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A guide to interpreting M5 match results

Standard Operating Procedure

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1. Purpose

The Migration Five (M5), formerly known as the Five Country Conference (FCC) is a consortium of the immigration agencies of Australia (AUS), New Zealand (NZ), the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US) and Canada. The five countries have entered into agreements to exchange biometric information (fingerprints) against their respective immigration databases. The M5 objectives are to *“detect, deter and prevent mala fide (with intent to deceive) travelers, while ensuring bona fide travelers can move without undue delay or cost – where they are already known to an M5 member – to realise the benefits of cost savings, security and the integrity of our immigration systems”*.

This arrangement is in line with the Five Country Conference High Value Data Sharing Protocol and the relevant Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Home Affairs (the department) and each of the M5 partners.

The purpose of the Standard Operating Procedure is to provide guidance to decision makers and the Biometrics Resolution Section in interpreting the Migration Five match results in the Client Search Portal for the UK, Canada, the US and NZ.

2. Scope

2.1. In Scope

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) covers M5 match codes and their interpretation.

2.2. Out of Scope

This SOP does not cover the interpretation of Biometric Match Indicators (BMIs) that are not related to M5 matching.

3. Standard Operating Procedure

3.1. M5 data sharing arrangement

The Biometric Resolution Section (BRS) manages the operational relationship with M5 countries and requests data from them, either automatically from the US, NZ and Canada for visa applicants located in certain countries applying for certain visa subclasses, or manually on a weekly basis from the UK. These requests are known as M5 referrals.

There are three levels of queries, with each successive response providing more information. The initial search to each of the M5 partners is based on a fingerprint match. If the fingerprints are a match, the partner country can be sent additional queries.

- Level 1 includes whether there is a match or not, and if there is a match, it provides basic biographic data for each biometric event and a facial image if available.
- Level 2 includes additional document data and biometric encounters. Note that for referrals to the US, NZ and Canada, Levels 1 and 2 information will be received at the same time due to the automated process, however this is not necessarily the case for information from the UK.

- Level 3 provides the opportunity to ask specific questions about a match.

The information returned in Level 1 and 2 responses is specified in bi-lateral agreements and generally includes the following data elements:

- Date, location and reason fingerprinted
- Last name, first name, any other names
- Date and place of birth, nationality and gender
- Travel document number, visa type and visa outcome
- Facial image, and/or scan of the travel document's bio-data page
- s. 47E(d) or derogatory information (where available)

The information provided under all three levels is dependent on the information held by the M5 partner country, and their ability to lawfully disclose that information. As such, responses may vary between countries.

s. 47E(d)

3.2. How to use M5 information

All biometric match information is potentially valuable and even if not adverse, may be useful in corroborating or establishing the client's story. Adverse match information could relate to immigration infringements, fraud, s. 47E(d). All adverse information should be investigated and should be viewed in the light of applicant declarations and their character.

3.3. How a match assists with an identity assessment

M5 information can support or negate a person's claimed identity. A match can indicate whether a person has made an application to, or visited an M5 country under a particular nationality, residency and/or identity.

Inconsistencies in the person's identity could be minor and/or due to data error. For example, most clients that do not know their DOB will have a default DOB of 01/01/year or 31/12/year depending on the organisation that registered that client. Such differences could be considered acceptable.

Some inconsistencies may be greater and may indicate that a fraudulent identity has been used. You must consider which identity, if any, is likely to be genuine.

An identity may be considered supported where a match indicates that a person has travelled to a partner country whose processes we have assessed as having a high level of trust. In these cases the providing country may hold a travel document and possibly other identity documents to support the identity. However if the person has only applied for a visa but has not been granted and has not travelled, there may be a lower level of assurance with that identity as it may not have been verified. Regardless, an M5 match will confirm that a person has provided biometrics and documentation at a certain place and point in time, to one or more of our M5 partners.

S. 47E(d)

Further information may be requested from partner countries by raising a Biometric Issue Referral in the Client Search Portal. The instructions can be found here: [BIR 1 page for ICH.docx \(bcz.gov.au\)](#).

3.4. Client Search Portal and the Biometric Interaction Tab

The Client Search Portal (CSP) is the Department's preferred client search system, providing officers with a consistent, comprehensive and up-to-date summary view of a client's core details, business interactions and dealings with the Department. The Biometric Interaction Tab of the client's record within CSP holds all biometric information including the results of internal matching and checks to law enforcement records and M5 partners.

The *CSP FCC Advance User* access is required to view match results in the CSP. This role can be requested through easySAP using role code: **SECS-CSP_FCC_ADVANCE_USER**.

S. 47E(d)

3.5. Biometric Match Indicator

A Biometric Match Indicator (BMI) is generated as a result of a number of matching rules that are triggered on biometric collection. The BMI is sent to ICSE or IRIS and is designed to assist decision makers.

It is important to note that BMIs are enrolment specific. A client may have had their biometrics collected during previous interactions with the Department, these are displayed chronologically in the Client Search Portal (CSP).

When biometrics are collected they are compared to fingerprints and facial images within the Department's holdings. S. 47E(d)

When a fingerprint is checked with an M5 partner the BMI for that specific enrolment will be displayed as Amber when checks are pending, and Green when checks are cleared and no derogatory information is received. S. 47E(d)

3.9. Partner Specific Information

The elements that make up an M5 response are different for each partner and have been negotiated based on what is available from the providing country and what is deemed appropriate for sharing. Level 1 information, for example the name, DOB and nationality fields are consistent across M5 partners.

S. 47E(d)

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s. 33(1)(b)

4. Statement of Expectation

The APS Code of Conduct states that an APS employee must comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the employee's Agency who has authority to give the direction under subsection 13(5) of the Public Service Act 1999 (the Public Service Act).

Failure by an APS employee to comply with any direction contained in this SOP may be determined to be a breach of the APS Code of Conduct, which could result in sanctions under subsection 15(1) of the Public Service Act.

The Secretary's Professional Standards Direction, issued under subsection 55(1) of the Australian Border Force Act 2015, (the ABF Act) requires all IBP workers who are not employed under the Public Service Act to comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the Department with authority to issue that direction.

Failure by an IBP worker who is not an APS employee to comply with a direction contained in this SOP may be treated as a breach of the Professional Standards Direction, which may result in the termination of their engagement under section 57 of the ABF Act. Non-compliance may also be addressed under the terms of the contract engaging the contractor or consultant.

All IBP workers who make decisions or exercise powers or functions under legislation have a duty to do so in accordance with the requirements of the legislation and legal principles.

5. Accountabilities and Responsibilities.

Role	Description
BRS Manager	Oversight of entire process.
Department decision makers	Reviews the M5 match results in CSP, submits a request for additional information to BRS and makes informed visa decisions based upon the match information received from the M5 partner.

6. Version Control

Version number	Date of issue	Author(s)	Brief description of change
0.1	April 2018	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	Drafted SOP
0.2	May 2018		Reviewed SOP
0.3	May 2018		Reviewed SOP
0.4	June 2018		Reviewed SOP and provided feedback
0.5	June 2018		Reviewed SOP
0.6	June 2018		Reviewed SOP and provided feedback
0.7	June 2018		Reviewed SOP and provided feedback
0.8	July 2018		Reviewed SOP and provided feedback
0.9	July 2018		Reviewed SOP and made some changes
0.10	July 2018		Reviewed SOP and made some changes
0.11	August 2018		Reviewed SOP
0.12	August 2018		Reviewed SOP and made final changes
1.0	November 2018		Finalised version for publication on PPCR
2.0	December 2021		Reviewed and made some changes
2.1	December 2021		Reviewed and made some changes
2.2	December 2021		Reviewed SOP and made some changes
3.0	March 2022		Provided content for the Department of Defense watchlist Codes
3.1	March 2022		Reviewed
3.2	March 2022		Reviewed changes
3.3	March 2022		Reviewed SOP and made final changes
3.4	November 2022		Provided content for Citizenship
3.5	February 2024		Addition of disclosure table and other minor changes
3.4	January 2025		Reviewed SOP
3.5	January 2025		Reviewed SOP
3.6	January 2025		Reviewed SOP and made some changes
3.7	March 2025		Reviewed SOP and made final changes

Attachment A - Definitions

Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Migration 5	M5	The M5 participants are the governments of AUS, NZ, UK, US and Canada. These countries exchange data for immigration, visa and citizenship purposes.
Client Identifier	CID	Unique ICSE Client Identifier number.
Client Search Portal	CSP	The Department of Home Affairs' immigration and citizenship client database which consolidates data from various source systems. Presents a comprehensive summary of the client's business dealings with the Department and provides the only complete view of biometric match information.
Biometric Match Indicator	BMI	Only applicable to offshore fingerprint and Citizenship facial enrolments. Shows the result of various matching rules. A Red BMI should be investigated, they indicate Irregularities found were in the automatic biometric comparisons. Amber indicates automatic biometric comparisons are underway with an M5 partner and Green indicates no irregularities were found in the automatic biometric comparisons.
Biometric Resolution Section	BRS	BRS is responsible for conveying and coordinating data exchanges with M5 partners. It also provides support in regard to interpreting match results and facilitates additional manual requests.

Attachment B – Assurance and Control Matrix

1.1. Powers and Obligations

Implementation of this SOP does not require any powers, delegations or authorisations.

1.2. Control and Assurance

Related Policy	<u>Identity - Policy Statement (IIB-6798)</u>
Procedures / Supporting Materials	s. 47E(d)
Training/Certification or Accreditation	NIL
Other required job role requirements	NIL
Other support mechanisms (e.g. who can provide further assistance in relation to any aspects of this instruction)	Advice and outreach can be provided by the Biometric Resolution Section at s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au
Escalation arrangements	Escalation of concerns or issues can be sent to s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au
Recordkeeping (e.g. system based facilities to record decisions)	All correspondence and decisions regarding M5 queries are saved in departmental systems and/or the department's record management system, Content Manager.
Program or Framework (i.e. overarching Policy Framework or Business Program)	<u>Identity - Policy Statement (IIB-6798)</u>
Job Vocational Framework Role	Program Implementation - Program Delivery

Attachment C – Consultation

1.1 Internal consultation

- Biometrics and Data Exchange Section
- Caseload Integrity and Logistics Section
- Privacy Information Disclosure Section
- Citizenship Program Delivery
- All staff in accordance with clause 1.7 of the Department of Home Affairs Workplace Determination 2019.

1.2 External consultation

M5 partners – the United Kingdom, Canada, United States and New Zealand