

Frequently Asked Questions – Criminality Check Requirements

The comments below relate to new registrations and the position in relation to new BOOMs. Please note there is NO REQUIREMENT for members to obtain further criminality check certificates when submitting the renewal form.

Q1. Why are criminality checks required?

This change was introduced by the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017 as amended (MLR). Under [Regulation 26](#) no beneficial owners, officers and managers (BOOMs) of supervised firms can have any criminal convictions for offences listed in [Schedule 3](#).

In determining and carrying out its obligations under MLR, and in particular in determining whether to accept applications for registration from new firms applying for supervision or new BOOMs in a business, the CIOT and ATT, as AML Supervisory Authorities, are required to understand whether proprietors and certain other individuals associated with an applicant firm have been convicted of a criminal offence.

We do not believe that this obligation can be discharged by total reliance on self-certification by the individuals concerned, however much they may be in good standing with us more generally as members. The requirement was reinforced by changes to the MLR which came into force in January 2020. The MLR now include a more explicit statement that supervisory authorities must collect sufficient information to enable a supervisor to determine whether the person concerned has been convicted of a relevant offence.

Firms seeking supervision by the CIOT and ATT are required by us to carry out a criminality check on their business owners, officers or managers (BOOMs) when they first register or in relation to new BOOMs in the business. This is a one-off check at this stage but the Office for Professional Body AML Supervision (OPBAS) has recently consulted on future arrangements regarding criminality check procedures. We will update members further once the result of the consultation is available.

Q2. What is the definition of BOOMs?

All firms applying for AML supervision need to identify the BOOMS relevant to their organisation. The definition agreed with HM Treasury in relation to BOOMS is as follows:

Officer

This should include:

- a sole practitioner;
- a partner in a partnership (including a Scottish Limited Partnership (SLP));
- a member in a limited liability partnership (LLP);
- a director or company secretary in a limited company; and **
- a member of the firm's management board or equivalent.

Beneficial owner

This should include:

- a sole practitioner;
- a partner, or LLP member, in a firm who:
 - o holds (directly or indirectly) more than 25% of the capital, or profits or voting rights; or

- exercises ultimate control; and
- a shareholder in a limited company who:
 - holds (directly or indirectly) more than 25% of the shares or voting rights; or
 - ultimately owns, or exercises ultimate control.

Manager

This should include:

- the nominated officer (the MLRO);
- the member of the board of directors (or if there is no board, of its equivalent management body) or of its senior management as the officer responsible for the relevant person's compliance with MLR); and
- any other principal, senior manager, or member of a management committee who is responsible for setting, approving or ensuring the firm's compliance with the firm's Anti-Money Laundering policies and procedures, in relation to the following areas:
 - client acceptance procedures;
 - the firm's risk management practices;
 - internal controls, including employee screening and training for AML purposes;
 - internal audit or the annual AML compliance review process;
 - customer due diligence, including policies for reliance; and
 - AML record keeping.

** Members are reminded that where a spouse or civil partner is a director or shareholder those individuals **must** be included in the relevant section of the registration form and criminality checks **must** be undertaken.

Q3. How are criminality checks obtained?

Members will need to apply for the checks themselves as CIOT/ATT are not registered to carry out checks on behalf of members.

Criminality checks must be carried out through [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) for members working in England and Wales or through [Disclosure Scotland](#) or [AccessNI](#) for members working in Scotland or Northern Ireland. Further information on how to carry out criminality checks can be found [here](#). Checks cost around £21.50 and are usually processed within 14 days. Each BOOM in an organisation will need to arrange to carry out a check and pass the information to the nominated principal (unless your organisation is registered to do online checks for employees). This is necessary so the nominated principal can complete the declaration on the registration form and pass copies of criminality check certificates to the CIOT and ATT where required. If the MLRO is not the same person as the nominated principal they may also wish to have a copy.

Criminality checks for those who are based outside the UK or have lived outside the UK prior to the date of registration will also need to be obtained. Where they have been in the UK for some time a UK check will be needed as based on the paragraph above. You will also need to undertake checks for the overseas territories where they've lived in the previous five years. Guidance for employers on obtaining checks for overseas individuals may be of assistance in these circumstances and can be accessed [here](#).

Q4. How recent do the checks need to have been?

HM Treasury have indicated that criminality check results should be no more than 3 months old. CIOT and ATT require the following:

- New applications – the criminality check certificate should be dated no more than 3 months before the date you first apply for AML supervision.
- New BOOMs – the criminality check certificate should be dated no more than 3 months before the date the individual becomes a BOOM.

Q5. If I have already had a criminality check in relation to work I undertake for a charity can I base my declaration on the results of that check?

Where members or other BOOMS have the results of a criminality check obtained for another purpose issued within the appropriate time frame that may be sufficient. If a member provides the results of an enhanced check to CIOT and ATT they should be aware that they may be disclosing more information than is required under the regulations.

Q6. Will CIOT and ATT require sight of all of the results of the criminal checks?

In relation to **new registrations** the criminality check certificates of all BOOMS must be submitted as soon as possible as the CIOT and ATT will not be able to confirm registration and supervision of the firm without sight of these. As a reminder we expect all members to complete their registration for AML supervision **within two months of commencing in business**.

Firms must notify the CIOT within 14 days of the appointment of a new BOOM and must supply a copy of the criminality check certificate within 14 days of the appointment.

Q7. Do I have to wait for the results of all criminality checks before I submit the new registration?

The AML registration form requires the nominated principal to confirm that criminality checks on all Beneficial Owners, Officers and Managers have been undertaken and to go on to confirm that none of them have committed a relevant offence under Schedule 3 of the MLR. If the form is submitted before receipt of all the criminality checks the nominated principal will need to answer no to having criminality checks for all BOOMS and note that they are in the process of being obtained. However, it will not be possible to confirm registration and supervision until the criminality checks have been submitted to the CIOT and ATT.

Q8. What will happen if the criminality check certificate indicates a criminal conviction?

If a BOOM's certificate shows a criminal conviction in relation to an offence listed in [Schedule 3](#) MLR, CIOT and ATT will not be in a position to approve those individuals and will not therefore be able to supervise the firm.

The firm will need to take immediate action to remove the individual from their position as a BOOM otherwise AML supervision will cease. All supervisory bodies are required to take the same approach and therefore the firm will be unable to register with any supervisory body if the BOOM remains in position. Supervision is a legal requirement and therefore the firm will be operating illegally without AML supervision being in place.

If a criminal conviction is shown which is not listed in [Schedule 3](#) MLR no action will be required and CIOT or ATT will still be able to be AML supervisor. However, members will need to notify CIOT and ATT of their criminal conviction in accordance with paragraph 2.14 of Professional Rules and Practice Guidelines (see here for [CIOT](#) and here for [ATT](#)).

Q9. What happens if a firm appoints a new BOOM?

Where a new Money Laundering Reporting Officer, Board Member or Senior Manager or other BOOM is appointed details relating to the individual must be notified to the CIOT and ATT within 14 days of appointment. Please notify us by email to aml@tax.org.uk. The email should include:

- The name of the firm and AML supervision reference
- The name and address of the new BOOM and date of appointment

The firm must supply a copy of the new BOOM's criminality check within 14 days of appointment.

Q10. What happens if a BOOM is convicted of an offence set out in Schedule 3 MLR AFTER the current criminal check has taken place?

If the BOOM is convicted of a criminal offence within the list in Schedule 3 MLR after the checks have taken place either they or their firm must inform CIOT or ATT **within 14 days** of the date on which the individual was convicted.

As indicated above the firm cannot be supervised if the BOOM remains in position.

Q11. What happens if members submit their application form indicating that the criminality checks have been completed and that none of the BOOMS have committed an offence and cannot produce copies of the checks?

Where CIOT and ATT find checks have not been undertaken on some or all of the relevant BOOMS they will require the firm to arrange for the checks with immediate effect and provide a copy of the results within an agreed time frame. The nominated principal may be referred to the Taxation Disciplinary Board for disciplinary action for making a false declaration on the AML application/renewal form.