

ISU Social Work Background Check Policy

A criminal background check is no longer required as part of the admissions process. Students should be advised that a criminal background may create barriers to obtaining a license to practice social work and the rules and regulations regarding licensure for those with a criminal background vary by state. Please refer to the licensing board in the state where you plan to seek a license upon graduation to review state policies. Students may be required to obtain a background check when seeking practicum placement; if a student opts to seek a placement in a facility that requires background checks they will be required to do so. If a student does not wish to submit to a background check they will need to seek a practicum placement in a setting where one is not required. If a student's unwillingness to submit to a background check, or if a student's criminal background prohibits them from securing a practicum placement the students progress in the program may be delayed and/or they may be dismissed from the MSW program.

ISU Social Work Background Check Rationale

Idaho State University is committed to reducing financial barriers in the application process, and is committed to honoring the core professional belief that all humans have the capacity for change. Thus, background checks are only conducted when required in order for a student to obtain a specific practicum placement. At the same time, Idaho State University seeks to produce social workers prepared to be licensed in the state of Idaho. One practical consideration is that The Idaho Bureau of Licensure (IBOL) (<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. Any potential or current student with a criminal background should familiarize themselves with the licensing requirements and restrictions applicable to their personal situation and consider carefully whether investing in a graduate degree in Social Work will help you meet your long-term professional goals.

(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.")

ISU Social Work Background Check Procedure (To be Completed at the Request of a Practicum Placement)

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.