Guidance on the verification process

The credentialling and scope of practice process is a key governance responsibility. Verification of a doctor's credentials is a critical element of this process. There have been a number of high profile cases across Australia where the verification process has been inadequate, leading to failure of the credentialling process and leaving patients, organisations and doctors vulnerable.

The verification process must be rigorous. The health service must ensure that the doctor is who they say they are, and is presenting bona fide documentation.

If an organisation uses a recruitment agency to source applicants, the organisation is still responsible for undertaking their own verification process as outlined in Tables 1 – 3 below.

In general, organisations will experience greater levels of certainty and thus protection if they have obtained sufficient information about the doctor. The *Credentialling and defining the scope of clinical practice for medical practitioners in Victorian health services* policy (Department of Health 2007, updated 2009) enables organisations to collect the information required to be sure that the doctor meets the organisation's requirements.

The credentialling process should be documented using the Department of Health's policy forms or an equivalent. The form completed by the doctor must include a requirement for the doctor to notify the health service of any change to their credentials that may impact their scope of practice. The form should also include permission from the doctor for the health service to obtain any information relevant to their application (including contacting previous employers regardless of whether they are listed as referees).

The credentialling policy defines the following elements in the verification process as outlined in Tables 1 – 3 below for the *Initial appointment, Annual credentials review* and *Re-credentialling*.

Initial appointment

Evidence	Verification process
Curriculum vitae (CV)	• Confirm through checking with other sources (for example, referees and previous employers) if indicated
Registration status	• Check current Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registration http://www.ahpra.gov.au/ • Confirm presence or absence of endorsements, conditions, undertakings, notations and reprimands • Confirm type of registration (for example, General, Specialist, Limited - Area of need)
Certified copy of specialist or other qualifications	• Sight certified copy of qualification • Check with relevant college if indicated
Proof of identity (100 points)	• Confirm identity documents - 100 point check
National police record check	• Should be routine for new appointments – refer *Credentialling and defining scope of clinical practice* policy (2009) and your health service's recruitment policy
Certified copy of current medical indemnity (if applicable)	• Sight certified copy of indemnity certificate • Ensure cover reflects requested scope of practice • Confirm with relevant insurer if indicated
Continuing professional development (CPD) certificate	• Sight copy of college certificate or evidence of relevant CPD • Confirm with relevant college if indicated
Referees	• Minimum two referees • Referees must be recent and reflect the CV • Referees must be contacted and written references verified verbally • Referee report template provided in policy
Additional processes Organisations should be aware of attempts by doctors to fraudulently seek appointment through falsification of their applications. This has been a particular issue regarding failure to disclose previous issues with medical registration. This has largely occurred in what might be regarded as high risk settings (for example, highly mobile doctors with international qualifications, areas of workforce paucity, remote and rural settings, doctors being presented by recruitment agencies).	• In these settings, organisations are strongly encouraged to undertake additional efforts to ensure the accuracy of a doctor's application - this is now regarded as 'best practice' • Organisations should contact previous employers to confirm good standing (regardless of whether they are listed as referees) • Targeted online searches using a search engine should be conducted • Where possible the doctor's previous registration status should be verified, for example, by searching the doctor's name on the previous medical board's online register • It may be also prudent to check the veracity of a doctor's publication list using an online publication search facility such as Pubmed® http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/

Annual credentials review

Evidence	Verification process
Curriculum vitae	• Not required
Registration status	• Check current AHPRA registration http://www.ahpra.gov.au/ • Confirm presence or absence of endorsements, conditions, undertakings, notations and reprimands • Confirm type of registration (for example, General, Specialist, Limited - Area of need)
Certified copy of qualifications	• Not required
Proof of identity (100 points)	• Not required
Copy of current medical indemnity (if applicable)	• Sight copy of indemnity certificate • Ensure cover reflects scope of practice
National police record check	• Not routinely required
Continuing professional development (CPD) certificate	• Sight copy of college certificate, annual statement of participation or evidence of current CPD • Confirm with relevant college if indicated
Referees	• Not required
Additional processes	• Not required unless indicated from outcomes of the above processes

Re-credentialling (3 or 5 years or as needed)

Evidence	Verification process
Curriculum vitae	• If change scope of practice is requested, updated CV and other supporting documentation should be checked • Confirm through checking with other sources (such as other hospitals where the doctor works) if indicated • Otherwise not required
Registration status	• Check current AHPRA registration http://www.ahpra.gov.au/ • Confirm presence or absence of endorsements, conditions, undertakings, notations and reprimands • Confirm type of registration (for example, General, Specialist, Limited - Area of need)
Certified copy of qualifications	• If recognition of new qualifications is requested - sight certified copy of qualification • Check with relevant college if indicated
Proof of identity (100 points)	• Not required
Copy of current medical indemnity (if applicable)	• Sight copy of indemnity certificate • Ensure cover reflects requested scope of practice • Confirm with relevant insurer if indicated
National police record check	• Not routinely required
Continuing professional development (CPD) certificate	• Sight copy of college certificate, annual statement of participation or evidence of current CPD • Confirm with relevant college if indicated
Referees	• Referees only required if a change in scope of practice is requested - must be contacted and verified verbally • Referee report template provided in policy
Additional processes	• Not required unless indicated from credentialling forms or outcomes of the above processes