

Criminal Background Info Sheet:

Information for Initial Teacher Certification Program Candidates Concerning Criminal Convictions

YOU NEED TO KNOW: Illinois law bars from teacher certification individuals who have a record of certain criminal convictions. This sheet provides you with information related to those offenses and other convictions and circumstances that may impact your eligibility for certification at the end of your program.

Questions of all certificate applicants

Once you have successfully completed a teacher certification program you will apply for your teaching credential. The application you will complete has several questions to which you will be required to respond “yes” or “no”.

You will be asked to answer questions such as the following:

Have you in Illinois or any other state:

- Ever had a certificate denied, suspended or revoked in Illinois or any other state?
- Ever been convicted of a felony, or **any** sex, narcotics or drug offense in Illinois or any other state?
- Have you failed to file a tax return with the Illinois Department of Revenue, or failed to pay any tax, penalty, or interest owed or any final assessment of same for any tax as required by law administered by that Department that was not subsequently resolved to the Department’s satisfaction?
- Have you ever been named by a state agency responsible for child welfare as a perpetrator in an indicated report of child abuse or neglect if such report was not reversed after exhaustion of any appeal?
- Are you in default on an Illinois student loan for which you have failed to establish a satisfactory repayment plan with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission?

Individuals who will answer in the affirmative to any of these questions will need to provide to the Illinois State Board of Education a detailed explanation of the situation. These cases will invariably result in some delay in determining the certification status of the applicant.

Certificate Denial, Suspension or Revocation

A certificate denial, suspension or revocation will need to be explained in detail including the state where the action took place, the date, the reasons for the action, any penalties imposed and the date any penalty is lifted. ISBE will contact the state’s education department for verification of the information.

Certification for Persons Who Have Been Convicted of a Crime

Unless you have been convicted of first degree murder, attempted first degree murder, a Class X felony or certain enumerated narcotics and sex offenses, you may be able to obtain an Illinois certificate. Each application is reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education (not by Governors State University) on its own merits with attention paid to evidence of good character and rehabilitation in light of the nature of the offense. There are specific rules involved in these cases:

1. At least **one year must have elapsed** from the termination of sentence, including any incarceration or probation.
2. You must provide a **statement in your own words** describing the circumstances of the crime.
3. You must provide a **certified copy of the court record of conviction**.
4. You must provide **original** statements attesting to your good character and rehabilitation. These statements must come from employers, civic leaders, college instructors and others who have knowledge of the conviction and who are in a position to attest to your good character and rehabilitation.

These documents will be reviewed. A determination of whether to issue a certificate will be made on the basis of the degree to which the evidence of good character and rehabilitation outweighs the offense. You should also note that **each school district is required to do a fingerprint-based criminal background check on every employee**. Districts cannot hire individuals who have been convicted of certain offenses.

If any of the above circumstances apply to you contact the Dean of the College of Education or the GSU Certification Officer to discuss the matter in detail. We'll be able to help you begin the process to determine whether or not you will be eligible for teacher certification at the end of your program.

By signing this document and continuing as a student in a teacher certification program at Governors State University I affirm that I have read and understand the above information. I understand that I am responsible for notifying the Dean of the College of Education in writing should I be convicted of any of these crimes while enrolled at GSU. The university will not be responsible for any consequences of my failure to file a report of a conviction.

Student Name – please print

Student Signature

Date