



Employment Suitability Screening Process

Supporting Material

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1. Introduction

The Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) contains the controls used by the Australian Government to protect its people, information and resources. Pursuant to the PSPF, the Department is required to:

- ensure the eligibility and suitability of its personnel who have access to Australian Government resources (PSPF core requirement 12), and
- assess and manage the ongoing suitability of its personnel and share relevant information of security concern, where appropriate (PSPF core requirement 13).

Under the PSPF, agency heads are responsible for setting the minimum suitability requirements for all new staff employed in their agencies, based on factors such as their risk environment, any agency-specific legislation and the Australian Government's expectations that agencies have in place measures to facilitate resource sharing.

Within this context, the Department and its operational arm, the Australian Border Force (ABF), operates in a privileged place at the border and in the community. Every day, the Department makes decisions that affect the safety, rights and freedoms of people, and Australian trade and commerce. Immigration and Border Protection (IBP) workers exercise considerable discretion and significant powers on behalf of the Department, often under limited supervision. The community and government trust the Department and its IBP workers to exercise these powers responsibly, lawfully, impartially and professionally.

The Department's work and the information it holds is of considerable value to organised crime syndicates, who actively try to circumvent border controls, reduce border integrity and threaten national security. Visa and citizenship decision making and the Department's border management activities are a significant target for criminal groups who have strong financial and other motives to infiltrate border protection agencies worldwide, including the Department.

Against the backdrop of the Department's extensive responsibilities and powers, there is a need for the Department to have policies and procedures in place to mitigate integrity risk. There is a real risk that an employee or other individual with access to the Department's assets might misuse their powers or position, with some expectation of gain for themselves or for others. There is also the risk that individuals may be vulnerable to bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion or perversion of the course of justice.

Corruption in the Department would greatly undermine government and public confidence in the Department, as well as the confidence of its partners, including intelligence organisations and foreign governments.

To meet its obligations under the PSPF, the Department has developed a comprehensive employment suitability screening framework which is designed to examine a range of Department-specific risk factors relevant to its personnel and other individuals who are provided with access to the Department's assets. In accordance with the PSPF, the framework is based on risks that are relevant to the Department's operating environment. To implement the Department's obligations under the PSPF, the Secretary of the Department has determined that:

- in the case of Department employees, an Employment Suitability Clearance (ESC) and a minimum Baseline security clearance are 'essential qualifications' and thus:
 - a condition of engagement for the purposes of paragraphs 22(6)(c) and 22(6)(d) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Public Service Act), and

- a condition of ongoing employment, and
- in the case of all other individuals who require non-public access to departmental assets, an ESC and a minimum Baseline security clearance are a mandatory precondition of being provided such access.

The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency (AGSVA) security clearance and ESC complement each other. Combined, they provide the Secretary with confidence that an individual is suitable to be employed by the Department and/or to be provided with non-public access to its assets. The table below summarises the purpose of, and risk factors examined during, the two clearance processes.

	AGSVA Security Clearance	Employment Suitability Clearance
Purpose	Provides the Australian Government with assurance that an individual can protect Australian Government security classified resources by assessing whether an individual possesses and demonstrates the following character traits: honesty, trustworthiness, maturity, tolerance, resilience and loyalty.	Provides the community with assurance that there are no risks associated with an individual or their circumstances which may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cast doubt on an individual’s ability to support the Department to achieve its mission, or • otherwise reduce the confidence the community places in the Department to maintain the integrity and security of Australia’s borders.
Risk Factors Examined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External loyalties, influences and associations • Personal relationships and conduct • Financial considerations • Alcohol and drug usage • Criminal history and conduct • Security attitudes and violations • Mental health disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations and conflicts of interest • Criminal history and/or involvement in criminal or illegal activities • Compliance with border-related laws • Drug use • Compliance with the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct • Dishonesty in the ESC process • Cumulative impact of multiple risk factors

1.1. Definitions

Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Adverse (or potentially adverse) information		Any information which may cast potential doubt on a clearance applicant’s or clearance holder’s ability to satisfy the minimum requirements for obtaining or maintaining an ESC.
Aftercare arrangements		Arrangements established between an individual and the Department, designed to manage and/or mitigate any risks to the Department or an individual which may be identified during an employment suitability screening process.

Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Clearance applicant		The individual who is the subject of an initial employment suitability screening process or employment suitability re-screening process.
Clearance holder		An individual who has already been granted an ESC.
Decision maker		The individual or individuals within the Department who have been authorised by the Secretary to make decisions in relation to employment suitability matters, as outlined in Attachment D .
Department		The Department of Home Affairs (including its operational enforcement arm, the ABF).
Departmental assets		Includes (but is not limited to) any information and technology systems (ICT systems), information, plant and equipment, vessel, aircraft and/or premises that is owned, operated, managed, controlled, leased or contracted by the Department.
Employment suitability clearance	ESC	An essential qualification for engagement and employment with the Department.
ESC assessment criteria		The assessment criteria within the Employment Suitability Clearance Assessment Criteria Supporting Material.
Employment suitability screening		A process to determine whether an individual is suitable to have non-public access to departmental assets.
Employment suitability screening information		Any information declared by an individual or otherwise obtained through any employment suitability screening process.
Employment suitability screening policy		This policy document, as well as any associated PPCF documents.
Employment suitability screening		Employment Suitability screening includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any initial employment suitability screening process any employment suitability re-screening process any employment suitability continuous assurance process undertaken pursuant to this or a related policy.
Non-public access		Ongoing or unrestricted access to departmental assets which are not available to members of the public.

Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Personnel Security and Suitability Section		<p>Any member of the Section with the functional responsibility for employment suitability re-screening, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any Senior Executive with responsibility for, or oversight of, the employment suitability re-screening function • any other individual appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the Integrity and Professional Standards Branch (I&PS) to assist with any employment suitability re-screening process.
Pre-employment Screening Section		<p>Any member of the Section with the functional responsibility for initial employment suitability screening, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any Senior Executive with responsibility for, or oversight of, the employment suitability screening function • any other individual appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the Integrity and Professional Standards Branch (I&PS) to assist with any employment suitability screening process.

2. The employment suitability screening process

2.1. Overview

The initial employment suitability screening and employment suitability re-screening processes consist of the following high level steps:

- a need for an individual (the clearance applicant) to undergo employment suitability screening or employment suitability re-screening is identified
- the clearance applicant completes all required documentation
- the Pre-employment Screening Section or Personnel Security and Suitability Section undertake a range of checks which are used to assess whether the clearance applicant is able to satisfy the minimum requirements for obtaining an ESC
- a decision maker makes a decision as to the clearance applicant's suitability to be granted an ESC and advises the clearance applicant and their relevant business area accordingly
- once the employment suitability screening or re-screening process is complete, the clearance applicant's business area may provide the clearance applicant with non-public access to Departmental assets.

2.2. Onboarding – identification of a need for employment suitability screening

If an individual requires non-public access to departmental assets, that individual will need to undergo employment suitability screening and be granted an ESC as a precondition to being provided that access.

The identification of a need for an individual to undergo employment suitability screening will generally occur through a broader organisational process associated with the movement or assignment of people into, or within the Department.

Attachment A details how the employment suitability screening process must be incorporated into relevant departmental documents and activities which govern recruitment, movement and the provision of non-public access to departmental assets.

Individuals who already hold an ESC (i.e. a clearance holder) may be required to undergo employment suitability re-screening at any time. To avoid doubt, employment suitability re-screening is to be undertaken to the same standard, and using the same checks and inquiries, as an initial employment suitability screening process.

2.3. Information used to inform an employment suitability screening decision

Information used to inform an employment suitability screening decision comes from two sources:

- information provided by the clearance applicant as part of the employment suitability screening or re-screening application process, and
- information obtained by checks and inquiries undertaken by the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections.

Additional data relating to a clearance applicant will be sourced by the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections through a range of database checks.

Processing of an employment suitability screening application will not commence until the clearance applicant submits all required documentation.

2.4. Minimum requirements for an ESC screening

Unless the clearance applicant is subject to a waiver issued by the Secretary, or a delegate of the Secretary, the following minimum requirements must be satisfied before a clearance applicant can be issued with an ESC:

- the clearance applicant must not meet any grounds or present any risks (as specified within the ESC Assessment Criteria Supporting Material) upon which the decision maker may decide not to grant their ESC (in cases where potential risks have been identified, those risks must be able to be adequately managed and mitigated through an Aftercare Arrangement)
- the clearance applicant must obtain a minimum Baseline Commonwealth security clearance (unless the ESC applicant has been granted short term or provisional access to security classified information, holds a foreign security clearance which is recognised by the Australian Government or otherwise

does not require a Commonwealth security clearance because this requirement has been waived by the Secretary or their delegate)

- the clearance applicant must have a checkable background
- the clearance applicant must be an Australian Citizen, or a foreign citizen who has a lawful right to work in Australia
- the clearance applicant's identity must be verified to the Department's identity verification standards (as outlined in **Attachment B**).

2.5. Screening processes

There are a range of checks undertaken by the Pre-employment Screening and Personnel Security and Suitability Section as part of the employment suitability screening or employment suitability re-screening processes. These checks are designed to enable the Department to:

- identify whether there are any risk factors associated with the clearance applicant which may result in the clearance applicant being not granted an ESC
- identify whether there are any risk factors which may necessitate the development of tailored risk mitigation strategies through an Aftercare Arrangement.

The Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections may request a clearance applicant to provide additional information, put additional questions to the clearance applicant or conduct additional database checks in order to assess a clearance applicant's ability to satisfy the minimum requirements for being granted an ESC.

The clearance applicant may invite a support person (including a staff representative) to attend any meeting with the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections.

2.6. Uncheckable backgrounds/gaps, anomalies and discrepancies

A clearance applicant has an uncheckable background when the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections cannot complete the minimum checks and inquiries required to support the employment suitability screening process, or the checks and inquiries, where able to be made, do not provide adequate assurance about the clearance applicant's life or background.

It is recognised that in some circumstances, a clearance applicant may be genuinely unable to provide information required as part of an employment suitability screening process, or evidence to support their claims, or there may be no practical means to corroborate the background of the clearance applicant. This may arise, for example, when:

- checks cannot be conducted because they relate to a period of time when the clearance applicant resided in a foreign country
- documents required to be produced do not exist (for example, because they never existed, no longer exist, or it is not possible to get copies from the issuing authority)
- the source of the documents may not be credible.

Where a clearance applicant has an uncheckable background (or the clearance applicant has provided information which creates gaps, anomalies or discrepancies), the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel

Security and Suitability Sections may interview the clearance applicant. The interview may be used to corroborate information collected from other sources, or to address any remaining doubts or concerns.

Where, after an interview, the lack of information about an applicant creates reasonable doubt regarding their ability to satisfy the minimum requirements for obtaining an ESC, the decision maker may determine the clearance applicant is not suitable to be granted an ESC.

2.7. Consideration of adverse (or potentially adverse) information

Where a check undertaken by the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections identifies adverse (or potentially adverse information), the information will be assessed to determine whether the information may impact on the clearance applicant's ability to satisfy the minimum requirements for being granted an ESC.

If a clearance applicant has existing non-public access to departmental assets, the Personnel Security and Suitability Sections (and the Pre-employment Screening Section in rare circumstances) must also undertake a preliminary risk assessment to identify and mitigate any potential or actual risks to the clearance applicant or the Department. The preliminary risk assessment must, at a minimum:

- examine whether, based on the available information, continued non-public access may create a risk to the Department or the clearance applicant which is either unknown, unacceptable or cannot be sufficiently mitigated
- examine whether there are any temporary mitigation measures which may be warranted in the circumstances.

All preliminary risk assessments (along with their recommended mitigation strategies) will be referred to the decision maker for review and approval. Prior to any decision, employees will have the right to reply as per the Procedural Fairness section of this document. In circumstances where action is required, for example the establishment of an Aftercare Arrangement, the clearance applicant will then be advised of the outcome of the decision.

3. Possible outcomes

3.1. Summary of possible outcomes

There are three possible outcomes which may occur as a result of the initial employment suitability screening or re-screening process:

1. A decision that a clearance applicant is suitable to be employed by the Department or provided with non-public access to departmental assets, which will result in the clearance applicant being granted an ESC.
2. A decision that the clearance applicant is suitable to be employed by the Department or provided with non-public access to departmental assets, however there is a risk associated with the individual or their circumstances which requires ongoing monitoring or management. This will result in the clearance applicant being granted a conditional ESC and being placed on an Aftercare Arrangement.
3. A decision that the clearance applicant is not suitable to be employed by the Department or provided with non-public access to departmental assets, which will result in the clearance applicant being not granted an ESC.

If an individual is not granted an ESC, the outcome of this decision may be:

- for existing departmental employees – this may result in the individual’s employment being terminated pursuant to section 29 of the Public Service Act,
- for existing contracted staff or service providers – this may result in the individual being denied their existing access to departmental assets, being removed from the performance of the service or (if relevant) having their contract with the Department terminated,
- for existing employees of other government agencies – this may result in the individual being denied their existing access to departmental assets and returned to their home agency,
- for prospective departmental employees – this may result in the individual not being offered employment with the department (or having their employment offer retracted) on the grounds that the individual is unable to obtain an essential qualification required for employment with the Department, or
- for prospective non-Department employees – this may result in the individual not being eligible to be provided with non-public access to departmental assets.

3.2. Decision maker’s authority to grant an ESC

If a clearance applicant is assessed as being able to satisfy the minimum requirements for obtaining an ESC and no risks have been identified which may require management or mitigation through an Aftercare Arrangement, the decision maker may grant the clearance applicant an ESC.

3.3. Decision maker’s authority to grant a conditional ESC

A conditional ESC may be granted by the decision maker in circumstances where:

- a risk is identified in relation to the clearance applicant that may be adequately and efficiently addressed through an Aftercare Arrangement
- the clearance applicant (and if relevant, the clearance applicant’s business area) agrees to comply with the terms of the Aftercare Arrangement.

Procedures for establishing and maintaining an Aftercare Arrangement are outlined in **Attachment C**.

To avoid doubt, the Department is not required to implement an expensive or inefficient Aftercare Arrangement. If the cost to the Department in establishing, managing or maintaining an Aftercare Arrangement is too significant or onerous for the Department, the decision maker may not grant the clearance applicant an ESC. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

3.4. Standard conditions of being granted an ESC

It is a standard condition of a clearance applicant being granted an ESC (including a conditional ESC) that:

- the clearance applicant promptly reports all Declarable Circumstances in accordance with the Department’s Declarable Circumstances Procedural Instruction (PI)
- the clearance applicant continues to satisfy all minimum requirements for being granted an ESC.

3.5. Decision maker's authority not to grant an ESC

The decision maker may not grant a clearance applicant or a clearance holder an ESC if:

- the clearance applicant or clearance holder is assessed as being unable to satisfy one or more of the minimum requirements for obtaining an ESC,
- there is a reasonable basis to suspect the clearance applicant or clearance holder may have consciously provided false and/or misleading information (or has omitted to provide relevant information, and by that omission the information provided by the clearance applicant or clearance holder is false or misleading) as part of an employment suitability screening process,
- the clearance applicant or clearance holder has failed to cooperate or comply with any employment suitability screening process or requirements such that the decision maker cannot be satisfied that the clearance applicant or clearance holder should be granted an ESC,
- the clearance applicant or clearance holder fails to agree to or comply with a condition of being granted an ESC, or
- a ground for not granting clearance applicant or clearance holder an ESC otherwise contained within this policy has been met.

In all cases, where reasonable doubt exists regarding the ability of a clearance applicant or clearance holder to satisfy the minimum requirements for being granted an ESC, the decision maker must resolve the matter in favour of the national interest.

3.6. Pre-notification procedures where a decision has been made not to grant an ESC

If the clearance applicant or clearance holder has existing non-public access to departmental assets, all existing access must be suspended or revoked effective immediately from the date and time the clearance applicant or clearance holder is advised of the decision maker's decision.

Prior to the clearance applicant or clearance holder being notified of the decision maker's decision, the Personnel Security and Suitability Section (and in rare cases the Pre-employment Screening Section) must also undertake the following activities:

Existing departmental employees: if the clearance applicant or clearance holder is an existing departmental employee, the Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections must notify the relevant Human Resources decision maker that the clearance applicant or clearance holder will be not granted an ESC, and that the departmental employee will therefore be losing an essential qualification and unable to satisfy a condition of employment.

- The Human Resources decision maker is responsible for deciding whether or not to:
 - commence a process to remove the clearance applicant or clearance holder from the Department – such as by negotiating a transfer of the clearance applicant or clearance holder another APS agency
 - terminate the clearance applicant's or clearance holder's employment pursuant to section 29 of the Public Service Act.
- Depending on the circumstances, the clearance applicant or clearance holder may be placed on miscellaneous leave until the Human Resources decision maker has made their decision.

Existing contracted staff or service providers: if the clearance applicant or clearance holder is an existing contracted staff member, consultant or service provider, the Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections must notify the relevant Contract Manager that the clearance applicant or clearance holder will not be granted an ESC, and that the clearance applicant or clearance holder will therefore be unable to provide a service to the Department pursuant to the contract.

- The Contract Manager should then consult Legal Group for advice about managing options under the contract, which may involve:
 - terminating of the contract
 - in cases where the clearance applicant or clearance holder is an employee/sub-contractor of the contractor - arranging for the contractor to provide the Department with a suitable replacement for the clearance applicant or clearance holder.
- Depending on the circumstances, the clearance applicant or clearance holder may be placed on leave until a decision is made in relation to options under the contract.

Employees of other government agencies: if the clearance applicant or clearance holder is an employee of another Government agency (for example, a seconded staff member or a member of a joint task force), the Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections will engage with the clearance applicant's or clearance holder's home agency and relevant departmental business area prior to any decision being made. The home agency is to be notified that the clearance applicant or clearance holder has failed to meet a condition imposed by the Department for the provision of non-public access to departmental assets.

- The redeployment of the clearance applicant or clearance holder, and the management of any consequences arising out of the decision to not grant the ESC is a matter for the clearance applicant's or clearance holder's home agency.

Other individuals with existing non-public access to departmental assets: in all other cases, the Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections will liaise with the business area of the clearance applicant or the clearance holder to ensure all necessary and reasonable steps are taken to preserve the integrity and security of departmental assets.

4. Continuing assurance processes

4.1. Introduction

An initial employment suitability screening or employment suitability re-screening process represents a 'point in time' assessment of an individual. Pursuant to the PSPF, agencies must have policies and procedures to assess and manage the ongoing suitability of their personnel. The continued suitability of an individual is assured when an individual complies with relevant Department policies and procedures such as those that require the ongoing disclosure of declarable circumstances, declarable associations and conflicts of interest, and other monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

4.2. Clearance holder obligations

Each clearance holder must comply with all relevant departmental integrity, physical security, personnel security and information security related policies, including (but not limited to) the requirement to promptly report all declarable circumstances in accordance with the Department's Declarable Circumstances PI.

4.3. Obligations for staff with supervisory responsibilities

Staff with supervisory responsibilities are responsible under the PSPF for positively influencing workplace behaviour and attitudes towards protective security and personnel security practices within the Department – including employment suitability screening.

Under the PSPF, individuals with supervisory responsibilities should:

- ensure their staff know their responsibilities under this policy
- report any unexplained change or pattern of behaviour or other information that could indicate a security or integrity concern to the Personnel Security and Suitability Section.

Staff with supervisory responsibilities should contact the Personnel Security and Suitability Section by phone or email to make a report.

4.4. Additional requirements for contractors and service providers

Departmental contracts where individuals operating under those contracts may require non-public access to departmental assets should, where possible, include appropriate clauses about:

- arrangements for dealing with any declarable circumstances and the reporting and investigation of security incidents or breaches by the contracting company or service provider, and
- a requirement for the contracting company or service provider to inform the Personnel Security and Suitability Section if any individual employed by the company is or has been:
 - expelled from an accrediting body
 - undergoing disciplinary proceedings
 - arrested, subject to law enforcement action or criminal legal proceedings
 - dismissed or has resigned in adverse circumstances (or who has otherwise resigned or no longer requires non-public access to departmental assets).

4.5. Assessment of information obtained through a continuous assurance process

The Personnel Security and Suitability Section may undertake checks or further inquiries, as required, in order to assess any information obtained through a continuous assurance process.

Where a risk or concern is identified through a continuous assurance process, the decision maker may:

- convert the clearance holder's ESC to a conditional ESC in order to manage or mitigate an identified risk or concern
- direct the individual to undergo employment suitability re-screening.

5. ESC validity periods

5.1. Overview

Once an ESC is granted, the clearance holder is permitted to retain non-public access to departmental assets unless or until:

- the clearance holder meets an automatic revocation trigger
- 12 months has elapsed since the clearance holder no longer requires non-public access to departmental assets.

5.2. Automatic revocation of an ESC

A clearance holder may have their ESC automatically revoked without the clearance holder undergoing employment suitability re-screening if:

- the clearance holder no longer meets the minimum requirements for being granted an ESC
- the clearance holder's employment with the Department has been terminated pursuant to paragraph 29(3)(g) of the Public Service Act (breach of the Code of Conduct).

5.3. Expiry of an ESC

An ESC will automatically expire 12 months from the date on which the clearance holder ceases to require non-public access to departmental assets, including periods of leave.

If a clearance holder commences a period of extended leave or absence from the Department for greater than 12 months, their ESC will expire 12 months from the date on which leave or separation commences.

5.4. Reactivation of an expired ESC

A clearance applicant may have a previously expired ESC reactivated. A decision to reactivate may be made at the discretion of the decision maker. All decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Factors which the decision maker may take into consideration include, for example:

- the period of time since the ESC expired
- the period of time since the clearance applicant last underwent an employment suitability screening process
- the risk associated with the particular role the clearance applicant will perform
- the particular non-public access to departmental assets which the clearance applicant will require
- any changes to the circumstances of the clearance applicant which may have occurred since they last underwent an employment suitability screening process
- any other factor deemed relevant in the circumstances.

The decision maker may require the clearance applicant to provide additional information to inform the decision.

6. Employment suitability re-screening

The employment suitability re-screening process is the Department's formal process for reviewing a clearance holder's satisfaction of the minimum requirements for obtaining and maintaining an ESC. A clearance holder may be directed to undergo employment suitability re-screening at any time.

A clearance holder undertaking employment suitability re-screening may be required to provide supporting documentation or to answer additional questions to support the re-screening process.

7. Procedural fairness

7.1. Right to reply

Employees of the Commonwealth will be given the right to reply to any matter that may adversely affect them that arises through an employment suitability screening process. This may include, but is not limited to, circumstances where the decision maker is:

- required to consider adverse (or potentially adverse) information
- considering granting a conditional ESC
- considering not granting an ESC.

As a general principle, the decision maker will endeavour to disclose all credible, relevant and significant potentially adverse information to an existing employee so that they can respond before a final decision is made. This disclosure may be in writing or by way of a formal interview. Where the Department discloses this information, the individual will need to respond within seven working days. Extensions to this timeframe will be granted where there is a valid reason.

However, there are situations—particularly in a national security and law enforcement context—where the decision maker’s ability to disclose adverse information may be limited. This may include, for example, situations where:

- the disclosure may jeopardise or compromise intelligence information
- the disclosure may prejudice national security
- the information may be subject to disclosure caveats or is otherwise privileged
- the disclosure may not be in the national interest.

Such cases will however be the exception rather than standard practice. When the decision maker is considering withholding adverse information the decision maker must consult with Legal Group.

7.2. Conflicts of interest/bias

Each member of the Personnel Security and Suitability and Pre-employment Screening Sections must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest or bias which may arise during an employment suitability screening process.

Members of the Personnel Security and Suitability and Pre-employment Screening Sections will not make a recommendation in circumstances where the section member could be perceived as having a conflict of interest.

8. Appeals and complaints

8.1. Review of decisions and complaints referral

Any employee who is employed by the Department under the Public Service Act and whose employment is terminated by the Department for failing to maintain an essential qualification is entitled to consider a claim for unfair dismissal under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

Any non-SES employee who is employed under the Public Service Act is entitled to seek a review of action pursuant to section 33(1) of the Public Service Act while they are an employee. Further information regarding the process and grounds for review under this section can be found within the Department's review of actions policy.

Any individual is also entitled to seek independent legal advice on other avenues of review, subject to compliance with the relevant legislative disclosure power applicable to the Department at the time.

8.2. Complaints regarding the conduct of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections

If an individual believes that a section member of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections has not behaved in a manner which meets the APS Values or Code of Conduct, or has breached relevant departmental policy, the individual may refer the matter to the relevant Section Director, in the first instance.

If an individual is not satisfied with the response from the relevant Director or the matter relates to the Director, the individual may refer the matter to the Assistant Secretary, I&PS Branch.

8.3. Privacy complaints

If a person believes we have wrongly collected or handled their information, they can email their complaint to esc@homeaffairs.gov.au.

We are committed to the quick and fair resolution of complaints. Every complaint will be investigated and complainants will be advised of the outcome.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with our response, they can write to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). The OAIC can investigate privacy complaints about the protection of personal information, order compensation to be paid where warranted and direct departments to change the way they handle personal information. If a person needs help lodging a complaint with the OAIC, they can call the OAIC Enquiries Line on 1300 363 992. If calling from outside Australia, they can call: +61 2 9284 9749

The OAIC can receive privacy complaints through:

- by email, enquiries@oaic.gov.au
- by fax, 02 9284 9666
- by mail, OAIC Sydney Office GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001

A person can make a complaint directly to the OAIC, however the OAIC will generally recommend that a person try to resolve the complaint directly with the Department in the first instance.

9. Privacy, security, collection, use and disclosure of information

9.1. Individuals within the Department who may directly access employment suitability screening information

Employment suitability screening information may be directly accessed by:

- members of the Pre-employment Screening Section
- members of the Personnel Security and Suitability Section
- members of the I&PS Branch where there is a strict legitimate business purpose for accessing the information.

In all cases, the above personnel must have a legitimate business purpose for accessing this information and a genuine need to know in accordance with PSPF core requirement nine and the Department's relevant information handling policies.

9.2. Storage of employment suitability screening information

All physical personnel security records and files held by Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections must be securely stored in an appropriately rated and lockable security container, and are not accessible to individuals who do not form part of either of these sections or have a legitimate business purpose for accessing information as specified above.

All electronic personnel security records and files held by the Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections must be stored on an appropriately rated and secured IT system, and must not be accessible to individuals who do not form part of either of these sections or have a legitimate business purpose for accessing information as specified above.

9.3. Sharing of employment suitability screening information

Employment suitability screening information must only be used and disclosed in a manner which is authorised by, and consistent with the privacy notice and general consent signed by the clearance applicant. Personal information provided by a clearance applicant may also be used and disclosed by the Department in accordance with relevant exemptions or provisions within the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act), or as otherwise authorised or required by law.

The Department will disclose employment suitability screening information, as required, and in accordance with the consent or relevant exemption within the Privacy Act in order to facilitate checks and inquiries with external parties to support the employment suitability screening process. When conducting these checks and inquiries, the Department will generally only provide the external party with the clearance applicant's identifying information, unless it is necessary for further information to be provided to enable the external party to conduct the particular check or inquiry.

Information provided by an individual as part of any employment suitability screening process will not be, as a matter of routine practice, disclosed to an external law enforcement agency for the purposes of that agency undertaking criminal investigations. However, where a law enforcement agency requests the Department to provide employment suitability screening information to support a criminal investigation and has a lawful basis for doing so (for example, under a warrant or coercive power), the Department is obliged to disclose this information. Similarly, matters which must be reported under the Department's mandatory reporting policy will also be disclosed and referred in accordance with the Department's established mandatory reporting process.

In some cases, matters may arise or be identified during an employment suitability screening process which may constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct. In cases where potential breaches of the Code of Conduct are identified, the Personnel Security and Suitability or Pre-employment Screening Sections may disclose and refer the matter to the Integrity Referrals and Engagement Section.

Information about whether or not an individual has been granted an ESC will be given to officers responsible for issuing access to departmental assets.

Where a conditional ESC has been granted, the clearance applicant or clearance holder's supervisor and manager may need to be informed of the nature of the risk and the Aftercare Arrangement in place to manage it.

If an employment suitability screening process identifies matters which may be relevant to the individual's suitability to obtain or maintain a Commonwealth security clearance, the Department is required under the PSPF to disclose and refer the relevant matter to the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency (AGSVA) or the relevant authorised vetting agency. This may include, but is not limited to:

- the outcome of any employment suitability screening process
- information regarding the individual's compliance with any employment suitability screening or Commonwealth security clearance aftercare requirements
- reportable changes in circumstances
- suspicious, on-going, unusual or persistent contacts
- security incident and investigation results
- where a breach of the Code of Conduct or other disciplinary finding has been made against the individual (including cases where a breach is established following the individual's departure from the Department)
- conduct or incidents that may indicate a disregard for security by the individual – such as multiple infringements of agency security policies, or
- where concerns have been identified which may call into question the integrity of the person.

If an employment suitability screening process identifies a security or integrity concern which relates to an individual who is the subject of a secondment or temporary assignment with the Department, the matter may be referred to the individual's home agency.

The fact that a clearance applicant or clearance holder has not been granted an ESC or has failed to obtain or maintain an appropriate Commonwealth security clearance may be disclosed to the manager or employer of the clearance applicant or clearance holder to explain why they do not have access to departmental assets.

The fact that a clearance applicant or clearance holder has not been granted an ESC or has failed to obtain or maintain an appropriate Commonwealth security clearance may be disclosed to the relevant Human Resources decision maker to determine whether a person has met a condition of engagement or has lost an essential qualification for performing their duties.

Information provided in relation to employment suitability screening must not be disclosed to a selection panel or other individual involved in a selection/recruitment process.

10. Delegations

10.1. Delegation for decision-making

Attachment D contains a table listing the individual or individuals who have been authorised by the Secretary of the Department to make decisions in relation to specific matters listed within that table.

10.2. Obligations to cooperate and comply

A clearance applicant or clearance holder must:

- fully disclose all relevant and required information
- provide accurate and truthful information and personal documents
- fully complete and return all required documentation within the required timeframe
- fully comply with all requests and directions from the Personnel Security and Suitability Section, the Pre-employment Screening Section, or the decision maker, within the required timeframe.

To avoid doubt, a clearance applicant or clearance holder is solely responsible for any fees or other costs the individual incurs that are associated with complying with a request or direction from the Personnel Security and Suitability Section, the Pre-employment Screening Section or the decision maker.

Where a clearance applicant or clearance holder fails to meet these obligations, they may have any existing non-public access to departmental assets suspended or cancelled. This is because, in the absence of the requested information, the decision maker will not be assured that the clearance applicant or clearance holder is suitable to have non-public access to departmental assets.

11. Waivers and mutual recognition

11.1. Waivers

The decision maker may waive the requirement for an individual to require an ESC.

The decision maker may grant any individual an ESC waiver based on any grounds determined by the decision maker to be appropriate in the circumstances. However, as a general principle, a waiver will only be granted by the decision maker in exceptional circumstances.

A request for an ESC waiver must be provided to the Assistant Secretary, I&PS Branch, who is the decision maker and delegate for waiver requests.

For more information on waivers contact ESC@homeaffairs.gov.au.

11.2. Mutual recognition

Where a clearance applicant has been subject to a similar employment suitability screening process by a current or past employer, the decision maker may:

- recognise some or all of the suitability checks undertaken by that employer, or
- request that employer to undertake specific suitability checks on behalf of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections.

A decision to recognise some or all of the suitability checks undertaken by a past employer may be made at the sole discretion of the decision maker. All decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

12. Related policies

- Employment Suitability Screening Procedural Instruction
- Employment Suitability Clearance Assessment Criteria Supporting Material

- Declarable Circumstances Procedural Instruction
- Declarable Associations Procedural Instruction
- Conflict of Interest Procedural Instruction

13. Legislation

- *Australian Border Force Act 2015*
- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*

14. Consultation

14.1. Internal consultation

The following internal stakeholders have been consulted in the development of this Supporting Material:

- Integrity, Security and Assurance Division
- Legal Division
- all staff through Department-wide consultation.

14.2. External consultation

The following external stakeholders have been consulted in the development of this Supporting Material:

- staff representatives through the National Staff Consultative Forum
- Community and Public Sector Union.

15. Version Control

Version number	Date of issue	Author(s)	Brief description of change
1.0	1 July 2015	Integrity and Professional Standards(I&PS)	Initial document.
1.1	27 June 2019	I&PS	Revisions and change of template.
1.2	30 July 2020	I&PS	Incorporating feedback and edits.

Attachment A – Implementation and communication requirements

The table below outlines how the Department’s employment suitability screening requirements must be incorporated into relevant Department documents and activities which govern the recruitment, movement and provision of non-public access to departmental assets.

Document/Activity	Employment Suitability Screening Policy Implementation Requirements
Position descriptions	Every position description (regardless of whether for recruitment that is internal/external, permanent/temporary, contracts, tenders or inter-agency moves) must include as appropriate, a reference to, and specifically identify the ESC and the required level of security clearance as being conditions of engagement/ongoing employment with the Department; as well as information on the consequences for failing to obtain or maintain these essential qualifications. This information should also be included in all job advertisements.
Recruitment	Every offer of employment must include a dedicated conditions of engagement and ongoing employment section that refers to and attaches the position description.
Seconded staff	All arrangements or agreements governing the secondment of staff to the Department must include a clause outlining that the ESC is a condition of being provided non-public access to departmental assets; as well as any security clearance requirement, and also information on the consequences for failing to obtain or maintain them.
Inter-agency or intra-agency movement of staff without recruitment (redeployment, internal moves, etc.)	All arrangements or agreements must include a clause outlining the ESC and relevant security clearance as a condition to being provided non-public access to departmental assets; as well as termination or contingency (i.e. substitution with another individual) provisions should the subject fail to acquire or maintain them.
Memorandum of understanding (MoU)	All Department MoUs covering the provision of non-public access to departmental assets must include a clause outlining the ESC and relevant security clearance requirements, as well as termination or contingency provisions should an individual subject to the MoU fail to acquire or maintain them.

Document/Activity	Employment Suitability Screening Policy Implementation Requirements
Contracted staff/ service providers	<p>Department contracts dealing with the provision of non-public access to departmental assets should include appropriate clauses about relevant security clearance requirements; as well as termination or contingency provisions should an individual subject to the contract fail to acquire or obtain them.</p> <p>Such clauses will be particularly important and necessary if the contractor is not an IBP worker under the <i>Australian Border Force Act 2015</i>.</p>
All other cases	<p>In all other cases, business areas must ensure that any individual requiring non-public access to departmental assets is advised as soon as reasonably practicable of the ESC and relevant security clearance requirements being a condition of being provided non-public access, and also information on the consequences for failing to obtain or maintain them.</p>

Attachment B – Required documents

Introduction and context

Pursuant to the PSPF, the Department has a mandatory obligation to ensure that all personnel within the Department who access Australian Government resources have had their identity established as part of the employment screening process.

Consistent with this requirement, the National Identity Proofing Guidelines outline a set of processes and requirements to verify a person's identity. The Guidelines adopt a risk-based approach to identifying an appropriate level of assurance that can be applied commensurate with the level of risk.

Due to its unique operating environment, it is essential that the Department and the community more broadly have a high level of confidence in the accuracy and legitimacy of the identity of every individual who is employed by the Department, or is otherwise provided with non-public access to departmental assets. The Department has developed and implemented an identity verification process which meets, at a minimum, 'Level of Assurance 3' within the National Identity Proofing Guidelines.

Required documents

All identity documents provided by a clearance applicant must be current, valid, clear and legible.

If the clearance applicant is an Australian citizen, the clearance applicant must produce a combination of documents which meets the requirements outlined in Table 1, including:

- 1 x Category A Document
- 1 x Category B Document
- 1 x Category C Document
- 1 x Category D Document
- All relevant Category E Documents (if required)
- All relevant Category F Documents (if required), and
- All relevant Category G Documents (if required).

If the clearance applicant is not an Australian citizen, the clearance applicant must produce a combination of documents which meet the requirements outlined in Table 2.

Verification of produced documents

Wherever possible and practical, identity documents produced by the clearance applicant must be verified with an authoritative source. Verification may occur directly with the issuing authority or via a third party identity verification system such as the Document Verification Service.

If there are doubts regarding the authenticity of a claimed identity which are identified during the verification or face-to-identity comparison process, the clearance applicant may be requested to produce their original identity documents during an in-person interaction with a member or authorised representative of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections.

If the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections identify discrepancies or a concern regarding the legitimacy or validity of the clearance applicant's claimed identity, the clearance applicant may be required to provide additional information identified by the Sections as appropriate in the circumstances to support their claimed identity.

‘Known customer’ principle

The Department’s identity verification processes operate on the ‘known customer’ principle. Where a clearance applicant has previously proven their identity to the Department in accordance with the Department’s identity verification requirements outlined in this section, the decision maker may exempt the clearance applicant from the requirement to provide some or all of the required identity documents in any subsequent employment suitability screening process.

Approval to use alternative documents

Although the majority of clearance applicants should be able to meet the Department’s identity verification requirements, in some cases a clearance applicant may face genuine difficulty in providing the necessary evidence to identify themselves to the Department’s required level of assurance. Where a clearance applicant has experienced genuine difficulty in satisfying the Department’s identity verification requirements, the clearance applicant may request the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections to consider approving the use of alternative identity documentation.

A decision to approve the clearance applicant to use alternative identity documents may be made at the discretion of the decision maker.

Foreign language documents

Where personal documentation is in a language other than English the clearance applicant must provide a translation of the document from a National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited provider.

The clearance applicant must produce both the original document, along with the translated document.

Failure to satisfy identity and citizenship verification process

If a clearance applicant fails to satisfy the Department’s identity verification process, the decision maker may not grant the clearance applicant an ESC.

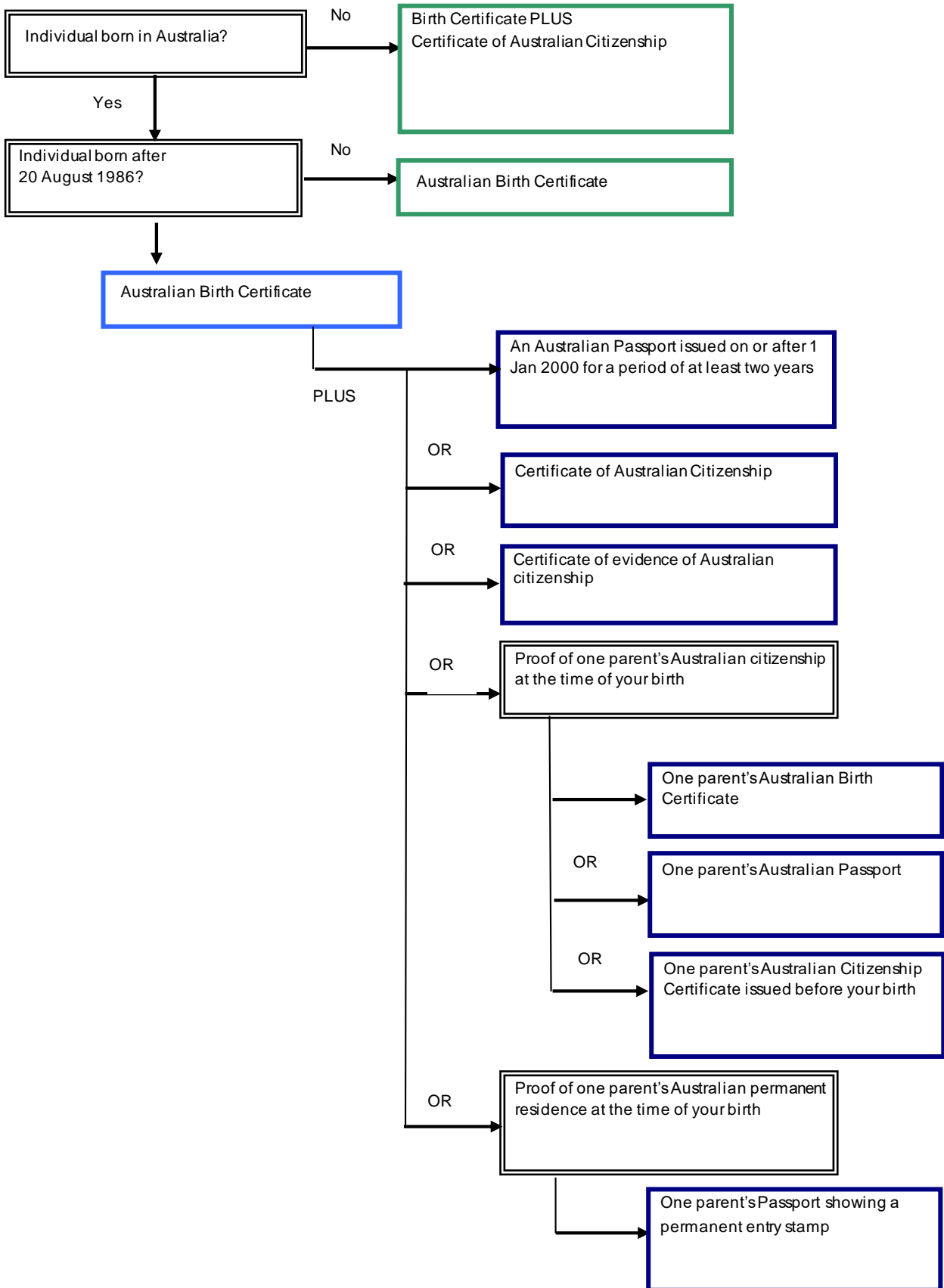
Table 1: Supporting documentation for Australian citizen

Category A	Category B	Category C	Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G
<p>Australian birth certificate</p> <p>AND</p> <p>If born in Australia after 20 August 1986, see Category F</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Australian citizenship certificate</p> <p>AND</p> <p>If not born in Australia, see Category F</p>	<p>Australian passport</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Australian driver licence</p>	<p>Medicare card</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Australian government issued proof of age card</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Employee identity card issued by an Australian Government or Australian State/Territory Government agency</p>	<p>One high quality digital photograph which is less than 6 months old</p>	<p>If required, evidence of a name change such as a change of name certificate, deed poll or marriage certificate</p>	<p>Additional documents to prove citizenship as outlined in Flowchart 1</p>	<p>If required, evidence of the clearance applicant's current address if it does not appear on a Category A-F Document.</p>

Table 2: Supporting documentation for Non-Australian Citizens

	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	As required	As required	Mandatory
Australian visa	Foreign passport	Foreign driver licence OR Foreign government issued identity document	One high quality digital photograph which is less than 6 months old	If required, evidence of a name change such as a change of name certificate, deed poll or marriage certificate	Any other identity document determined by the decision maker to be appropriate in the circumstances.	Australian visa

Flowchart 1: Proof of Citizenship Evidence Requirements



Attachment C – Aftercare arrangements

Introduction

In this section, a reference to an individual includes a reference to:

- a clearance applicant, and
- a clearance holder.

Aftercare Arrangements are designed to manage and/or mitigate any risks to the Department or an individual which may be identified during an employment suitability screening process. To avoid doubt, Aftercare Arrangements may apply to both departmental employees as well as any other individual who requires non-public access to departmental assets.

Aftercare Arrangements may be used as an alternative to the decision maker not granting an ESC in circumstances where risks identified during an employment suitability screening process can be adequately and cost effectively mitigated or managed.

An Aftercare Arrangement may place additional obligations, conditions and/or restrictions on an individual. At all times, conditions must be commensurate with the particular risk that is being managed or mitigated through the Aftercare Arrangement.

A decision maker may, at their discretion, elect to establish an Aftercare Arrangement in response to any risk identified through an employment suitability screening process and grant a clearance applicant or clearance holder a conditional ESC on this basis. To avoid doubt, this may include any risks identified through any initial employment suitability screening process, employment suitability re-screening process, as well as any employment suitability continuous assurance process. A decision by the decision maker to convert an existing granted ESC to a conditional ESC may also be made without requiring a clearance holder to formally undergo employment suitability re-screening.

Aftercare Arrangements may include (but are not limited to):

- a requirement for the individual to participate in specific activities, such as the recording and/or periodic reporting of contacts with particular individuals
- a requirement for the individual to limit or cease contact with particular individuals
- a requirement for the individual to undergo specific and/or periodic checks, or for the individual to periodically report specific additional changes in their or their associates' circumstances
- a requirement for the individual to have suspended or limited access to particular departmental assets – including (but not limited to) particular premises, work areas, information and/or systems
- a requirement for the individual's access to specific information (either by classification or nature) to be limited
- a requirement for the individual to divest themselves of certain business interests, or to cease particular outside employment or voluntary activities, or
- any other measure identified by the decision maker and/or the individual's business area as being reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.

In considering whether an Aftercare Arrangement may be an appropriate means for managing an identified risk, the decision maker may take into account the following factors:

- whether the risk identified directly relates to the individual's area of work, function or responsibilities
- the individual's willingness to cooperate and comply with any conditions of the Aftercare Arrangement

- operational requirements of the individual's business area
- the capacity and imposition on relevant parties to maintain and/or monitor the conditions of the Aftercare Arrangement, or
- any other factor identified by the decision maker as being reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.

If, after considering the above factors, the decision maker forms a preliminary view that an Aftercare Arrangement may be an appropriate means for managing or mitigating the risk, the decision maker may then consult directly with the individual to determine whether the individual is willing to implement the proposed Aftercare Arrangement.

In certain cases, a risk may exist which may also require the cooperation of the individual's business area to effectively manage, monitor or mitigate the particular risk or concern. In such cases, the decision maker may consult with the individual's business area to determine whether the business area is also willing and able to implement the proposed Aftercare Arrangement.

After considering these matters, the decision maker may decide to not grant an ESC if:

- the decision maker considers that the risk is not suitable to be managed by, or cannot be sufficiently mitigated through an Aftercare Arrangement, or
- the individual is unwilling to implement the proposed Aftercare Arrangement, or
- (if relevant in the circumstances) the individual's business area is not willing to implement the proposed Aftercare Arrangement.

If the individual is an existing departmental employee, prior to making a decision to not grant an ESC, the decision maker must consult with the relevant Human Resources decision maker to determine whether another departmental work area exists which may be willing to implement the proposed Aftercare Arrangement. To avoid doubt, the decision maker must take all reasonable steps to identify a suitable alternative work area.

Should a suitable alternative work area be identified, the relevant Human Resources decision maker may assign the individual to that work area pursuant to section 25 of the Public Service Act and the decision maker may issue the individual with a conditional ESC, subject to the specified Aftercare Arrangement.

Should a suitable alternative work area not be identified, the decision maker may decide to not grant an ESC.

An individual (and if relevant – the individual's business area) must agree to, and comply with, all conditions of the Aftercare Arrangement as a condition of the individual being granted the conditional ESC.

Should an individual fail to comply with an agreed-to Aftercare Arrangement, the individual may be referred for employment suitability re-screening. To avoid doubt, the decision maker may decide to not grant an individual an ESC on the grounds of non-compliance with a previous Aftercare Arrangement if the decision maker cannot be satisfied that (due to the clearance applicant's or clearance holder's past non-compliance, the clearance applicant or clearance holder will comply with the terms of any new Aftercare Arrangement.

An Aftercare Arrangement may be indefinite or time-limited. The duration of an Aftercare Arrangement will be determined by the decision maker on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the nature of the risk which is being managed or mitigated.

Aftercare Arrangements should be reviewed every 12 months or more often, at the discretion of the decision maker.

An Aftercare Arrangement is not transferrable between positions, roles or functions within the Department. It is a standard condition of each Aftercare Arrangement that the individual must advise the decision maker of any expected or anticipated change in their role, position or function within the Department, in a reasonable time prior to that change occurring.

Upon receiving notice of the expected or anticipated change, the decision maker will liaise with the individual's existing or proposed new work area to determine whether the Aftercare Arrangements continues to address the risk and (in the case of a new work area), whether the new work area is willing to implement the Aftercare Arrangement.

Interaction with security clearance aftercare

Where AGSVA has identified a risk, it may act to establish an aftercare arrangement with a security clearance holder. Any aftercare imposed by the AGSVA is separate to any ESC Aftercare Arrangement.

The AGSVA may share information with the Department regarding the risk or concern and any Commonwealth security clearance aftercare conditions, so as to ensure effective administration and monitoring of the security clearance aftercare requirements.

Attachment D – Delegations

Delegation for decision-making

The Secretary of the Department has overall authority and responsibility for ensuring the security and integrity of departmental assets.

The decision maker retains overall responsibility for making the relevant decision, but may take into account a recommendation made by another member of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections.

The table below lists the individual or individuals who have been authorised to make decisions in relation to specific matters listed within that table.

Decision	Decision maker
Grant an ESC	Any APS 6, EL1, or Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Section, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Grant a conditional ESC (including directing an IBP worker to discontinue an association in accordance with the Declarable Associations Procedural Instruction)	Any EL1 or Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Not grant an ESC	The Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Any ESC decision relating to a member of the Pre-employment Screening section or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections	The Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Initiate an employment suitability re-screening process	The Director of the Personnel Security and Suitability Section, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Direct an individual to undergo employment suitability re-screening	The Director of Personnel Security and Suitability Section, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.

Decision	Decision maker
Direct an individual to undergo an employment suitability screening process	Branch or Division head, contract manager, the Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Reactivate an expired ESC	Any EL1 or Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Suspend or cancel an employment suitability screening process due to a clearance applicant's non-compliance	Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Limit or exclude the disclosure of adverse (or potentially adverse) information to a clearance applicant	Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Waive the requirement for an individual to hold an ESC	Secretary of the Department, Deputy Secretary Chief Operating Officer Group, First Assistant Secretary Integrity, Security and Assurance Division or Assistant Secretary I&PS Branch
Approve the use of alternative identity documents in relation to an identity verification process	EL1 or Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.
Exempt a clearance applicant from providing identity documents on the basis of the 'known customer' principle	EL1 or Director of the Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability Sections, or any other decision maker appointed by the Assistant Secretary of the I&PS Branch.

Decisions not listed in the above table

In the case of any other decision which is expressly provided for, or otherwise implied by this policy, the decision maker in relation to such matters is the Director Pre-employment Screening or Personnel Security and Suitability.

Where the decision maker is not available to, or is unable to make a decision (for example, in cases of a conflict of interest, travel, leave etc.), the Assistant Secretary I&PS Branch may, at their discretion, make the decision themselves or assign a substitute decision maker at or above Director level.