



Kutztown University Policy STU-035

Admissions Review Process for Applicants with Prior Felony Convictions and/or Disciplinary Separations

A. Purpose

To afford procedural due process to Kutztown University applicants who indicate a prior felony conviction and/or separation from another institution of higher education for disciplinary reasons.

B. Applicability and Scope

The policy applies to all applicants seeking graduate or undergraduate admission to *any* university program [and to former students seeking readmission who must officially reapply for admission to Kutztown University.]

C. Definitions

Criminal Conviction: a criminal conviction of a felony crime.

Separation: a suspension, dismissal and/or expulsion from an institution of higher education for disciplinary reasons.

D. Policy

Kutztown University is committed to ensuring a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. As such, policy and procedures have been developed to protect all members of the University Community.

When Kutztown University receives an admission application in which an individual has met the academic admissions requirements and has indicated he or she has been convicted of a criminal offense (felony) or has been separated from another institution of higher education for disciplinary reasons, the application will be forwarded to the Director of Admissions. The *Director of Admissions* and *Associate Dean of Students* will conduct a preliminary review/investigation and make one of the following recommendations:

1. Move forward and process the admissions application, or:
2. Convene the Admissions Review Committee for additional review and recommendation.

Some state professional standards and licensure requirements bar the issuing of a license to a convicted felon. Consequently, convicted felons may not be eligible for admission into related academic majors/programs.

Prior criminal conviction, in and of itself, does not automatically result in denial of admission to the University. The Admissions Review Committee will base the determination on admission on the criteria listed in the procedure below and the extent to which the conduct would be relevant to the student's participation in the University Community.

Members of the Admissions Review Committee include:

- *Dean of Students*
- *Director of Admissions*
- *University Chief of Police*
- *Associate Dean of Students*

E. Procedure

- The applicant responds "yes" to the felony conviction question and/or "yes" to the question about a prior dismissal or suspension from another higher education institution on the university admissions application or provides such information to an admissions staff member in another format.
- A determination of academic and admission criteria is made by the Office of Admissions; if the applicant does not meet admission criteria the review process is halted.
- The applicant is notified by the Office of Admissions requesting additional information regarding circumstances related to any past behavior in question. The applicant's admission application is considered incomplete until the required paperwork is completed in full and submitted and certified by the Office of Admissions.
- Omitting and/or providing false, inaccurate, incomplete and/or misleading information will result in the denial and/or revocation of admission.
- If a felony conviction is involved, criminal history may be collected via a background check or through Public Safety & Police Services.
- The application, along with the background information, is collected and forwarded to the Admissions Review Committee. Ad hoc members may be added, as appropriate, and may include but are not limited to: *Director of Disability Services, Director Residential Life, Director of Health and Wellness Center.*
- All records collected as part of this review process will be considered Office of Admissions' records and are maintained accordingly.
- A phone or in-person interview with the Admissions Review Committee will occur to discuss the applicant's admission application and prior history.

- The review team will consider the following factors in its evaluation of the applicant's record:
 - Offense Committed/Nature of the Incident
 - Date Committed
 - Aggravating/Mitigating Circumstances
 - Penalty Imposed
 - Current Standing with Courts (probation, parole, etc.)
 - Severity of Harm
 - Responsibility Assumed by the Applicant
 - Likelihood for Recidivism/Harm to the Community
 - Direct impact to any currently enrolled Kutztown University student(s) and/or employee(s)
- The Admissions Review Committee may request additional information from the applicant or other appropriate sources (references, former institutions, probation officers, etc.) as needed to aid in their evaluation making process.
- The Admissions Review Committee will examine the applicant's record and make a recommendation to the *Director of Admissions* for a final admissions decision. Conditional admission with specific prohibitions may also be considered (e.g. no housing or housing visitation, etc.).
- PASSHE legal counsel and the *University President* or the President's designee will be consulted of any decision or recommendation to deny admission on the basis of prior criminal or disciplinary history.

F. Effective Date:

April 8, 2015

G. Approved By:

Administrative Council and Acting President – April 8, 2015

H. Last Reviewed:

August, 2015
 August, 2016
 August, 2018
 August, 2020