

## **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidance for staff**

### **Guidance for Staff**

This document provides guidance for Queen Mary Counter signatories with responsibility for completing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff involved in regulated activity as part of their job role.

### **What is the Disclosure and Barring Service?**

The Disclosure and Barring Service is an executive agency of the Home Office established in December 2012 through a merger of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Its purpose is to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups including children, and to support organisations in England and Wales in making safer recruitment decisions.

### **What is a Disclosure?**

A Disclosure is an impartial and confidential document that details an individual's criminal history, including cautions, convictions, warnings and other relevant police information and, where jobs include 'regulated activity', confirms whether or not the individual is barred from working with vulnerable groups including children.

### **Why do staff need a disclosure?**

A number of job roles at Queen Mary require DBS checks for staff who will be working with children or vulnerable adults, in a variety of establishments and healthcare settings. This is known as 'regulated activity'.

### **Regulated Activity**

The line manager of the role should determine from the outset of the role being developed, or recruited to, whether a DBS check is required. Thought should also be given to DBS requirements if the role changes over time to include regulated activity or contact with children/vulnerable adults.

The DBS have an [online tool](#) that can also be used to find out if we can check an employee's criminal record. The following questions can also be used to determine whether a DBS Disclosure Check is required:

- Location – Where the activity is taking place?
- Activity – What does the employee's role entail? What activities is the employee undertaking?
- Frequency – How often will the employee attend the placement? E.g. Will it be 3 times a week, over a 6 week period. How many times will the employee interact with the child/adult workforce in a 30 day period?
- Category – Which group of people will the employee be working with – children, vulnerable adults (e.g. elderly, ill or disabled) or both?
- Opportunity – Will the employee have the opportunity for face-to-face contact with the

vulnerable adults and/or children?

- Supervision – What level of supervision will the employee have? Will the employee be supervised by another member of staff who has a DBS check?
- Freedom of movement/use of facilities – Will the employee have the opportunity to roam freely around the placement setting and/or have use of facilities, such as toilets, without supervision?

If there is any doubt about whether a check should be undertaken please speak to Human Resources before proceeding.

### **Who can complete the check?**

Human Resources, together with a small number of Schools / Institutes and Professional Services teams have authorised DBS counter signatories, known as DBS checkers. Whilst the evidence provided by the member of staff (applicant) can be checked by a member of staff with knowledge of DBS checking procedures, only the counter signatory or lead counter signatory can declare and certify the DBS application.

Forms can be collected from Human Resources. Individual forms should not be given out unless approved by the local DBS checker.

If the School / Institute / Professional Service area has local counter signatory officers (known as DBS Checkers) they will conduct the DBS check and complete and sign the form.

### **Checking the form**

The DBS service provides comprehensive guidance for completing the DBS application form. Please ensure you refer to this at all times:

- [Guidance for counter signatories](#)
- [Guidance for applicants](#)

Please note: Before the form can be processed, the School / Institute must have provided the relevant information for section 'X' as this will assist the DBS checker in determining what level of DBS check to undertake.

The staff guide will provide the applicant with the information they require to accurately complete the form (see also the above link). The applicant will need to attend a meeting with their DBS checker. For the meeting they should bring a completed DBS Application form and the relevant range of ID documents, dependent upon the route used to verify identity. The following link provides a list of the permissible documents: [Acceptable ID documents](#).

The forms must be completed using capital letters and black ink throughout. Any mistakes should have a single line entered through it and the corrections to the right of the box. Signatures for both staff and DBS checkers should be kept within the box provided.

The applicant is expected to have completed all of the mandatory fields, highlighted in yellow in sections a, b and e. Section c should be completed for any other addresses where the applicant has lived in the last 5 years. If the applicant has had multiple addresses they must complete a continuation sheet, ensuring there are no gaps in dates.

Applicants have to submit original documents. Copies cannot be accepted.

Section W, X and Y are not to be completed by the applicant and should be completed by the appropriate person (DBS checker and counter signatory).

### **Completing the DBS Check**

Once the form has been completed and checked and the applicant has provided proof of their identity in accordance with the DBS regulations, photocopy the form and supporting documentation and hold in the event of a query until the Disclosure is returned. Explain the fair processing notice to the applicant and provide them with the form reference number should they wish to track progress. The DBS service will send the Disclosure directly to the applicant at the address provided in Section B of the application form. The applicant should bring a copy of the Disclosure to Human Resources or the School/Institute counter signatory.

For HR staff: Enter the details of the DBS check into ResourceLink and store a copy of the form and supporting documents securely, until the applicant has confirmed their Disclosure has been received. At this point, shred the form and supporting documents and update ResourceLink to record the Disclosure has been received.

For other counter signatories: Enter the details onto a tracking spreadsheet for audit purposes and store a copy of the form and supporting documents securely, until the applicant has confirmed their Disclosure has been received. At this point, shred the form and supporting documents and update the spreadsheet to record the Disclosure has been received.

### **Lead Counter signatory**

Currently this responsibility lies with the Deputy Academic Registrar within ARCS.

### **DBS Charges**

There will be no charge to the member of staff so long as the request for the DBS check has been made by the School / Institute and is required to undertake their role.

Created: July 2016, Academic Registry

Updated: January 2019, Human Resources

## **Appendix A – Common Errors / Application forms returned**

Following an audit exercise in July 2018, the DBS service reported Queen Mary needed to put a number of actions in place to ensure staff were aware of errors in processing DBS application forms. The number of applications returned with missing or incomplete information should not be greater than 5% and DBS checkers must ensure the relevant ID is provided and the form completed as accurately as possible. New DBS checkers should pass all forms to another counter signatory until they are confident they are able to complete the forms accurately.

Whilst the Lead Counter signatory may receive returned forms where it is not possible to establish who the counter signatory was, any forms returned to the DBS checker should be reported to the Lead Counter signatory. This will ensure there is a coordinated approach to monitoring error rates and issuing further guidance to DBS checkers to ensure further errors are not made.

Please see a list below of the common errors reported:

- Form not completed in black ink - if a form is not completed in BLACK ink, please over-write in black ink.
- All information is in upper case and not mixed case
- Gaps in the 5 year address history
- Full name including middle name(s) not complete. Check the driving licence, birth certificate or passport for evidence of a middle name
- Previous known by names not fully complete
- Last digits missing from driver's licence details.
- Signatures not within the boxes
- Continuation sheets not signed
- Counter signatory number missing or incomplete
- The student has completed section e
- The Organisation name (question 62) has QMUL's name and not the name of the School / Organisation where the student is going
- The relevant 'registered body use only' fields have not been checked

### **Recording Evidence**

It is important to record basic information regarding those staff making a DBS application to ensure auditing can take place throughout the year. As well as recording a staff members forename, surname and job role, it is essential that you record what documents / ID route were used to identify the staff member and whether they met the eligibility criteria for the level and type of DBS check used. This will assist in future audits. Once the DBS applicant has received notification of the outcome of the Disclosure, any copies of documents retained should be destroyed.

All counter signatories should familiarise themselves with the following DBS official documents:

- [DBS Code of Practice](#)
- [DBS Eligibility Guidance](#)
- [DBS Workforce Guidance](#)
- [Regulated activity with children](#)

- [Regulated activity with adults](#)
- [DBS Guidance leaflets](#)
- [Policy Statement on the recruitment of staff and acceptance of students who are ex-offenders](#)
- [Policy Statement on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of DBS certificates](#)