

Misrepresentation of job qualifications has been spotlighted in recent years as faculty, athletics coaches, and high-level administrators have claimed academic degrees they did not possess or have obtained “academic degrees” from diploma mills. This article addresses fraudulent credentials and the use of background checks for faculty and staff positions at colleges and universities. It reviews potential legal liability for institutions that do (or do not) choose to use background checks, employer liability when a candidate for a position is not hired or is dismissed as the result of a background check, and legal and policy considerations in developing a policy for using background checks for employment decisions.