

Frequently Asked Questions

AM I ELIGIBLE

To hold a clearance you normally need to be a New Zealand citizen or hold a Residence Class Visa. If your agency has concerns about your trustworthiness or suitability they may decide not to submit a request for a clearance.

WHAT CLEARANCE LEVEL DO I NEED?

You must have a New Zealand government national security clearance if your role requires you to access information classified CONFIDENTIAL or above. The level of clearance you need depends on the classification level of the information you need access to. There are four levels of security clearance;

- Confidential
- Secret
- Top Secret
- Top Secret Special

HOW LONG DOES THE VETTING TAKE?

The length of time to complete the process depends on your background and any issues that need to be explored. It can take several months.

HOW QUICKLY DO I NEED TO COMPLETE MY QUESTIONNAIRE

You and your referees need to complete the online questionnaires within 2 weeks or this may delay your clearance.

HOW DEEP DO YOU DELVE INTO MY LIFE?

The level of intrusion into your personal life increases with the level of clearance sought.

The vetting assessment considers:

- external loyalties, influences and associations
- personal relationships and conduct
- financial considerations
- alcohol and drug use
- criminal history and conduct
- security attitudes and violations
- mental health issues

Each clearance level requires NZSIS to delve deeper into your background. For Confidential clearance you

need to provide 5 years of history, for Secret and Top Secret you need to provide 10 years of history, and for Top Secret Special you need to be able to provide 15 years of historical information about yourself.

WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED?

Depending on the clearance level you're being assessed for, the range of information you'll be required to submit will vary.

Information is gathered from you, and your referees if required, through questionnaires and interviews. Enquiries include, but are not limited to, standard checks such as credit and police histories, international travel and any security relevant information.

We suggest you collate all the required information prior to filling out the online forms and questionnaires. You will receive a guide to help you with this.

For vetting at a SECRET level or higher, you must provide four referees, each relevant to specific aspects of your life. Your referees are required to fill out an online questionnaire and may be interviewed in person or by telephone. If you are applying for a Top Secret/Top Secret Special clearance you will automatically be interviewed.

WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS ONCE I'M GRANTED A CLEARANCE?

Holding a national security clearance comes with some obligations. A security clearance holder must:

- Comply with the New Zealand Government's rules for the protection of classified information
- Comply with your employer's standards of conduct
- Report any security breaches
- Report changes in personal circumstances (e.g. divorce, a new partner, bankruptcy, foreign citizenship, etc.)
- Report any suspicious contacts or enquiries
- Be 'security aware'

Your agency will explain your responsibilities in more detail when you are granted a clearance.

VERSION 1 / AUGUST 2017

Getting a National Security Clearance

Here is the process you need to follow to obtain a national security clearance.



PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All information obtained during the course of the vetting process is kept in NZSIS records. The information is not made available to government departments or agencies, except so far as is necessary to support recommendations on the clearance to the originating chief executive.

COMPLAINTS AND FAIRNESS

NZSIS is committed to procedural fairness to protect your rights in the security vetting process. If you are unhappy with the way the process was handled or with the NZSIS recommendation, you may make a complaint to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. www.igis.govt.nz