

AS 4811:2022



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Australia



# Workforce screening



AS 4811:2022

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- Australian Strategic Policy Institute
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- Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner
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# Workforce screening

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## Preface

This Standard was prepared by the Australian Standards Committee MB-025, Security and Resilience to supersede AS 4811—2006, *Employment screening*.

The objective of this document is to set out requirements and guidance for the development of organizational specific workforce screening policies and processes.

Workforce screening is a risk-based approach that provides an organization with a level of ongoing assurance around the eligibility and suitability of an individual to access organization assets, in order to help achieve the organization's objectives.

This document is intended to be read in conjunction with the following Australian Standards:

- (a) AS 8001, *Fraud and corruption control*
- (b) AS ISO 15489.1, *Information and documentation—Records management, Part 1: Concepts and principles*
- (c) AS ISO 31000, *Risk management—Guidelines*

The major changes in this edition are as follows:

- (i) Alignment with AS ISO 31000:2018.
- (ii) Amendments to the requirements for review of access.
- (iii) Amendments to the process flow chart.
- (iv) Expansion of the document to include persons who are not designated employees.

The terms “normative” and “informative” are used in Standards to define the application of the appendices to which they apply. A “normative” appendix is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an “informative” appendix is only for information and guidance.

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## NOTES

# Australian Standard®

## Workforce screening

### Section 1 Scope and general

#### 1.1 Scope

This document sets out requirements and guidance for the development of organization-specific workforce screening principles, policies and processes.

This document applies to organizations of any type and size. It does not apply to other recruitment activities such as competency assessment and talent matching, which are beyond the scope of this document.

This document can be read in conjunction with the additional reading matter listed in the Bibliography.

#### 1.2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

NOTE Documents referenced for informative purposes are listed in the Bibliography.

#### 1.3 Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

##### 1.3.1

##### **adjudication**

process of an independent review of assessor's report to determine that the assessment is supported by the facts and analysis

##### 1.3.2

##### **asset**

anything that has value to and is under control of an organization

Note 1 to entry: Assets include human, physical, information, intangible and environmental resources.

##### 1.3.3

##### **credentials**

anything that is the basis for the belief or trust of others in a person's abilities, which can be verified

##### 1.3.4

##### **entrusted person**

individual who has been assessed or is being re-assessed within an organization, for the purpose of gaining or maintaining access to and being entrusted with: assets, care or control of persons, access to dangerous environments and tangible or intangible assets, until access is no longer required

Note 1 to entry: An entrusted person, who is having their level of access determined or assessed, is on entering the process considered a candidate for screening.

##### 1.3.5

##### **fit and proper person**

person who demonstrates appropriate attitudes and behaviours as defined by the organization

##### 1.3.6

##### **identity**

combination of unique attributes of an individual that distinguishes them from others

**1.3.7****informed consent**

agreement provided by the applicant to use their personal information for the purposes for which they have been advised

**1.3.8****integrity**

soundness of principle and character

Note 1 to entry: For data and information, this refers to accuracy, completeness and consistency.

**1.3.9****may**

indicates the existence of an option

**1.3.10****organization**

person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities, and relationships to achieve its objectives

[SOURCE: AS ISO 22300:2019, 3.158, modified – Notes to entry deleted.]

**1.3.11****outside employment**

forms of employment or engagement arrangement, whether paid or unpaid, outside the primary organization

**1.3.12****privilege**

authorized level of access granted to a person to enable them to perform their duties

**1.3.13****probity**

level of integrity necessary to ensure the conscientious and honest conduct of one's working relationships and activities

**1.3.14****review for cause**

reassessment of continued suitability of a person to maintain their level of privilege based on new information in respect to suitability or eligibility

**1.3.15****screening**

act of verifying and validating an applicant's eligibility and suitability to meet the minimum requirements for access as determined by the organization on the basis of their risk assessment

**1.3.16****security clearance**

result of specific level of assurance screening used by organizations to determine the eligibility and suitability of a person for roles that are either undertaking functions with elevated risk or accessing security classified information

Note 1 to entry: This documented determination is completed by an authorized screening agency.

**1.3.17****shall**

indicates that a statement is mandatory

**1.3.18****should**

indicates a recommendation

**1.3.19****workforce**

people who provide a product, service or labour to contribute to business or organizational outcomes

Note 1 to entry: This includes all persons who are controlled or engaged by the organization, including direct employees, agency staff, contractors, casuals, and volunteers.

## Section 2 Workforce screening

### 2.1 Workforce screening principles

The following principles should be applied to the workforce screening process:

- (a) Governance:
  - (i) The workforce screening program (processes and practices) supports the organization's mission and the delivery of its business objectives and outcomes.
  - (ii) The specific levels of organizational accountability and responsibility are clearly defined for those persons tasked with performing workforce screening and the corresponding role is appropriately resourced.
  - (iii) The culture of the organization reflects a high-level of commitment to managing risks associated with workforce screening.
- (b) Risk management:
  - (i) Design of the workforce screening program is based on a risk management approach.
  - (ii) Assessment of candidates or entrusted persons is based on a risk management approach.
- (c) Process:
  - (i) Workforce screening program is effective and efficient, meets agreed performance levels, is reviewed periodically on a predetermined schedule or for cause and is continuously improved.
  - (ii) Information used in workforce screening is accurate, timely, complete, consistent, and relevant.
- (d) Security:
  - (i) Security arrangements provide the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all relevant information required for workforce screening.
- (e) Conduct and assessment:
  - (i) Workforce screening processes and practices are standardized in order to deliver trusted, high quality, consistent and reliable outcomes.
  - (ii) Workforce screening processes, practices and outcomes are made available and communicated to candidates and entrusted persons within controls prescribed by the organization.
- (f) Ethics:
  - (i) Workforce screening recognizes the unique circumstances of each candidate or entrusted person and takes into account their requirements and rights in all aspects of the process.
  - (ii) Workforce screening processes and practices support mutual trust.
  - (iii) Workforce screening requirements are fully disclosed, transparent and included in the position description when gazetted.

## 2.2 Legislation and regulation

This document is complementary to various legal requirements which impact upon workforce screening where screening deals with appointments to positions of trust and care.

## 2.3 Communication

A well-designed communication strategy is a key element in the effective implementation of workforce screening. All relevant stakeholders should be informed of why workforce screening is being implemented, their relationship to the process, and how this process will impact on the organization's people management.

## 2.4 Privacy and confidentiality

Workforce screening checks shall be conducted in accordance with the organization's privacy policy. Organizations shall obtain informed consent from all candidates to collect, maintain, use and disclose their personal information (including sensitive information) for the purposes of assessing, determining, and reviewing their eligibility and suitability. In the screening documentation, organizations shall include a statement relating to the privacy and extent of the information required in their recruitment or review of ongoing suitability.

The statement shall detail how personal information will be collected, maintained, used and disclosed. Obtaining informed consent from all candidates will allow the organization to —

- (a) collect personal information, including sensitive information, from other entities or private organizations; and
- (b) disclose personal information, including sensitive information, within the organization and to external parties when determining initial or continuing suitability to access the organization's assets.

As part of the workforce screening, organizations shall obtain acceptance of confidentiality requirements from the candidate, including —

- (i) a statutory declaration stating all information provided is truthful and complete; and
- (ii) a signed agreement to confirm their undertaking to protect the organization's resources.

An organization shall ensure that candidates are given access to their personal information, in order to confirm its accuracy and veracity. If the candidate provides evidence of the veracity of any proposed change, this change shall be reflected in the necessary documents. False information shall be removed from the record.

## 2.5 Organizational probity

The organization should implement the necessary system and processes to ensure procedural fairness, impartiality, transparency, and timeliness in screening decision making. This should include ensuring that:

- (a) personnel involved in the screening processes approach their duties in an honest and unbiased manner;
- (b) adequate notice of the screening process is provided to all parties; and
- (c) effective avenues for review or appeal of the screening decisions are available.

Upon introduction of a screening program, organizations should screen their current workforce.

In the event an organization introduces or varies workforce screening requirements that may be deemed intrusive by stakeholders, the following should be considered before implementation:

- (i) Legal or other suitable professional advice.
- (ii) Human rights.
- (iii) Stakeholder consultation and implications for the program.

## 2.6 Responsibility

The organization is responsible for developing and maintaining an effective program for screening current and potential personnel, both for the initial screening and on an ongoing basis.

## 2.7 Risk management

Workforce screening should form part of an organization's risk management strategy and process. The risk management process for workforce screening should form an integral part of management and decision-making and be integrated into the structure, operations and processes of the organization.

The dynamic and variable nature of human behaviour and culture should be considered throughout the workforce screening risk management process. Although risk management is often presented as sequential, in practice it is iterative. This is important to minimize the risk of misuse of privilege.

The level of screening conducted on a candidate should be commensurate with the level of risk posed by that particular role, to organizational objectives, processes and business impact, for example reputational damage, or financial loss. This shall be identified during the risk management process.

All relevant stakeholders should be informed —

- (a) why workforce screening is being implemented;
- (b) any respective roles they play in the process; and
- (c) how this process will impact on the organization's people management process.

AS ISO 31000 provides a risk management process that may be applied to assess risk and identify controls. See [Appendix A](#) for the application of the risk management process for a workforce screening program in an organizational context. [Appendix A](#) also outlines the specific risk assessment process when applied to individual candidates.

A risk management process should inform the development of the workforce screening program. It should be conducted before the implementation of the program and before any roles are advertised. The screening requirements identified in the risk assessment should identify any mitigating controls that may be subsequently incorporated into the role and job description, as well as applied to any individual assessments. The risk assessment should consider the following —

- (i) value of the assets to which the role requires access (e.g. buildings, people, sensitive information, critical infrastructure, firearms) and the impact on the organization of loss or compromise of those assets;
- (ii) credibility of any documentary or oral assurances concerning the candidates' attributes, as well as the integrity and reliability of third parties providing these assurances;
- (iii) impact of internal and external influences on the candidate, considering the urgency, duration, and nature of the role (e.g. permanent ongoing role, contract role, short or long term role);
- (iv) level of access (e.g. administrator or privileged) required to the organization's assets;
- (v) frequency of contact required with the asset (e.g. do they come into "regular" contact with the asset?);