Getting a National Security Clearance

A candidate's overview of the national security clearance vetting process



Your organisation will check your suitability to access CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET, and TOP SECRET information, assets, and work locations before applying for a NZSIS vetting recommendation.



🗒 \overline Registration

Your organisation will ask you to register online and consent to NZSIS vetting doing background checks.



Questionnaire

You and your referees need to complete an online questionnaire. Once this information is completed the NZSIS will be able to initiate the vetting assessment.



Decision

Your organisations Chief Executive





Assessment

(or their delegate) decide whether or not you will be granted a national security clearance.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Vetting applications are initiated and checked for completeness by the sponsoring organisation before forwarding to NZSIS vetting. Organisations should not be recording or utilising the completed forms before forwarding onto the NZSIS for assessment

All information obtained during the course of the vetting process is kept in NZSIS vetting records. The information the NZSIS collects is not made available to government organisations, except so far as is necessary to support recommendations on the clearance to the originating organisations Chief Executive



COMPLAINTS AND FAIRNESS

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

NZSIS vetting makes a recommendation to your organisation regarding your suitability to hold a national security clearance.

The information you and your referees provide is used as the basis for NZSIS vetting to conduct background checks to identify any vulnerabilities or behaviours that may impact on your suitability to hold a clearance.

INTERVIEWS

You may be interviewed depending on the assessment or the clearance level sought. Top Secret clearance and above are automatically interviewed.

REFEREES

Your nominated referees may be interviewed in person or by telephone depending on the clearance level sought or as required.



Discuss concerns

If any concerns are identified you are provided the opportunity to discuss them before the recommendation is finalised. Expert opinion may be sought as required.

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 organisation has concerns about your suitability they may decide not to submit a request for a clearance.

WHAT CLEARANCE LEVEL DO LNEED?

Your organisation will decide which clearance level you need based on the highest classification of the information, assets, or work locations your role

- will need access to. There are four levels of security clearance:
- 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 guestionnaires 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 looks at the following areas of your life:

- · organisations or people you are loyal to, who may have influence over you,
- or who you are associated with personal relationships and conduct
- financial considerations
- alcohol and drug use
- · criminal history and conduct · security attitudes and violations
- mental health situation.

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

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 evant to specific aspects of your life. Your referees are requi 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 and behaviour
- · be 'security aware'.

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

