

Information for Bursary Applicants regarding Security Clearance for Employment in the UK Nuclear Sector – Civil and Defence

This information note provides a brief, high-level introduction to security clearance for employment in the nuclear sector.

You do not need a security clearance to apply for this bursary. This information is provided so that applicants are aware that security clearance may be a requirement when you apply for employment in the nuclear sector in the future.

Eligibility – who can apply

You can apply for this bursary if:

- You have the right to live and work in the UK now and are likely to keep that right after your course (for example, you are a British citizen, or you have settled / pre-settled status or another long-term visa).
- You plan to or are interested to work in the UK civil or Defence nuclear sectors after your studies.
- You will be a minimum of 18 years old ¹on 1st September 2026

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, including those who are the first in their family to progress to higher education or advanced vocational study (e.g. Level 3+), or who have experienced financial hardship or other disadvantage.

Security checks – what you need to know

Many jobs in the nuclear sector, especially in Defence, require security checks carried out by the UK Government. These are called National Security Vetting (NSV) and include different levels, such as Security Check (SC) and Developed Vetting (DV).

You do not need a security clearance to apply for this bursary. But it is important to understand that:

- By the time you start work in some nuclear roles, you may need to have lived in the UK for around 5 years (for SC) or longer (often up to 10 years) for the most sensitive Defence roles.
- If you have spent a lot of time living in other countries, or have strong links overseas, security checks can still be possible, but they may take longer and may limit which jobs you can do.

¹ The nuclear bursary is open to applicants 18 years old and above. There is no upper age limit, and we welcome applications from career changers as well as early career entrants.

The decision to grant a security clearance is made by government vetting teams, not by the bursary scheme or your training provider/university/employer.

Dual nationality and overseas backgrounds

We know many people interested in nuclear careers have family, citizenship or lived experience in more than one country.

- Having dual nationality or non-UK nationality does not automatically stop you getting a security clearance or a job in nuclear.
- People with different nationalities and dual nationalities already work in the civil and Defence nuclear sectors.
- For some very sensitive Defence jobs, individual employers may apply stricter rules (for example, they may only recruit British citizens for particular roles). This is decided by the employer and the security authorities for that specific post.

Because this can vary from job to job, the bursary does not set extra nationality rules beyond the basic requirement to have the right to live and work in the UK.

How this might affect you

To keep things simple:

- If you have lived in the UK most of your life, you are likely to meet the residency expectations for many nuclear roles by the time you finish your course.
- If you have moved to the UK more recently, or have spent a lot of time overseas, you may still be able to work in nuclear, but some jobs (especially certain Defence roles) may be harder to access or take longer to clear.
- If you are from a disadvantaged or migrant background, this bursary is still for you provided you have the right to live and work in the UK.

We encourage you to think of security clearance as one factor in your future career, not as a reason not to apply.

Further information about security vetting and an overview of the process can be accessed online at:

[National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/national-security-vetting-clearance-levels)