

ECS Background Clearances - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Who needs a background clearance?

All students enrolled in ECS courses with observation hours must submit a clearance.

Do I need to resubmit it every semester?

You must submit your clearance at the start of **each course** that has an observation requirement, even if you submitted it for other courses. There are 7 ECS courses with observation hours: ECS 4313, ECS 4443, ECS 4613, ECS 4623, ECS 3243, ECS 3323, and ECS 3433.

Why do I need this if I already work with children and have a clearance through my employer?

Higher education program and accreditation requirements are separate from employment or licensing requirements. Even if you are employed in a school district or childcare center and already have a clearance, you must still provide documentation that meets program expectations for each observation course.

How recent does my clearance need to be?

It must be dated within one year of the start of your course. Outdated clearances will not be accepted.

Where do I submit my clearance documents?

Upload your documents directly in your Canvas course. Your instructor will verify your submission before course content is opened.

Do I need to keep a copy for myself?

Yes. You must keep your own copy of your clearance. You will not be able to access course content until your instructor verifies your acceptable clearance has been received.

Why can't RCU provide me with a copy of my clearance that was submitted when I was admitted?

The clearance you submitted for admission was sent directly to Admissions/Advising for enrollment purposes. It is not shared with you or with the School of Education or the Department of Early Childhood and cannot be used to meet program course requirements. Program requirements are separate from admission requirements, even though both involve background checks. For program purposes, you need to keep a copy for yourself and submit it at the start of each course with observation hours.

What if I don't have my own copy?

It is your responsibility to obtain a copy for yourself. Admissions/Advising does not provide copies. If your employer or district will not release a copy to you, you must choose another clearance option. **The I-CHAT & DHS option is inexpensive, convenient, and completed entirely online. It does not require an in-person visit.**

What is the Release of Records Request?

If you are fingerprinted through a school district, the results go to the district Human Resources Department, not to you or the university. A Release of Records Request authorizes your employer to provide you with a copy, which you can keep and provide it to your instructor. If your district will not release your fingerprint report, you must use a different clearance option.

What happens if I don't submit an acceptable clearance?

You will not be able to access course content or begin observation hours. In addition, you will be marked absent until your clearance is submitted and verified by your instructor. Please note the RCU attendance policy: *Students who do not attend the first two weeks of a particular course will be administratively dropped from that course.*

Criminal Background Check Documentation

This course requires contact with young children. Therefore, before you can participate in the class, you must provide documentation of an acceptable criminal background check **that is dated within the last year**.

For *Michigan residents, the acceptable options for ECS Program Background Clearance are as follows:

Option 1:

Both A and B below—DHS *and* I-CHAT. This is usually the quickest and easiest option. It is completely online and covers you for a full year. It is easy to renew.

A. Michigan I-CHAT (\$10 online). The results are provided immediately.

Michigan I-CHAT link: <https://www.michigan.gov/msp/services/chr> Scroll down. Select Go to ICHAT and follow the prompts. You can Log in as a Guest User. Be sure to include any additional names (such as maiden name or legally changed names) and Submit. Then Check out and pay.

AND

B. DHS Central Registry Clearance (no cost), takes up to 48 hours to obtain a response by email:

Email your complete form to DHS at **MDHHS-OAKLAND-CR-REQUEST@MICHIGAN.GOV**

You will need:

- Complete DHS [Central Registry Form](#) (print out form and sign in ink. No typed signatures are accepted).
- Copy of ID on form or separate page (front of ID if address is the same as the application, front and back if you have a change of address sticker on the back of your ID)
- [Sample completed DHS Central Registry Form](#) for your reference

Option 2:

LARA Eligibility letter (If you are working in a center, they can usually provide you with a copy of your letter). **The letter must be dated within the last year.**

Option 3:

School District fingerprinting system (if you are working in a school district). If you use this option, you will need to complete the [Release of Records Request](#) form for your employer (Note: The completed Release of Records form is not proof of your clearance and should not be submitted in Canvas). **The results report must be dated within the last year.**

*If you are not a Michigan resident, please contact the ECS Program Chair for information about acceptable background clearances for your state.