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1 Which students are covered by these requirements?

Only students attending clinical placements in NSW Health facilities are covered by these requirements; clinical placements (also known as student placements or fieldwork education) refer to the provision of supervised tertiary or post graduate education or research in a clinical setting by University /TAFE/ other Registered Training Organisation students.

Students from High School or TAFE completing work experience for their secondary school qualifications at a NSW Health agency are not covered by these requirements as they do not require National Criminal Record Checks (‘NCRCs’) as they must be supervised at all times by a staff member of the service who is allocated responsibility for them.

2 What do I need to provide to NSW Health to undertake clinical placements?

All students must have an original Australian National Police Certificate (also known as a National Police Check Certificate) to attend clinical placements in NSW Health agencies.

The National Police Check Certificate must have been issued by an Australian Police Force within the last three years and be valid for the duration of your placement. If you have any criminal records against your name, you must apply for a clearance before you will be allowed to attend placements.

Before commencing a clinical placement in a NSW Health Agency, your original National Police Check Certificate (or your clearance to undertake placements) must be sighted by a NSW Health employee. You must provide this information in person and have with you your student ID card. Only ORIGINAL certificates will be accepted. Please contact your Tertiary Education Institution for more information.

All students must also sign the NSW Health Code of Conduct Agreement and abide by the Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Infections Diseases Policy (PD2011_005).

If you are an overseas student, please note the additional requirements for overseas students detailed below.

Refer to the NSW Health Student Clinical Placement Checklist for more information about the criminal record check and immunisation requirements for students wishing to undertake clinical placements in NSW Health agencies.
3 Is a National Police Check Certificate issued by a private company acceptable?
No, students wishing to undertake clinical placements in NSW Health agencies must have a valid National Police Check Certificate issued by an Australian State, Territory or Federal Police Force only.

4 I am an existing NSW Health employee. Do I still need to obtain a National Police Check Certificate to undertake placements?
Yes, all students wishing to undertake clinical placements are required to have a valid National Police Check Certificate obtained from an Australian State, Territory or Federal Police Force, regardless of whether or not they are an existing NSW Health employee.

5 As an overseas student, do I need to obtain an Australian National Police Check Certificate?
Yes, all students wishing to undertake clinical placements in NSW Health agencies are required to obtain an Australian National Police Check Certificate through a State or Territory Police Force or from the Australian Federal Police.
Overseas students, whether enrolled in an Australian or Overseas Tertiary Institution, must in addition to obtaining an Australian National Police Check Certificate, also obtain Police Certificates from their home country or any country that they have resided in (as a permanent resident or citizen) since turning 16 years of age (translated into English).
If you are unable to obtain a Police Certificate from your home country or any other country that you have been a citizen or permanent resident of since turning 16 years of age, you must complete the Template Statutory Declaration. (The Statutory Declaration must be completed after arrival in NSW).

6 Am I required to have a Working with Children Check?
No, students undertaking clinical placements in hospitals or other health services in NSW are not required to obtain a Working with Children Check. Refer to the Student Clinical Placement Checklist for requirements.

7 What is included in a National Police Check Certificate?
A National Police Check Certificate lists all disclosable court outcomes recorded by Australian Police jurisdictions against the applicant’s name.
Disclosable court outcomes include all findings of guilt (with or without a conviction) as well as current pending court matters released in accordance with the state and federal spent convictions legislation.
8 How long is a National Police Check Certificate valid for?
In accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2013_028, the National Police Check Certificate is valid for three years from the date of issue.

You must ensure that your Police Certificate is valid for the duration of your Clinical Placement prior to commencing. If your Police Certificate is not valid for the duration of your placement, you may not be allowed to commence.

9 How do I apply for a National Police Check Certificate?
All Students wishing to undertake Clinical Placements in NSW Health agencies must have a valid National Police Check Certificate from their State or Territory Police Force or from the Australian Federal Police. Refer to the website of the relevant Police Force for instructions on applying.

10 How long does it take to get a National Police Check Certificate?
You should allow at least 15 working days, depending on the State, Territory or Federal Police Force dealing with your application. To check on the status of your application, contact the Police Force managing your application.

11 Can I apply at any NSW Police Station?
For information on how to apply for a National Police Check Certificate from the NSW Police Force, refer to the NSW Police Force website.

12 Can I apply for a National Police Check Certificate whilst overseas?
Yes, but only from the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

Please note that when completing the AFP application form, you should:

1. Select “Name Check only”
2. Complete all necessary information on the form
3. For field “Purpose Type” – Select “Commonwealth Purpose / Employment”
4. For field “Purpose of Check” – Select –“Care of children/intellectually disabled/Aged Care staff/volunteers

13 I live overseas and will not be arriving in Australia until the day before my clinical placement. What should I do?
Contact your Tertiary Education Institution as soon as possible as you may be entitled to have your original National Police Check Certificate (and any Overseas Criminal Record Check/ Statutory Declaration) sighted by a NSW Health employee on the first morning of your placement.

To ensure there are no delays in organising your placement, you still need to provide a certified copy of your original National Police Check Certificate (and overseas Police Certificates or Statutory Declaration) before the commencement of the placement.
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Your original National Police Check Certificate may be certified by a Justice of the Peace or your Tertiary Education Institute may scan the original National Police Check Certificate and email it to NSW Health with confirmation that they have sighted and sent a scanned copy of the original document.

You will still need to provide the original documents on the first day of your placement; failure to do so may result in your placement being suspended.

14 I live interstate / in a remote area/ too far away to travel to provide my National Police Check Certificate in person before the commencement of my clinical placement. What do I do?

Refer to the instructions for overseas students.

15 Will NSW Health accept a copy of my National Police Check Certificate certified by a Justice of the Peace?

No, the original National Police Check Certificate must be presented by you in person to a NSW Health employee prior to commencing your clinical placement (unless it has been agreed that you may present your original National Police Check Certificate on the first morning of the placement – see arrangements for overseas students)

16 Is a Working with Children Check clearance acceptable instead of a National Police Check Certificate?

No, a Working with Children Check clearance is not the same as a National Police Check Certificate. Students wishing to undertake clinical placements in NSW Health agencies must have a National Police Check Certificate issued by an Australian State, Territory or Federal Police Force.

17 What happens if I lose my National Police Check Certificate?

You should contact the Police Force that provided the Certificate.

18 What if my personal details on the National Police Check Certificate are incorrect?

You should contact the Police Force that provided the Certificate as soon as possible.

Please note, NSW Health may not accept a Police Certificate if it has incorrect personal details. Your National Police Check Certificate must match your name exactly as printed on your student ID card issued by your Tertiary Education Institution.
19 What happens if I change my name?
You must ensure that the name on the National Police Check Certificate matches the name on your student’s ID card from your Tertiary Education Institution.
If the name on the National Police Check Certificate does not exactly match the name as printed on your Student ID card, NSW Health will not accept it.

20 I’ve recently changed my name (got married/divorced/reverted to maiden name). Will NSW Health accept my National Police Check Certificate in my new name and my student identification card in my previous name if I can present evidence of the change of name?
No, your National Police Check Certificate must be in the same name as your student ID card.

21 I’ve lost my Student ID card. Will I be able to show NSW Health my driver’s licence as proof of identification instead?
Yes, as long as your driver’s licence is still valid and is in the same name as your original National Police Check Certificate.

22 What if my National Police Check Certificate shows criminal records that do not belong to me?
You should contact the Police Force that provided the Certificate as soon as possible.

23 Can I provide alternative documentation if I don’t have my original National Police Check Certificate?
No, only an original National Police Certificate from an Australian State, Territory or Federal Police Force is acceptable as evidence of an Australian National Criminal Record Check.

The following documents are not acceptable:

- A Criminal Record Check from a private company;
- Your receipt for payment for your National Police Check Certificate;
- A screen shot or email you’ve received regarding confirmation for your National Police Check Certificate;
- A National Police Check Certificate not printed on the official paper;
- A copy of your National Police Check Certificate signed by a Justice of the Peace;
- A copy of your National Police Check Certificate accompanied by a Statutory Declaration from you stating it is a copy of the original;
- A verbal confirmation from you stating that you have an original National Police Check Certificate;
- An original National Police Check Certificate which is in a different name to your student identity card issued by your Tertiary Education Institution;
- A Working with Children Check Clearance.
24 Will I be able to undertake clinical placements if I have a criminal history?

Criminal history does not necessarily constitute a barrier to clinical placement.

You may not, however, commence clinical placements until your criminal history (as identified on your National Police Check Certificate or Overseas Police Certificate or as disclosed by you) has been assessed by NSW Health’s Employment Screening and Review Unit (ESRU) and you been provided with a Clinical Placement Authority Card or a Conditional Letter.

To apply for an assessment, your must complete an ‘Application for authority to undertake clinical placements in NSW Health facilities’ and forward it to ESRU with other required documentation.

Each application is considered on its merits, and its relevance to undertaking clinical placements in NSW Health agencies. Mitigating factors include, but are not limited to, the length of time since the convictions, the nature of the convictions and penalties imposed, action taken since by the student and any references provided.

If the risks relating to the criminal history are not relevant or are sufficiently mitigated, ESRU will provide you with a Clinical Placement Authority Card or a Conditional Letter with authority to undertake clinical placements subject to certain conditions.

If you have any questions about how your criminal history may affect your application for authority to undertake clinical placements, or any questions about the process for obtaining an authority to undertake clinical placements, you may contact the NSW Health’s Employment Screening and Review Unit on 02 8848 5175 or by email at esruenquiries@hss.health.nsw.gov.au

25 If I have a minor offence on my National Police Check Certificate, do I still have to provide it to ESRU for assessment?

Yes. You must obtain a Clinical Placement Authority Card from ESRU to attend clinical placements. NSW Health agencies will not accept National Police Check Certificates that have criminal records of any kind; you must obtain a Clinical Placement Authority Card from ESRU. Refer to Clinical Placement Checklist for the requirements.

26 What information do I need to provide to ESRU?

ESRU requires a completed Student Application for Clinical Placement Authority and:

- Certified copies of your National Police Check Certificate, and any Overseas Police Certificates or your Statutory Declaration relating to overseas matters;
- A certified copy of your Student ID ;and
- Written references (as applicable) and any other supportive information that you feel may assist with the assessment process.

Information may be faxed (02 8848 5188), emailed (esruenquiries@hss.health.nsw.gov.au) or posted (PO Box 292 WESTMEAD NSW 2145) to the Employment Screening and Review Unit.
27 How long will it take ESRU to assess my application?
You should allow 10 working days.
The time taken will depend on the type of offences recorded against your name and the sufficiency of the information you have provided. To minimise any delays, you should ensure that you have provided sufficient references and completed all the paperwork correctly.
If you are unsure what references you need to supply, or how many, contact ESRU on 8848 5175 or by email at esruenquiries@hss.health.nsw.gov.au.

28 How do I get an urgent Clinical Placement Authority or Conditional Letter?
Email or fax your documents to ESRU and then contact ESRU on 8848 5175.

29 What happens if my Clinical Placement Authority or Conditional Letter is incorrect?
Contact ESRU immediately on 8848 5175. If the Clinical Placement Authority or Conditional Letter has incorrect personal details, it may not be acceptable for commencing placements, and your placement may be delayed.

30 If I have a Clinical Placement Authority Card or Conditional Letter do I still have to present my National Criminal Record Check Certificate?
No, if you have criminal records on your Police Certificate or in a Declaration that have been assessed by ESRU, you are not required to disclose that information to the NSW Health agency; you should present the Clinical Placement Authority Card or Conditional Letter from ESRU instead of your Police Certificate. Refer to the Clinical Placement Checklist.

31 How long is a Clinical Placement Authority Card valid for?
Clinical Placement Authority Cards are valid until the expiry date on the Card. If there is no date on the card, because it was obtained before June 2010, it is valid for the duration of the course. For further information, refer to the Clinical Placement Checklist.
You must ensure that your National Police Check Certificate, Clinical Placement Authority Card or your Conditional Letter is valid for the duration of your Clinical Placement. If it is not valid for the duration of your placement, you may not be allowed to commence and your placement may be delayed.

32 What happens if I lose my Clinical Placement Authority Card or Conditional Letter?
Complete a “Request for duplicate/amendment clinical placement card” form and send it to ESRU. The fee for a replacement CPA/Conditional letter is A$33.00.
33 What happens if my Clinical Placement Authority Card or Conditional Letter is stolen?

Complete a “Request for duplicate/amendment clinical placement card” form and send it to ESRU along with the Police Event Number (after you have reported it to the Police). No fee will be incurred as long as you have a valid Police Event Number.

34 What happens if I am charged with an offence after my National Police Check Certificate or Clinical Placement Authority or Conditional Letter?

If you are charged with, or convicted of, an offence, you must immediately contact ESRU on 8848 5175 or by email at esruenquiries@hss.health.nsw.gov.au.

You may not commence any clinical placements or continue in a clinical placement until advised by ESRU that it is okay for you to do so. You must provide to ESRU:

- A completed Student Application for Clinical Placement Authority;
- Certified copies of any Police Facts Sheets/Court Outcomes, or any other documentation relating to the charges or convictions;
- A certified copy of your Student ID; and
- Written references (as applicable) and any other supportive information that you feel may be necessary to assist with the assessment process.

ESRU will undertake an assessment of the charges or the convictions and will notify you of the outcome.

If the risks relating to the criminal history are not relevant or are sufficiently mitigated, ESRU will provide you with a Clinical Placement Authority Card or a Conditional Letter with authority to undertake or continue to undertake clinical placements subject to certain conditions.