

## ISU Social Work Background Check Policy

Prior to placement in a Field Practicum all Social Work students must have a current criminal background and finger-print check. A **current** criminal background check is one that includes a finger-print report and that was completed no more than **12 months** prior to beginning the Field Practicum. The Background check must indicate that the student is not at risk to harm potential clients. A criminal history does not automatically disqualify a student from completing the Field Practicum, but may limit where the Field Practicum can be completed.

## ISU Social Work Background Check Rationale

Idaho State University is committed to producing social workers prepared to be licensed in the state of Idaho. One practical consideration is that The Idaho Bureau of Licensure (<https://ibol.idaho.gov/IBOL/BoardPage.aspx?Bureau=SW>) has limitations and restrictions about criminal histories that are or are not acceptable for professional license. *(The website states: "The profession of social work is dedicated to serving people; the professional relationship between social workers and clients thus is governed by the highest moral and ethical values. The client is in a vulnerable role that extends beyond the time frame of actual services. In both social and professional interactions, this vulnerability is taken into consideration whether the person is currently or has been a client.")*

While the admissions team doesn't decide what is acceptable to the IBOL, they can take note of backgrounds that might disqualify a matriculated student in obtaining a professional licensure.

## ISU Social Work Background Check Procedure

1. Scheduling and obtaining a criminal background check is the responsibility of the student and must be completed prior to beginning the Field Practicum placement. Some social service agencies (e.g. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare) have specific procedures for obtaining a criminal background check that meets their requirements. When appropriate students should follow these procedures.
2. Most students will obtain a criminal background check and finger print report through Castle Branch: <https://discover.castlebranch.com>. Students will set up an account in Castle Branch using Package Code **ID40** for the BSW and **II24** for the MSW Program.
3. Students must sign a release of information before an agency can receive the completed background check.
4. Castle Branch criminal background checks can take up to two months to process.
5. Students are strongly recommended to let the Field Director and the Program Director know if there is any possible criminal activity that will be reported on the criminal background check. This notification will help to ensure that an appropriate Field Practicum placement is secured.
6. Students retain access to the Castle Branch criminal background report and can provide access to the information via the release of information.