
Conviction History Resources

Bellingham Technical College

This worksheet is designed to provide you with resources and suggested first steps if you are thinking about a program at Bellingham Technical College and you have a misdemeanor or felony conviction. You should also follow up with your academic and career advisor for more information on your specific career path to ensure that you are choosing a career that is right for you!

Step 1: Know & Own your Conviction

Know Your Conviction

A common first step is to conduct a background check on yourself through Washington Access to Criminal History (WATCH). What appears on the check? Arrests or just convictions? What is the exact name given to your conviction? What is the date of your conviction?

Be aware: Not all companies use WATCH. Some may conduct background checks which include your entire history no matter the location.

Own your conviction

Be honest with yourself about the impact your conviction has had on your life, and assess what steps you have taken since your conviction to move forward. Have you had any job or volunteer experience since your conviction? Complete counseling? What have you done to show that the choices you made that lead to your conviction are choices you are not making in the future?

Bottom Line: If your list is short, that's okay! You can start now. Education is a great step towards putting your conviction behind you.

Step 2: Choosing the Perfect Career Path

Do some research on career paths that are available and a good fit for you. Which career paths require background checks? Are there special certificates or license you will need to obtain? Below are some examples of the impact of convictions on career choices at BTC. Remember, a background check being run does not necessarily restrict you from getting a job at that company, so do your research and be prepared to talk about your conviction in an interview!

Manufacturing & Industrial

More companies in manufacturing industries are requiring background checks upon hire in addition to Transportation Work Identification Credential (TWIC) requirements, and will often have higher standards. Employer background policies can vary based on the level of the offense, years since conviction date, etc.

Some career paths that may require a TWIC card include: **Process Technology, Instrumentation & Control Technology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Electrician, Electro Mechanical Technology, Welding & Precision Machining.**

Healthcare

BTC requires background checks before entering into many healthcare programs due to standards of the clinical sites where students are working in the field. Healthcare programs that require a background check include: **Veterinary Technician, Surgery Technology, Dental Hygiene, Registered Nursing, and Radiologic Technology.**

Transportation

If you work for an **automotive or diesel** repair company, you will often be required to drive customer or company vehicles. Employers require a valid driver's license with a clean driving record. Driving citations will restrict or prevent student participation in some lab activities, internships and employment in this industry.

Bottom Line: Do your research so you know which career fields require background checks and what their expectations are!

Step 3: What to do while you're at BTC

Once you're enrolled in your program, it's important to take steps now that will help you stand out from other applicants, which is essential if you have a conviction history.

- Build strong relationships with your faculty. They will be important resources and references when you are searching for a job. Developing relationships through networking will make your job search that much easier.
- Seek out opportunities to be involved on campus. Employers like to see candidates who have leadership and teamwork experiences on their resume.
- Internships are a great way to build your resume and gain experience in the field. Volunteer experience can also help build your resume as it shows your commitment to community.

Bottom Line: You want to look for ways to go above and beyond as a student! That will make you stand out as a job candidate and only benefit you in the application process.

What's next?

These steps are a good starting point for many students, but there are many other resources and people on BTC's campus who may be able to provide you with assistance. Please contact the departments below for additional resources.

Advising & Career Services

Admissions & Student Resource Center
College Services, room 106
Bellingham Technical College
Phone: 360-752-8450
Email: Advising@btc.edu

For academic advising, career exploration, resume, cover letter and mock interview critiques, and job search strategies

Workforce Funding & Student Support

College Services, room 102
Bellingham Technical College
Phone: 360-752-8468
Email: BHarper@btc.edu

For additional funding opportunities and student support services

Counseling

Admissions & Student Resource Center
College Services, room 106
Bellingham Technical College
Phone: 360-752-8450
Email: Counseling@btc.edu

For academic, career and personal counseling, as well as additional campus and community resource referrals

Faculty

Your faculty are an excellent resource in understanding industry expectations and networking opportunities!

Industry Professionals

Talk to professionals in the industry to conduct informational interviews to help you with research

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