

Pre-employment checks before hiring

By now, the employer has decided on the successful candidate. However, a further consideration should be what are called pre-employment checks – some are optional and some are a legal requirement.

Carrying out checks before a job offer

Some employers carry out as many checks as possible before offering a job. This will offer reassurance that an employee is suitable before a job offer is made, and can also speed up the time it takes to get an employee to start work, but it can come at a financial and administrative cost.

Carrying out checks once an offer has been made

Some employers carry out checks once they have sent a job offer letter and the candidate has accepted the post - but such an offer should say it will carry out pre-employment checks, and the job offer is made on the condition that the results of the checks are satisfactory. This method tends to reduce the financial and administrative costs, but can be problematic if candidates are subsequently found to fail any of the checks.

Carrying out checks once the job has started

The employer might also offer the job on a probationary period so it can complete checks before offering the role permanently. This is likely to result in the fewest unnecessary checks. However, some legal checks may need completing before employment starts, and other checks may inadvertently become forgotten or disregarded.

Some of the checks are covered in the next section, including:

- Checking the right to work in the UK
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- References
- Proof of qualifications.

A more detailed checklist of pre-employment checks is available at www.acas.org.uk/templates.

All checks must meet Data Protection Act 1998 requirements – these include that they must be lawful, necessary and fair, and information must be from a trusted source. Where possible, the employer should only check the successful candidate.