

Applying for a DBS Check

If you are volunteering in schools and working with children, it is a requirement that your UK criminal record is checked. This is called a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

What is it?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers and voluntary organisations make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children and young people.

When you submit your DBS application, the DBS service will search police records and then issue a DBS certificate to you. This will show any criminal records you may have.

Why do I need it?

You must obtain a DBS certificate before volunteering in schools as you will be working alongside children and young people. Before you go into school, the Volunteering Team must:

- Establish your true identity through examining a range of documents
- Ensure that you provide details and evidence of all names by which you have been legally known
- Ensure you provide a five year address history

How do I complete a DBS check?

If you are allocated a placement, you will receive an email in Week 10 asking you to select the three ID documents you will bring to an evidence check. **We cannot accept any photocopies, electronic versions of documents or printed online bank statements or household bills.**

You will then be able to attend one of our DBS Clinics running from Week 11 of each semester (dates will be confirmed in your placement offer email). If you cannot attend one of these please email ysis@york.ac.uk to let us know when you are ready to complete your evidence check. Make sure you have all of your ID documents to hand, ready to show a member of staff.

Following the check, we will then ask you to complete the remainder of your application independently. You will be asked to provide a five year address history, including all student housing/accommodation you have lived in. Please see an example below of how you should complete this if you are putting your home address as your current address:

Current address: Non-term time address (Jan 2009 - present)

Previous address 1: Uni address 1 (Sept 2024 - Jun 2025)

Previous address 2: Uni address 2 (Sept 2023 - Jun 2024)

E.t.c.

Please note it is fine to have overlaps in your addresses, however you must ensure that there are no gaps in your address history.

If you would like more guidance on completing the address history section of your application please email ysis@york.ac.uk, ask us at a DBS Clinic or read through the DBS [Unusual Addresses guidance](#).

You must submit your application **by the deadline given, or we will need to cancel your placement.**

If you have legally changed your name, proof of this name change must be presented (for example a Change of Name Deed). If you are transgender and do want to disclose a previous change of name you can contact DBS Sensitive application team on sensitive@dbgs.gsi.gov.uk

Where will my certificate be sent?

Your certificate will be sent to the address you provided as your current address. If this address was on campus, please ensure you check your accommodation mailroom and college reception. If you are unsure which address you listed on your application, please contact ysis@york.ac.uk.

How long will it take?

DBS certificates are usually sent within four weeks. If you have not received it after this time, please contact ysis@york.ac.uk.

If your certificate does not arrive at your listed address, you can [request a reprint](#) up to 93 days after your initial certificate was issued. Please note the Volunteering Team cannot request a reprint on your behalf.

Can I track its progress?

You can track the progress of your application via the [official DBS tracking site](#). You will need to input your reference number (this will be on the email that you received when you submitted your application) and your date of birth.

What do I do when it arrives?

Once your certificate arrives, please keep it safe. You do not need to show us your certificate unless asked to do so. Your allocated school will ask to see your certificate and a form of photo ID on the first day of your placement.

Can I use it for other volunteering roles?

Your DBS check is valid for your time as a student at the University of York and covers any volunteering activity run by the University that requires the same level of check. In some instances it will be required that you haven't had a gap in service of over 3 months.

We encourage all of our students to sign up to the DBS Update Service to allow you to use your certificate for all volunteering opportunities that require the same level of check, both at the university and with other organisations. This allows organisations to 'update' your existing certificate so that you don't need to send off for a brand new check. This service is free for volunteers. In order to register you will need to know your application reference number (on the email that you received when you submitted your application) and must complete the registration form within 28 days of completing your DBS application. If you have already applied you can register for the update service using your DBS certificate number. You must do this within 30 days of the certificate being issued: <https://www.gov.uk/db-update-service>

If I was cautioned, or was convicted of an offence when I was younger, will this affect my chances of a placement?

Not necessarily. You should declare if you have a previous caution or conviction on the DBS application form (it is an offence not to) and discuss this with us if you feel comfortable doing so.

Cautions or convictions will appear on your DBS certificate. Should this occur, the following procedure will take place:

- The Volunteering Team will contact you via telephone to discuss how to proceed.
- A confirmation email will be sent to you following this telephone conversation, obtaining your permission for the Volunteering Team to contact your partner school/host organisation. No details of the record will be written in this email.
- Unless the offence is of such a nature that you should be excluded from contact with children or vulnerable adults, it is for the school or host organisation to decide whether or not to accept you as a volunteer.
- With your permission, the Volunteering Team will contact the school/host organisation via telephone to discuss the DBS check with them. A confirmation email with the outcome of the discussion will then be obtained. No details of the record will be written in this email.
- The Volunteering Team will then contact you via telephone or email to advise you of the outcome of the discussion.

Please note, we will not contact the school/host organisation until we have your permission. If you would prefer that we do not share this information with your

school/host organisation, then unfortunately we are unable to allow you to volunteer on this occasion.

International Students

If you have lived outside the UK more than 3 months in the last 5 years, you will need to produce a translated police check/certificate of good conduct from the relevant country, in addition to a UK DBS check. It is your responsibility to obtain this check and show it to the York Students in Schools Team.

We will need to see your translated police check by Week 1 of the term in which you are due to volunteer. You may therefore complete your home country check over the Christmas, Easter or Summer vacation, if you will be returning home for the holidays. You may complete a UK DBS check before you have received your police check from your home country.

Some information about how you can go about obtaining a check can be found on the GOV.UK webpage covering [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#). Specific advice for students from Hong Kong can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).

You will still need to complete a UK DBS check with the Volunteering Team. You must have proof of a current address in the UK. This address is where your certificate will be posted.

If you have any questions about any of the information in this guide please get in touch with us at ysis@york.ac.uk and we will be happy to help.