



Unlocking Opportunity: Inclusive Nursing Programs with Modern Background Checks

OTT 1832

Applications

Higher Education, Nursing Programs, Healthcare Workforce Development, Background Check Industry

Target Problems

Nursing programs face growing pressure to address critical workforce shortages while maintaining high standards for patient safety and student success. Traditional background check policies can unintentionally exclude qualified applicants based on minor, outdated, or non-relevant findings, reducing access to nursing education and limiting workforce diversity. These barriers disproportionately affect individuals from underrepresented communities and may prevent otherwise capable students from entering the profession.

Solution

UWM researchers have developed an evidence-based framework that supports more modern and inclusive background check policies for nursing programs. By encouraging individualized review practices and focusing on the relevance of findings to nursing education and practice, this approach helps institutions expand access to qualified candidates while maintaining public safety standards. The result is a fairer admissions process that promotes student success, workforce diversity, and stronger healthcare outcomes.

Key Benefits

- Expanded talent pipeline by reducing unnecessary barriers for qualified nursing applicants
- Increased workforce diversity through more equitable admissions practices
- Enhanced student retention and success by providing opportunities for students with non-critical background findings
- Alignment with modern inclusion initiatives and equal opportunity goals
- Balanced risk assessment through individualized evaluation rather than blanket exclusions
- Strengthened institutional reputation as a leader in equitable healthcare education

About this Technology

This innovation is based on research examining the impact of criminal background check (BGC) policies within nursing education. UWM findings indicate that approximately 3.2% of nursing students had background check findings, highlighting the importance of policies that distinguish between relevant safety concerns and non-critical findings. The technology provides a data-driven framework that helps nursing schools evaluate applicants more holistically while preserving patient and public safety. By modernizing admissions practices, institutions can attract a broader range of qualified candidates, support workforce development, and contribute to a more representative healthcare profession.

Stage of Development

Research completed with supporting data and policy recommendations available for implementation and institutional evaluation.

Partnering Opportunity

We are seeking partnerships with nursing schools, colleges and universities, healthcare systems, professional associations, and background screening organizations interested in advancing equitable admissions practices and strengthening the nursing workforce.

Intellectual Property (IP)

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Lead Inventor

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