

International Background Checks

As the internationally recognised children's song tells us, "It's a small world after all". This song was written by the Sherman Brothers in 1960's for Mr Walt Disney, who wanted a single song that could be translated into many languages for use at Disneyland. This classic song still sends us a message today; the world is a small place and is increasingly becoming an international marketplace.

HR professionals will attest to the impact that this has had on recruitment. At PeopleCheck, we are finding more of our existing and new clients coming to us with the question of how a background checking program can be effective when candidates' CVs so rarely relate entirely to Australian residency, experience and qualifications.

The background checking culture in Australia is changing from merely "ticking the box" by undertaking searches locally to a real effort to minimise the threats associated with hiring undesirable applicants, even if the undesirable aspect may be of an international flavour!

In this article, we will address some of the frequently asked questions about international background checks.

When are international background checks relevant to an organisation?

International background checks are relevant to organisations on several levels, as follows:

- Australian organisations that hire personnel either originally from an international location or who have lived, worked or studied abroad.
- Organisations based in Australia with an international presence that require consistency in approach between the Australian background checking process and that in other locations; or
- Organisations based overseas that require checks in Australia and other international locations.

The first category is where most of the recent interest PeopleCheck has seen in incorporating international background checks stems from. Often Australian organisations are driven to look at international background checking largely due to candidates with international backgrounds applying for positions.

With travel and international work visas so accessible and "Generation Y" in full force traversing the globe, many Australian citizens have lived abroad for a period of time. It is just as likely something to note could be revealed by background checks overseas as those conducted in Australia. Enter international background checks!

Does PeopleCheck have experience in facilitating international background checks?

Yes, as our logo stating "international validations" suggests, PeopleCheck has many clients both based in Australia and overseas locations where international background checks form part of our service delivery. We have extensive experience in the international background checking arena with most of our management team having specialised in international background checks for many

years. Our Research team consists of Analysts and Assistants highly training in the intricacies of international background checks. Further, our variable working hours to accommodate time differences and our strong network of international contacts ensures efficiencies are maintained.

Additionally, People Check is a founding member of the Asia Pacific chapter of the National Association of Professional Background Screeners. The NAPBS is the internationally recognised body for the industry worldwide, focussed on creating dialogue and increasing education across the background checking community.

What regions does PeopleCheck cover?

PeopleCheck specialises in the Asia Pacific region; however, has a wide coverage, facilitating background checks in most international locations. Availability and pricing for specific locations can be provided on request.

How are international checks undertaken?

The process for validating a candidate's employment history, qualifications and memberships in countries other than Australia is generally the same as the process locally. Wherever possible, PeopleCheck conducts all enquiries out of its Australian validation centre, utilising staff with specialist language skill and custom knowledge, as well as our wide network of international contacts.

Personal and public database searches in international locations vary in terms of availability and process. These are able to be undertaken through a mix of subscription databases and applying for information from relevant authorities holding records such as criminal history, bankruptcy and credit history. In some instances, it is necessary to have an "on the ground presence" and in these cases, PeopleCheck utilises its strong network of partners to access the required information.

Are there separate forms or special requirements for international background checks?

Similar to checks in Australia, some background checks in international locations require specific forms and information and others can simply be undertaken with basic details for the candidate and their signed consent. For example, a criminal history check in New Zealand requires the candidate to complete a specific NZ Ministry of Justice form and provide a copy of ID; whereas a criminal history check in the Philippines can be conducted based on the candidate's name, date of birth and address.

A commonly required piece of information is a national ID number for countries including Brazil, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and the United States. PeopleCheck's Candidate Validation Form completed by all candidates where employment, qualification or professional validations are required requests this information of candidates, so in many cases we do not even have to revert for additional information.

Background checks undertaken in the European Union require a separate consent form authorising the transfer

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of the candidate's personal information to locations outside of the EU.

PeopleCheck's internal processes are such that all requirements for international background checks are clearly communicated to clients and candidates. Emails, forms and instruction sheets are customised for specific countries in order to ensure the procedure for obtaining this information is as simple as possible and our team are trained to answer queries on these requirements.

Do I have to speak the language, call overseas or understand the culture to request these checks?

Absolutely not – this is our job! PeopleCheck has the necessary industry and product knowledge to facilitate background checks in international locations and draws on specialist language and cultural resources as required. The involvement of our clients is as simple as authorising PeopleCheck to undertake a check in an international location (usually via PeopleCheck Online or easy email communication) and we take care of the rest.

Aren't the privacy laws different in other countries?

Yes, each country has its own legislation relating to the collection, use and storage of personal information. PeopleCheck fully appreciates the complexities that each region has in terms of varying availability of information, privacy legislation and cultural differences, and the way these impact on background checking. We attempt to remain abreast of all such issues and draw on the experience of strategic partners and in-country resources to assist with searches in some international locations.

You can be assured that the searches PeopleCheck undertakes are all fully compliant with local regulations, regardless of the country they are undertaken in.

Do international background checks take longer than Australian checks?

As a general rule, validations such as employment history, qualification and professional memberships do take a little longer than those in Australia and PeopleCheck's standard turnaround time is 10-12 working days, although our enquiries can be completed much quicker than this.

Personal and public information database checks also take an average of 10-12 working days. However, some checks are completed as quickly as 1-3 working days and others such as New Zealand, Thailand and UK criminal history checks can take up to 20 to 30 working days. PeopleCheck ensures these varying turnaround times are clear for our clients and that they are kept updated on the progress of background checks in all instances via draft reports.

Are international background checks more expensive than those in Australia?

Sometimes, but not always! The perception by many organisations is that incorporating international checks into a background checking program will be a great expense to the business. However, this is not always the

case. In some international regions, information is cheaper to obtain than locally and our fees vary dramatically as a direct reflection of this.

In the overall scheme, undertaking the international background checks required to ensure a candidate's background is thoroughly reviewed may cost a little extra than leaving these gaps open; however, without this, the money spent on Australian checks is not put to best use!

Does PeopleCheck offer the same service for international checks as that for Australian checks?

Yes, PeopleCheck can offer a consistent approach for all background checks, regardless of their location. This includes the following aspects of our service:

- Online ordering of international background checks;
- Liaising with candidates to have necessary background paperwork completed, regardless of their location;
- Undertaking validations direct with the organisation;
- Undertaking personal and public information database searches; and
- Providing high-quality reports to clients within deadlines.

How can international checks be integrated with a background checking program that consists largely of Australian checks?

In instances where checks are mainly undertaken in Australia, but equivalent checks in international locations are required, PeopleCheck offers a flexible solution in order to allow our clients to select their preferred method:

- PeopleCheck reports to our client in each instance where a candidate has resided overseas, providing a quotation for any equivalent background checks in that location and our client authorises these on a case-by-case basis;
- Automatic approval is given for PeopleCheck to proceed with international checks in specified countries where a candidate has resided there within a set period; or
- Our client's PeopleCheck Online account can be customised to allow ordering of the most frequently required international checks so that our client can specify these at the point of ordering.

More Information

For more information on the ways in which international background checks can assist in reducing the risks to your business, please contact us via telephone on +612 4023 0603 or email at validate@peoplecheck.com.au.

PeopleCheck is a background validation company specialising in local and international background checking and due diligence with a customer service focus. We work closely with our clients to establish validation solutions and packages to best suit an organisation's individual requirements, based on human resource and risk management principles. In order to meet our clients' varying needs, we have established solutions including pre-employment validations, executive team due diligence and legislative and compliance validation.

The information contained in this paper is the opinion of PeopleCheck Pty Ltd and does not form the basis of legal advice.



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