/or care for patients as a part of their role.

Q 4: Do new adjunct or adjoint faculty members need to complete the background check? Do new faculty members who are supported by a grant need to complete the background check?
A: Background checks are required of all final candidates for full-time or part-time faculty positions in the College of Arts and Science, Blair School of Music, Divinity School, School of Engineering, Graduate School, Law School, Owen Graduate School, Peabody College of Education and Human Development, School of Medicine, and School of Nursing. This includes all new adjunct faculty, adjoint faculty, and faculty supported by a grant. Please contact the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty at vpf@vanderbilt.edu if there are questions relating to who needs a background check.

Q 5: When does the background check take place?
A: The background check takes place post-offer, pre-employment.

Q 6: Are additional background checks required after the initial background check is completed on the new faculty member?
A: In most cases, only those faculty members who have a break in employment of more than twelve (12) months will need an additional background check when they are rehired. In some situations an additional background check may be required for faculty members changing positions/departments due to a promotion, reassignment, or change in status, unless the person has already had a background check which is specific to the newly assumed position. Please contact the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty at vpf@vanderbilt.edu if there are questions relating to additional background checks.

Q 7: Who conducts the background check?
A: Vanderbilt University has contracted with a third-party agency, Verified Person Inc. to conduct all background checks.
**Q 8: Is Verified Person’s background check system compatible will all computers?**

A: Verified Person’s background check system works best with Windows compatible computers (PC) running Internet Explorer 8. Those using other internet browsers may experience difficulty accessing the application since it runs JAVA script. If you experience issues with accessing the system, please contact the Background Check Office (Vanderbilt Human Resources) at 615-322-6358, PEBC@vanderbilt.edu.

**Q 9: What steps must the candidate take to complete the background check, and what sort of information will the candidate need to provide for the background check?**

A: The candidate must complete the online form in its entirety and execute a signed consent and disclosure form with Verified Person. As part of the form, the candidate must provide his or her first and last names; current address with city, state, and zip code; date of birth; social security number; telephone number; and whether the candidate has any criminal records. To verify the candidate’s terminal degree, he or she must provide the school’s name, city and state where the degree was earned; the field (major) of the degree; and the dates of attendance. Candidates with terminal degrees from outside the United States follow a separate degree verification process which is outlined in Q 12 below.

**Q 10: What does the background check include?**

A: The background check includes: address verification; social security number check; a county, statewide and federal criminal records search; search of sex offender registries; and examination of state and federal debarment list. Background checks for candidates with terminal degrees from US institutions will also include a degree verification. Candidates with terminal degrees from outside the United States follow a separate degree verification process which is outlined in Q 12 below. A more comprehensive background check may be required pursuant to a University administrative decision, local, state or federal law, or for certain sensitive positions.

**Q 11: What if the candidate lives overseas and does not have an address in the United States?**

A: The background check form requires a U.S. address. If the international candidate does not yet have a U.S. address, please instruct the candidate to enter the address given below.

Vanderbilt University
2201 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37235

**Q 12: What is the degree verification process for degrees received outside the United States?**

A: Candidates who received their terminal degree outside the United States will not have their degrees verified through the Verified Person’s background check process. Instead they should contact their school/departmental administrator to make arrangements to verify their terminal degree through other means such as a degree transcript.

**Q 13: How does the university protect an individual’s right to privacy?**

A: Vanderbilt University follows state and federal laws that ensure a candidate’s right to privacy, which prohibits employees and others from using or disclosing personal information except within the scope of their assigned duties.
Q 14: Does a candidate have to give permission or consent for a check to be conducted?
A: Yes. If a candidate does not give permission or neglects to give all of the information required to process a background investigation, the check will not be conducted. A person who does not give permission or does not provide all of the information needed cannot be employed.

Q 15: If a candidate has adverse information reported in the background check, is that individual automatically disqualified?
A: No. Adverse information is not an automatic bar to employment. Vanderbilt will consider the passage of time and the severity, frequency, and nature of a conviction, as well as its relationship to the position in question. Other factors may include the candidate’s full disclosure of the conviction during the application process (e.g., application, interview). If the background check reveals information that affects the University’s decision, the candidate will be provided an opportunity to see the findings and provide an explanation.

Q 16: How long does it take to get the results of a background check?
A: Background checks may five (5) business days to process. Additional time is needed if the candidate has lived overseas or in multiple states. If further information is required to complete your background investigation, you will be contacted.

Q 17: Does a previous criminal conviction automatically eliminate a final candidate from consideration from employment, or in the case when a candidate has begun work, does it mean automatic dismissal?
A: No. If adverse information or a discrepancy is reported, further review will be conducted. For University Central faculty, the Vice Provost for Faculty and the appropriate Dean will review background check results. The Office of the General Counsel and/or Vanderbilt University Police Department will provide advice and consultation as requested.

Q 18: Is a background check required for a faculty member who left Vanderbilt but returns to work here at a later date?
A: If the faculty member has been separated from Vanderbilt for more than twelve (12) months, Vanderbilt requires a background check of the person.

Q 19: Do candidates have the right to receive a copy of their background check?
A: Candidates are given this right under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). To receive a copy, the candidate will need to request one from Verified Person. The candidate may contact Verified Person by phone at 866-380-6100 or by mail at Verified Person Inc., 22 North Front Street Suite 300, Memphis, TN 38103.

Q 20: Who may candidates contact if they have additional questions about the background check process?
A: Candidates should contact the Background Check Office (Vanderbilt Human Resources) at 615-322-6358, PEBC@vanderbilt.edu.