



Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) for Applicants and Students

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1 Purpose and Scope

1.1.1 Purpose

1.1.2 To ensure the University fulfils its responsibilities and obligations for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with whom University students are in contact as part of their work.

1.1.3 To provide assurance of the individual, external agencies and the University itself.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy applies to applicants for courses where disclosure is judged to be required; current students enrolled on such courses; applicants for roles where disclosure is judged to be required.

2 Policy Statement

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by Home Office, provides access to criminal record information through its Disclosure service. This service enables organisations to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying applicants who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that which involves children or vulnerable adults.

2.1.2 The University uses the DBS disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the University complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. The University makes every subject of a DBS disclosure aware of the Code of Practice.

- 2.1.3 Applicants applying for certain professional courses, are required at acceptance of an offer, to make an enhanced declaration in relation to criminal convictions. These relate to professions or occupations which are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) or those involving work with children or vulnerable adults/adults at risk including the elderly or sick people.
- 2.1.4 Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a place on a course for which a DBS disclosure is required, and procedures are in place to ensure that decisions on suitability are made fairly in the light of all the available evidence.
- 2.1.5 Failure to disclose a criminal conviction or caution, or discrepancies between a [Student Suitability Declaration](#) and a DBS disclosure, may result in the withdrawal of an offer, or, in the case of current students, action under the relevant disciplinary or fitness to practise procedure.

2.2 Principles

- 2.2.1 The University will use the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to obtain information to enable it to assess the suitability of applicants for posts working with vulnerable groups or in positions of trust.
- 2.2.2 The University will remain mindful of its duty of care and other legal obligations such as those it owes under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU), the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) and the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2.3 The University acknowledges that while it is under an obligation to obtain disclosures from the DBS for students, it is important to achieve a balance based on the assessment of the risk involved in particular roles and activities being carried out and recognising the legal limits on the range of positions for which checks may be sought.
- 2.2.4 The University will provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in DBS checks, in order to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities.

2.2.5 The University will comply with the DBS code of practice when processing data as part of the DBS checking procedures including the secure storage, handling, use, retention & disposal of DBS disclosures and disclosure information and with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU).

2.3 Types of courses and roles where DBS disclosure is relevant

2.3.1 The list of courses and roles for which DBS disclosure is required is regularly updated. The course page on the University website will state whether a DBS disclosure is required.

2.3.2 However, examples of the types of courses and job roles for which DBS disclosures are sought are included below for illustrative purposes.

- Teacher Training courses (e.g. PGCE Primary and PGCE Secondary)
- BSc and MSc in Social Work
- Professional courses within Nursing and Allied and Public Health Professions
- Courses with placements

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

2.4 Applicants from overseas (or with significant overseas residence)

2.4.1 Applicants/students who fall into this category will include nationals of other countries, and UK nationals who have had significant periods of residence overseas.

2.4.2 Where an applicant/student has been resident in the UK for at least two months, a DBS disclosure should be sought, although it is recognised that the disclosure is likely to be of limited value where the period of UK residence has been short.

2.4.3 Applicants/students will be required to produce evidence of their conduct overseas (usually a Certificate of Good Conduct or equivalent document).

3 Procedure

3.1 Applicants to the University

- 3.1.1 Only students on courses with a Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements for Criminal Record Checks will be asked to declare whether they have any spent or unspent convictions or other punishments that would display on a criminal records check.
- 3.1.2 All applicants will be required to complete a Student Suitability Declaration Form to provide details of whether they have ever been convicted, or received a caution, warning or final reprimand, for an offence that will not be filtered from the Police National Computer when it is processed by the DBS.
- 3.1.3 The DBS application procedure is an online process under contract with First Advantage OnlineDisclosures. The notes for guidance and the online link will be sent to all applicants holding firm places (CF or UF).
- 3.1.4 Trainees on the salaried School Direct courses will be required to provide evidence of their DBS certificate to their employer as it is the employer that is responsible for ensuring that checks have been completed. The lead school within a School Direct partnership is responsible for providing confirmation to the University that checks have been carried out to a satisfactory level.
- 3.1.5 Trainees on the School-Direct fee-paying route will be required to follow the same procedure as other Teacher Training applicants as the University is responsible for ensuring that checks have been completed.
- 3.1.6 Applicants on Apprenticeship PRSB courses, will be required to provide evidence of their DBS certificate to their employer as it is the employer that is responsible for ensuring that checks have been completed.
- 3.1.7 A student will not normally be eligible to enrol on their course and/or commence a placement until the University has been notified of an individual's DBS Enhanced Disclosure and it has been assessed and verified as satisfactory as outlined in this policy.



3.1.8 Further information is available at <https://www.uel.ac.uk/study/new-applicants/dbs-occupational-health-checks>.

3.2 Current students

3.2.1 Current student should contact the Student Hub and complete a DBS request form for consideration.

3.2.2 Requests for a DBS disclosure will be assessed in line current registration and policy.

3.3 Application Procedure

3.3.1 The University is able to access an overview of all applications, which includes the DBS certificate number, the date of issue and the level of the check (Standard or Enhanced). The Applicant Checks Officer is responsible for ensuring that there is no relevant information contained on the certificate and recording the certificate number and the date of issue in line with the DBS code of practice.

3.3.2 The DBS checks should be completed to allow sufficient time for the disclosure to be received by the applicant and verified by the University before enrolment or any placement or research commences.

3.3.3 Applicants are advised they should subscribe to the DBS Update Service as part of their application for a DBS check (applicants will need to register for the Update Service within 30 days from the date that their DBS Certificate is issued). This will allow the University and other organisations (with the permission of the student) to check whether there have been any changes to an applicant's DBS certificate since it was issued.

1.1.1 We may be able to accept a DBS certificate issued by other organisation, provided it is currently subscribed to the DBS Update Service, it is for the correct Level (e.g. Standard or Enhanced) and for the correct role. DBS certificates issued by another organisation will not be accepted if they are not registered on the DBS Update Service.

- 3.3.4 Applicants must provide their permission in writing to the University to use their certificate number, name and date of birth to access the applicant's online record. Further details are provided by the Government on the website below:
<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>.
- 3.3.5 The Disclosure and Barring Service determines the cost of the enhanced check for regulated activity, the standard check and the Update Service. Applicants/students on courses for which a DBS is required, or who take an optional module that requires a DBS, are expected to meet the cost of this service and additional administration costs as appropriate.
- 3.3.6 It is not possible to refund the cost of the DBS check, once the form has been paid to the Post Office. Applicants must therefore be confident that they are able to meet any conditions for entry on a course, prior to paying the fee.

3.4 Disclosure Procedure

- 3.4.1 If a warning or caution is recorded which was not previously declared on the [Student Suitability Declaration Form](#), further information will be requested from the individual to determine whether it affects their application to study (applicants) or their enrolment (students) at the University.
- 3.4.2 Where a criminal conviction is recorded (or the warning/caution is for an act which is considered to be sufficiently serious to possibly prevent acceptance of a temporary or permanent position involving work with children or vulnerable adults), the relevant Head of Department, or nominee will be notified.
- 3.4.3 Further consideration by a Fitness to Practice Panel may be required to decide whether an applicant can be offered a place on a course, or whether no further action is necessary. All considerations by the panel regarding disclosures detailing convictions will be considered in a redacted form so as to protect the identity of the individual applicant.

4 Links to other Institutional Policies and Procedures.

4.1 Internal Policies

4.1.1 This Policy/Regulation relates to the following institutional regulations, policies or procedures

- [General Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure](#)
- [University Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Data Protection and Information Assurance](#)
- [Part 2 Admission of Students \(Manual of General Regulations\)](#)

5 Definitions

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): The DBS enables organisations to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially involving children or vulnerable adults.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB): External bodies which accredit, recognise and/or approve courses that lead to a professional or vocational qualification.

Fitness to Practice: The conduct of a professional outside of the working environment may involve fitness to practise where it could affect the protection of the public or undermine public confidence in the profession.



Policy Owner: Head of Admissions, Department of External Relations

Version	Effective From	Amendments	Equality Analysis	Stakeholders Consulted (e.g. Disability & Dyslexia Team, Policy Review Group)	Approval Date	Author	Date for Review
Draft V0.1	01/09/2022	New Policy replacing ' <i>Policy and procedures relating to the disclosure of relevant criminal records, health clearance requirements and students under the age of 18</i> '.	09/06/2022	OCGLS (inc DPO) Registry UEL Students' Union Complaints & Appeals Student Services Residential Services	04/05/2022	Janine Callender	04/05/2024

This Policy is reviewed by Education & Experience Committee and approved by Board of Governors