

Handling and Safe-keeping of DBS Certificate Information Policy

1. Introduction

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, The Open University complies fully with the code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information.

The University complies fully with its obligations under data protection legislation and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and this policy is available to those who wish to see it on request.

2. Storage and access

Certificate information should be kept securely, either password protected if electronic or in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

3. Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

4. Usage

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

5. Retention

We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate, other than for the exception of the Certificate of Sponsorship requirement stated below.

For applications for Certificates of Sponsorship for migrant workers, DBS checks, where required, are kept for one year from the date the sponsorship of the migrant is ended.

Units may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificates and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

6. Disposal

Once the retention period for Certificate of Sponsorship requirements has elapsed, we will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, for example by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack).

Useful references

DBS Code of Practice
Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy