1. **Introduction**
This document has been created to support hiring managers with pre-employment checks. It provides an overview of what good practice recommends and what our legal obligations are.
Read the University’s [recruitment policy](#).

2. **Pre-employment checks**
An offer of employment made at the end of the recruitment and selection process, should be conditional subject to satisfactory clearance of pre-employment checks. The checks are an important part of the recruitment process and should be appropriate for the job in question. Some are a legal requirement and others desirable. The checking process is managed and coordinated by HR on behalf of the University.
Pre-employment checks help the University to:
- Comply with the law by ensuring the potential employee has permission to work and remain in the UK, or not been barred from carrying out the job (eg: for roles working with vulnerable groups or holding the position of director)
- Check the potential employee is suitably qualified or skilled for the job
- Assess whether the potential employee is suitable for the job (eg: for roles working with vulnerable groups or in security)
- Check that the employee is physically able to carry out the job

A conditional job offer does not become a binding employment contract until both parties have agreed to it. It can be withdrawn if the conditions are not met. The checks should be completed as quickly as possible once a conditional offer has been made.

All new University appointments are subject to the following checks:
- Medical clearance
- Satisfactory references
- Proof of qualification/training
- Confirmation of eligibility to work in the UK at the University of Southampton
- Criminal records check*  
*Depending on the role (see point 7 below).

3. **Medical clearance**
Employers can only ask successful candidates for a health check before hiring someone if:
- It is a legal requirement, eg: eye tests for commercial vehicle drivers
- If the job requires it, eg: because their insurers need health checks on cycle couriers

Information about any health checks will be sent to the potential employee in their offer letter, and written consent is required before asking for a report from a candidate’s doctor. Candidates can demand to see the report, and ask for it to be changed or withheld from the employer.
4. **References**

References should only contain factual information that is known to the candidate. They should not include any personal views or opinions about the employee's performance or conduct that cannot be backed up by fact. Such opinions can be open to bias, whether deliberate or inadvertent.

For vacancies advertised through the University's e-Recruitment system, employer references will be taken up by HR on behalf of the hiring manager only with the permission of the applicant. This applies to both internal and external candidates.

For academic posts, academic references are requested from the applicant as part of the application process. These are submitted to the interview panel before interview.

5. **Proof of qualification/training**

Where a particular qualification, training or licence is required for the post, applicants will be asked to bring original certificates to their interview.

Certified copies of the certificates should be collected from the applicant on arrival for interview and sent to HR.

6. **Right to work in the UK**

The University has a legal responsibility to ensure that any individual undertaking employment at Southampton has the right to live and work in the UK. The checks are made regardless of the individual’s race, ethnic or national origin, colour or (apparent) nationality.

Even if we think a potential employee or worker has the right to work in the UK, checks need to be made to confirm this before they start work. Certified copies of documentation are then stored as evidence on the University’s central employee database, ResourceLink.

Employers can be fined up to £10,000 if they can't show evidence that they checked an employee's right to work in the UK.

More information about [right to work in the UK](#).

7. **Criminal record checks**

For certain jobs like working with children or in healthcare, employers need to carry out a criminal record check on new employees before they can start work.

Criminal record checks are carried out by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), which used to be the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). CRB checks are now called DBS checks.

Unless there’s specific need to check someone’s criminal record for a job, it’s against the law for employers to refuse to employ them because of spent convictions.

There are certain posts at the University which will require satisfactory criminal record clearance before the appointment. Examples include:

- Sports Centre staff who are coaching children and/or participating in children’s activities
- Nursery staff
- Security staff who may be involved with dealing with students in distress
- Researchers who working in schools or hospitals
- Student Recruitment staff who are regularly visiting schools/colleges and are involved with children’s activities
- Teachers of foreign language students (eg: TEFL) who participate in summer schools

Hiring managers should be aware that:

- A DBS check will normally be conducted only after having offered the candidate the role.
- It can take [two to four weeks to obtain a DBS certificate](#), so you should ensure it is applied for as soon as possible after the job offer is made.
- Where a disclosure reveals that the candidate has a conviction, you may wish to discuss the situation with HR.
More information about DBS checks.

8. **Data protection**
Data protection rules must be followed when handling information on job applicants.
Read the University's data protection policy.