

Guidelines for Handling Investigator Requests

The following procedures are meant to assist you in cases where an investigator or federal agent contacts you or arrives at your office to request information as part of the background check for a student or employee.

When an investigator/agent requests information, you should:

- Politely ask to examine the agent's credentials. Satisfy yourself that they are genuine. (You may wish to have the assistance of a co-worker.) Request a business card from the agent. If one is not provided, write down the agent's name and phone number, or copy his or her badge or card. If this request is made in writing, ask the investigator to send you copies by email or fax.
- Examine and copy the forms the agent should present. The form should indicate that the person about whom the background check is being conducted consents to NOVA producing documents to the agent, or to an interview. Make sure the consent form clearly identifies the individual, identifies NOVA, has been recently signed and dated, and otherwise appears to be genuine.
- If all seems to be in order, you may answer the agent's questions and provide the agent copies of the requested documents (usually a transcript, work history, etc.). Make a note of the documents that you have provided to the agent.
- If the agent does not have a signed consent form, has requested health information, or is seeking information for any purpose other than a background check, please direct the agent to the Office of System Counsel for NOVA and call Akiva Kirkland at (703) 425-5402 to alert us.

Special considerations for current/former employee information:

In addition to the general procedure outlined above, when you receive a request for employee information you should consider the following:

- Determine whether the request is for an official personnel document or a request for performance/character recommendation.
- For requests pertaining to information contained in the employee's personnel file, the investigator should be directed to the Office of Human Resources.
- If the request is for a supervisory recommendation decide whether you are *willing* and *able* to respond. If you decide to respond, follow the guidance outlined above. You may also contact the employee who is the subject of the request to confirm that s/he still want the College to provide the requested information.