

## **PLACEMENT OPERATIONS – HEALTH PLACEMENTS**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – POLICE CHECK**

**Q: What is a police check?**

A: A Police Record Check (also called a “National Criminal History Record Check” or “National Police Certificate”) is a national report prepared by the Australian Federal Police or by State or Territory police force or service that discloses evidence of whether a person:

- Has been convicted of an offence;
- Has been charged with and found guilty of an offence but discharged without conviction; or
- Is the subject of any criminal charge still pending before a Court.

**Q: Do I have to obtain a police check?**

A: Yes – you must obtain a police check prior to the commencement of placement, and at the start of each subsequent year, to be able to attend placement. You will not be permitted to undertake any placements unless you obtain and provide a copy of a satisfactory police check to the Placements Unit.

**Q: How long is a police check valid for?**

A: Police checks are current only for the day on which they are issued. For the purposes of placements, police checks need to be dated within the same year as the placement being conducted. You should obtain a police check in the first year that placement is offered and at the start of each subsequent year.

Note: Some placement providers may also require you to hold a police check with an issue date no older than 3 or 6 months. As a consequence, you may be required to obtain more than one police check in a given academic year. You will be informed by your discipline or Placement Officer where this is the case.

**Q: Can I use my police check from the previous year, as long as it is dated within 12 months?**

A: No – you are required to obtain a new police check in each year you undertake placements. For example, students who undertake placements in 2019 must have a police check dated in 2019.

**Q: I am an international student and/or have lived overseas for more than 12 months, do I need to provide a police check from the country I have previously lived in?**

A: Yes – if you have resided in any other country for a period of more than 12 months in the past 10 years, you will be required to provide a police check from that country. Where you are unable to provide a police check due to government regulations/time restraints etc. you will need to submit a statutory declaration stating whether you have ever been convicted of a crime overseas and, if so, providing details of the conviction.

**Q: Do I need to provide a police check each year from the country I have previously lived in?**

A: You are only required to provide a police check or statutory declaration once, prior to the start of your first placement. However, should you take a Leave of Absence from your course and live overseas for more than 12 months you will be required to submit an updated police or statutory declaration prior to undertaking further placements.

**Q: How do I apply for an overseas police check?**

A: It is your responsibility to enquire with the country of residence's local authorities to find out how to obtain a police check.

**Q: How do I apply for an Australian police check?**

A: Depending on your residential address you can apply for a police check through either the [Victoria Police](#), [fit2work](#) or the [Australian Federal Police](#).

- Students with a Victorian residential address can apply for a police check through either the Victoria Police or through fit2work.
- Students with an Australian residential address outside of Victoria can only apply for a police check through fit2work.
- Students with an overseas address can apply for a police check through fit2work or the Australian Federal Police.

**Q: Can I apply for a fit2work check even if I am a student from overseas or interstate?**

A: Yes – fit2work is available to all students from any State/Territory or country.

**Q: How do I apply for a fit2work police check?**

A: You will be sent an email by your Placement Officer with instructions on how to apply for a police check through fit2work. If you wish to opt out of using fit2work, you will be given the opportunity to do so at this point. Note: if you have placement commencing very early in the New Year you must apply through fit2work as you require a police check quickly.

Once you have been given the opportunity to opt out the Placement Officer will send all consenting students' details to fit2work. fit2work will then send you an individual email with a link to complete your fit2work police check application.

You will be required to complete an online application form, upload Minimum Proof of Identity Requirement documents and pay for the police check.

Full instructions on the fit2work process can be found in the [fit2work Student User Guide](#).

**Q: What are the Minimum Proof of Identity Requirements?**

A: The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) has recently replaced the old 100 point identity system with a Minimum Proof of Identity Requirement. This change requires police check fit2work applicants to provide four documents from three categories, as below:

- One Commencement of Identity Document (e.g. Australian passport, Australian visa and foreign passport, Australian birth certificate etc.)
- One Primary Use in the Community Document (e.g. Australian licence, Australian marriage certificate, Government-issued proof of age or photo identity card etc.)
- Two Secondary Use in the Community Documents (e.g. bank card, Medicare card, electoral commission enrolment etc.)

More information on the types of documents that fall under each of these sections is available on the [ACIC website](#).

Please note that Victoria Police and the Australian Federal Police still use the 100 point system.

**Q: Do my documents need to be certified for a fit2work application?**

A: When applying for a police check through fit2work, you can opt to upload a “selfie” holding one of the forms of photo ID you have provided in lieu of having your documents certified. If you choose not to provide a “selfie,” then your documents will still need to be certified by a person who is authorised to witness statutory declarations and certify documents.

After two failed attempts (per application, not per document) to verify the ID you have provided, fit2work will request that you provide certified copies of the documents instead. Verification failure usually occurs due to ID details being entered incorrectly when completing your application.

Any international identity documents will need to be certified as fit2work are unable to access international databases to verify these.

**Q: Can I get my identity documents certified overseas for the fit2work application?**

A: Yes – fit2work will accept identification documents certified overseas as long as the certification is in English and meets the same standards as Australian certification as outlined in the fit2work police check – student process above.

**Q: Do my documents need to be recently certified?**

A: Yes – Documents must be certified within 3 months of the submission of the documents to fit2work.

**Q: I haven't received an email invite to complete my police check through fit2work, what should I do?**

A: You should advise your Placement Officer. The Placement Officer will arrange for the email to be sent again.

Note: The email is from Equifax, who own fit2work. Please remember to check your junk and clutter mailboxes as emails from non-La Trobe University organisations may be sent to either of these mailboxes.

**Q: How do I apply for a Victoria police check?**

A: Download and complete the online application form from the [Victoria Police website](#). If you wish to obtain the discounted rate, you must have part of the form completed by a member of the Placements Unit. See the "How do I obtain the Community Volunteer Fee (CVF) number for the Victoria Police check?" question for more information on how to do this. You must then post your completed form, 100 points of certified identification and the fee to Victoria Police.

Full instructions on the Victoria Police process can be found here: [Procedure for police check applications](#).

**Q: How do I obtain the Community Volunteer Fee (CVF) number for the Victoria Police check?**

A: There are two ways to obtain the CVF number and signature from a Placement Officer.

- Students in Melbourne must take their application form to the ASK La Trobe Help Zone in the Bundoora campus library (Borchardt Library). An ASK La Trobe staff member will contact the Placements Unit and a Placement Officer will come to the library to fill in the CVF number and sign in Section E.
- Students based in Regional Victoria can post their completed form and a self-addressed reply paid envelope to the Regional Placements Unit – Regional Placements Unit, Clinical Teaching Building, La Trobe University, PO Box 199, Bendigo, VIC 3552. A Placement Officer will fill in the CVF number, sign Section E and return the form to you. You are then responsible for sending the form on to Victoria Police.

**Q: How do I apply for an Australian Federal Police check (National Police Check)?**

A: Either complete the online application form or download the paper form to complete. You must then either submit your completed application form, 100 points of certified identification and the fee via the online service or by post.

Full instructions on the Australian Federal Police process can be found here: [Australian Federal Police checks](#).

**Q: Do my documents need to be certified for a Victoria Police or AFP police check application?**

A: Yes - documents provided as part of an application for a police check through Victoria Police or the Australian Federal Police need to be certified.

**Q: Do I have to pay for the police check?**

A: Yes – you are responsible for all associated costs incurred when obtaining a police check. Payment is made directly to Victoria Police, fit2work or Australian Federal Police as part of the application process. La Trobe University will not act on behalf of students or accept payments in relation to police checks.

**Q: How much does a police check cost?**

A: Application fees for Victoria Police checks change on 1 July, every year, in accordance with the Victoria Police (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2014. The prices below were current as at 1 July 2019. Please check directly with the company providing the check for any updates to their prices.

Victoria Police check: Students applying for a police check through Victoria Police are eligible for a reduced fee as La Trobe University students qualify as volunteers for an authorised organisation. Students wanting to pay the reduced rate of \$18.40 (excluding GST) must obtain the Community Volunteer Fee (CVF) number and signature from a member of the Placements Unit.

Students who do not obtain the CVF number and signature will need to pay the full fee of \$48.90 (excluding GST).

Fit2work police check: Students applying for a police check through fit2work are eligible for a reduced fee if the student applies through a unique portal link that is emailed to them by Equifax. Students will only receive this email when their application for a fit2work police check is initiated by a member of the Placements Unit. If a police check is mandatory for your subject or facility, your Work Integrated Learning Administrator will contact you in advance of your placement commencing to arrange for this link to be sent to you. The reduced cost for students is \$21.90 (excluding GST).

Students who complete a police check directly through fit2work without going through the emailed link will be charged the full price of \$39.90 (excluding GST).

Australian Federal Police check: There is no reduced cost for students that apply for a police check through the Australian Federal Police. The cost is \$42.00 (excluding GST).

**Q: How long does it take to receive the completed police check?**

A: For Victoria Police checks the minimum turnaround time advertised for police checks is 10 working days, however in some instances applications can take up to 6 weeks. You should submit the application for a police check 6 weeks before the clinical document due date for your discipline.

fit2work have a turnaround of 1-2 days for 80% of the police checks. Approximately 20% will require manual processing which can take 2-10 business days and approximately 5% of checks may take up to

20 business days to be returned. It is recommended you allow sufficient time to obtain a completed police check prior to the clinical document due date, should your application need to be processed manually.

National police checks through the Australian Federal Police may take a minimum of 15 working days from the date the application is received.

**Q: What is manual processing?**

A: The majority of police check applications processed by fit2work are done electronically, and results are returned quickly. However, sometimes an application needs to be manually reviewed by police for further investigation. This usually occurs for one of the following reasons:

- Having a common name (eg Smith), or a given name and/or surname that has a potential match with other persons in the National Police Checking Database
- Having old police history information that requires manual collection and processing of hard copy records
- The relevant police agency having inaccurate or incomplete records which need to be investigated before the check can be finalised
- Transferring information between the various state and territory police agencies before the information can be vetted, verified and/or released

Checks that are sent for manual processing can take from 20-30 business days for a result to be returned.

**Q: Do I have to upload my police check to InPlace?**

A: Yes – you are required to upload a copy of your police check to the Student Placement Management System, InPlace by the discipline specific deadline. Log into InPlace and upload the police check under the '2019 Police Check' section of Health Placement Compliance on the details tab of your profile.

**Q: Do I need to upload a certified copy to InPlace?**

A: No – you are not required to upload a certified copy to InPlace. However, some placement providers require students to submit coloured certified copies prior to placement commencing. If a placement provider requests a certified copy of your police check you must comply – a black and white or colour photocopy will not be sufficient if they have requested a colour certified copy and the placement provider may refuse you to attend placement if you don't comply.

As you receive an electronic PDF result from fit2work, if you have completed your police check via fit2work and a certified colour photocopy has been requested, please contact your Placement Officer for further guidance.

**Q: I am having trouble logging in to InPlace, can I email my police check to the Placement Officer?**

A: No – you will need to contact ASK La Trobe – 1300 LA TROBE (1300 528 762) for any technical/IT difficulties.

**Q: When do I have to submit my police check by?**

A: Your Placement Officer will communicate with you about your discipline specific timeframes for police checks and final deadlines for submission.

**Q: What if I don't have my police check by the discipline specific deadline?**

A: Your placement allocations will not be confirmed if you fail to present your police check by the discipline deadline, and you risk being withdrawn from upcoming placements.

Due to the cost and limited supply of placements, we cannot guarantee that a suitable alternative placement will be sourced for you if you do not comply with the discipline deadline for clinical documents. This may lead to a delay in your progression through the course.

**Q: Will my police check be shared with a placement provider?**

A: Where required, we may disclose your name, the fact that you have a satisfactory police check and the date it was obtained to third parties where placements are undertaken. All handling of your police check is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Victoria Police: [Information Release Policy](#).

**Q: What should I do if I have a disclosable outcome on my police check?**

A: If you have a disclosable outcome recorded on your police check, you should immediately seek advice from the Senior Coordinator Placement Operations and/or your subject or course coordinator about the implications. The Senior Coordinator Placement Operations or delegate will liaise with the HR Director (or equivalent position) within the placement provider organisation and discuss your case and whether proceeding with the planned placement is possible. You will be de-identified in such cases.

**Q: Will my placement be cancelled if I have a disclosable outcome on my police check?**

A: Although a disclosable outcome does not automatically prevent you from attending placement, placement providers have to exclude you from placement based on the disclosable outcome.

Apart from aged care services (see question below) it is up to the agency to determine whether the individual student is suitable for placement. Placement providers will take into consideration the seriousness and relevance of the conviction, the level of access the person has to care recipients and the length of time since the conviction.

The final decision about whether you can attend placement is with the placement provider. The University cannot overturn this decision. Consequently, if you have a disclosable outcome, you student may have your progression halted at any instance of placement within the course.

**Q: Am I able to attend an aged care placement with a disclosable outcome?**

A: If your police check shows that you have been convicted of murder or sexual assault, or convicted of and sentenced to imprisonment for any other form of assault, you are not permitted to work within an aged care service. For all other types of convictions, it is up to the agency to determine whether you are suitable.

**Q: What if my placement is cancelled due to a disclosable outcome?**

A: Should a placement provider deny you from attending placement, we will make reasonable attempts to source a suitable alternative placement. We will consider that we have made reasonable attempts to find a suitable alternative placement if we have received rejections from three placement providers (however the number may be lower depending on availability of placements).

Where reasonable attempts have been made and no suitable alternative placement can be sourced, you will be counselled by your discipline specific Clinical Coordinator on the most appropriate action. You may be required to take a Leave of Absence from the course or reconsider your course enrolment.

**Q: Will my Supervisor / Clinical Educator be informed of my disclosable outcome?**

A: The Senior Coordinator Placement Operations or delegate will liaise with the HR Director (or equivalent position) of the placement provider regarding the disclosable outcome. Whilst you will be de-identified during this process, there may be occasions when the placement provider is aware of who the student involved is (such as where you are the only student allocated to a particular placement). The facility may also request further information from you in order to make a decision regarding your attendance, which could include a direct conversation between you and an appropriate facility staff member

**Q: Do I need to take my police check with me to placement?**

A: Yes – you should take your police check with you on the first day of each placement. Some placement providers may also require you to have their police check with you for every day of placement. Placement providers may send you home if you arrive at placement without a satisfactory police check.

**Q: I can't get my police check until the start of 2019 but the deadline for documents to be uploaded for my discipline is in 2018?**

A: We are aware that you are not able to obtain a new police check until January, which may be after the deadline for submission of clinical documents has passed for your discipline. If you have a deadline of the year prior to placement, your Placement Officer will advise you of a separate deadline for

uploading the police check. Please make sure you have obtained and uploaded the police check by this deadline.

You must upload all other documents (excluding the annual influenza vaccination) by the due date.

**Q: What do I do if I've lost my police check?**

A: If you have lost or misplaced your police check, you will need to replace it. In some instances, fit2work may be able to provide you with a new copy of your original police check. If you have lost a Victoria Police or AFP check, you will need to obtain a new police check prior to commencing any placement.

**Q: What if something happens during the year and I'm concerned my status might change?**

A: If you experience a potential change in the status of your police check, such as being investigated for, charged with, or found guilty of a criminal offence, you must immediately consult with the Senior Coordinator Placement Operations and may be required to obtain a new Police Record Check. A change in status may result in you being withdrawn from placement.

**Q: Do I need to get a different police check if I have placement in a New South Wales?**

A: The majority of placement providers in NSW now accept fit2work police checks. If you have a Victoria Police check you may be required to apply for a new police check through fit2work if you have placement in NSW. You will be informed by your Placement Officer if you are required to apply for a different police check.

**Q: Do I need to get a new or different police check if I have placement in other States/Territories or overseas?**

A: If you undertake interstate placements or if you reside outside of Victoria, you may be required to obtain a state or territory specific police check in order to undertake your placement. If you are undertaking a placement overseas, you will need to comply with local regulations and requirements necessary to undertake a placement in that country.

Where applicable, you will receive further information from your discipline specific Placement Officer at the time of placement allocation and should consult with your discipline specific Clinical Coordinator at the time of arranging an overseas placement.

**Q: I have a police check through holding registration with an accrediting body, can I use this instead of obtaining a separate police check?**

A: We cannot guarantee that a police check obtained through an accrediting body will be accepted as a suitable alternative to a Victoria Police check or fit2work police check by a placement provider, even if it is recognised as being equivalent. Where an agency rejects the alternative check, you will be required to obtain a police check through either Victoria Police or fit2work.

**Q: Where can I find out more information?**

A: Please check La Trobe University's [Police Record Check Guidelines](#) for further information.

All La Trobe University documents on police check process and guidelines are also available on the SHE Placements Administration LMS page – [SHE Placements – College of SHE Placements](#)