



Qualification checks

There are six employment check standards that employers must undertake as part of their recruitment processes.

Read the background information about the purpose of the standards, who they apply to and how to meet compliance. We also recommend viewing our frequently asked questions.

We regularly review and update the standards in line with policy and legislation changes. A summary of updates history can be found at the bottom of this page.

This standard sets out the requirements to verify the professional registration (where relevant to the post) and qualification checks that need to be carried out for all prospective NHS employees.

3.1 Minimum requirements

3.1.1 Employers need to identify which qualifications are essential or desirable for any given role. The criteria for each job role, and any flexibility around what might be essential or desirable, should be agreed between human resources and the recruiting manager prior to advertising, to ensure a fair and consistent approach to the recruitment process.

3.1.2 The purpose of a qualification check is to verify the educational and/or professional qualification information provided by the individual as part of their application. Employers must ensure that individuals hold professional and/or educational qualifications that are essential for the role. Employers have the discretion to accept other qualifications or experience which may be equivalent to any predefined requirements.

3.1.3 In the case of recruiting registered healthcare professionals, regulatory and licensing bodies are responsible for undertaking checks to validate that they have the relevant qualifications to be on their register and can practise in their chosen profession. Additional checks on qualifications to practise are not normally necessary, but employers must ensure they validate any other qualifications for specialist areas of knowledge and/or skills which are prescribed as essential to the role they are appointing to.

3.1.4 Employers must:

- Request that individuals provide original documentation.
- Check that all certificates appear genuine and relate to a real qualification. This may include checking basic security features and the presentation of the document. You should also consider if the certificate matches other documentation you have seen previously. More information is available from [UK ENIC \(formerly UK NARIC\)](#), the UK national information centre for global qualifications and skills.
- Check that the details on certificates match the information provided by the individual in their application form. For example, names, dates, course title(s) and grades. It is possible that the name given in a qualification certificate will not match the one given by the individual. This could be for a number of reasons, such as marriage/civil partnership, or divorce. In these cases, employers are required to obtain additional evidence to validate the change of name.
- Retain a copy (scanned or photocopied) on file. When storing information, employers should ensure they comply with existing data protection legislation. Employers must have a lawful basis for processing and retaining data, and document this. Details on the lawful bases for processing and retaining documents is available on the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) website](#).

3.1.5 It is important to ensure that sufficient time is factored into the recruitment process to allow for obtaining qualification information, to avoid any unnecessary delays in recruitment.

3.1.6 Individuals may not always have the original documentation. In such cases, employers will need to make an appropriate risk-based assessment to the priority given to that qualification in the person specification, and the assurances that may need to be gained as part of the check process.

3.1.7 Where there is any discrepancy or concern about the authenticity of documentation provided by an individual, employers may wish to contact the awarding body directly. This could be used to confirm attendance on the course stipulated by the individual and the grade awarded. Employers will be required to provide a copy of the individual's consent to obtain any such information.

3.1.8 For qualifications awarded by a body outside of the UK, advice may be sought from the relevant country's UK embassy, consulate or high commission. Contact details for UK based embassies, consulates and high commissions can be found on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office website](#).

3.1.9 UK ENIC has a [Statement of Comparability](#) which compares overseas qualifications to the UK education system, UK qualifications and framework levels. If there are doubts about whether an overseas qualification or its UK equivalent is genuine, further information can be obtained through the [UK ENIC website](#).

3.1.10 For more serious concerns about suspected qualification fraud, employers can:

- call the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line on (freephone) 0800 028 40 60 (lines are open 8am-5pm Monday to Friday)
- fill in the online reporting form on the [NHS Counter Fraud Authority website](#)

- speak to their local counter fraud specialist (LCFS). All NHS organisations are required by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority to have a LCFS.