

Pre-employment integrity screening in the Netherlands

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Platform chauffeur op Schiphol

🕒 20 tot 40 uur per week 📍 Schiphol 💰 € 2.414,00 - € 3.100,00 per maand 👤 Medewerker gastvrijheid

- Gratis parkeren tijdens werktijd op Schiphol;
- Vooraf weten waar je aan toe bent door je rooster 6 weken vooraf te ontvangen;
- Een professioneel inwerkprogramma en interne training van onze Academy zodat je goed van start kunt gaan en weet wat er van je verwacht wordt;
- Een zinvolle baan met dankbare passagiers in een hecht team.

Wie je bent

- Je bent in het bezit van een groot rijbewijs (Rijbewijs C)
- Je hebt een hoog verantwoordelijkheidsgevoel en bent opgewassen tegen een dynamische omgeving
- Je bent graag in contact met andere mensen en klantvriendelijkheid is je op je lijf geschreven;
- Je bent op zoek naar een fysieke functie waarbij geen dag hetzelfde is;
- Je bent flexibel beschikbaar en kunt gemiddeld 20 uur per week werken (Fulltime/Parttime is mogelijk);
- Je spreekt en schrijft Nederlands en bij voorkeur spreek je Engels;
- Je bent minimaal 18 jaar;
- Een screening bij de Koninklijke Marechaussee is onderdeel van de selectieprocedure. Het is daarom belangrijk dat je niet in aanraking bent geweest met justitie en dat je 8 jaar in Nederland woont.



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Home **Thema's** Actueel Documenten Contact FG's

Home > Thema's > Werken uitkering >


Screening

Voor werkgevers is het van belang om betrouwbare werknemers in dienst te hebben. Screening van sollicitanten en werknemers is een hulpmiddel om de risico's te beperken. Voor bepaalde functies is screening zelfs wettelijk verplicht.

[Screening](#) kan echter zeer ingrijpend zijn voor de privacy van de betrokken sollicitant of werknemer. Daarom is screening alleen onder bepaalde [wettelijke voorwaarden](#) toegestaan.



Fraude & Integriteit Grensoverschrijdend gedrag Cybersecurity Risk management



Wat is een pre-employment screening?

Home → Risk management → Pre-employment screening



Services Software Screening check

Pre-employment screening services

Pre-employment screening, ook wel PES screening, betreft het verifiëren van gegevens op het CV van een potentiële medewerker die betrekking hebben tot de uitoefening van de functie van de kandidaat. Zo weet jij wie je aanneemt!

Pre-employment screening

Background checks

- No (useful) formal definition in the literature, however,
 - Most papers (exclusively) deal with criminal background checks
 - But also sometimes: reference checks, official records checks, credit checks
 - Used to determine someone's integrity and reliability
- Negligent hiring as context for background checks (Levashina & Campion, 2009)
 - However, such laws do not exist in the Netherlands (or the EU)
 - Policy differences open criminal records (US) versus closed criminal records (EU) (Bushway & Kalra, 2021)
 - Public information vs use of criminal record extract (for specific purposes)
 - The Netherlands has an unique way of dealing with criminal record information
 - Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag (VOG) / Certificate of Conduct
 - Government evaluates criminal record information in relation to vacancy

Current exploratory study

Research questions

- What kind of pre-employment screening methods are used in the Netherlands?
- Why are these specific screening methods used?
- Who conducts pre-employment screening?
- When are these specific screening methods used?
- How effective do respondents consider these screening methods?

Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with screening professionals (1.5-3 hours)
 1. Public screeners (N=4)
 2. Commercial screeners (N=3)
 3. Employers (N=15)

What kind of screening methods are used?

Commonly available methods

- Certificate of Conduct [Verklaring omtrent het Gedrag (VOG)]
- Authenticity checks of official records (e.g., degree, BIG registration, identity, residential address)
- Contract checks of previous employment
- Reference verification of work history (employment length, job titles)
- Reference checks (e.g., reason for end of employment)
- Integrity declaration
- Overt integrity test (incl admissions of criminal convictions)
- Open source intelligence* (Google searches) (+ interview)
- Credit check / insolvency register
- Checks on side activities / financial investments

Restricted methods

- Blacklist (formal internal list / “informal list”) / Sanction list (finance)
- Direct check of criminal records/police records (police, secret service, airport authority, national bank) (+ interview)
- Checks of relatives/acquaintances (police and secret service)

Why are these screening methods used?

Commonly available methods

- Certificate of Conduct [Verklaring omtrent het Gedrag (VOG)] General integrity [Specific risk]
- Authenticity checks of official records (e.g., degree, BIG registration, identity, residential address) Verification & general integrity
- Contract checks of previous employment Verification & general integrity
- Reference verification of work history (employment length, job titles) Verification & general integrity
- Reference checks (e.g., reason for end of employment) General integrity
- Integrity declaration General integrity
- Overt integrity test (incl admissions of criminal convictions) General integrity
- Open source intelligence* (Google searches) (+ interview) Undue influence & general integrity (+ awareness)
- Credit check / insolvency register Undue influence
- Checks on side activities / financial investments Undue influence & conflict of interest

Restricted methods

- Blacklist (formal internal list / “informal list”) / Sanction list (finance) Specific risk
- Direct check of criminal records/police records (+ interview) General integrity
- Checks of relatives/acquaintances (police and secret service) conflict of interest General integrity, undue influence &

Why are these screening methods used? (2)

Choice of screening methods

- Based on actual and perceived legal requirements
- Always tailored to the risks of the specific job in a specific context (company)
 - Legitimate interest of screening
 - Needs to show that all other less invasive risk minimizing methods have already been used
- **Examples**
 - *Credit check only when potential risk of fraud or undue influence*
 - *Different screening for cleaner in a hospital than cleaners at the secret service*

When not used (only 2 employers)

- No need, sufficient information based on job interview, CV, and assessments to hire candidate
 - However, no specific attention to integrity in such assessments
- Very small sector “everyone knows everyone”

When and who?

When

- Pre-employment screening is conducted after a job offer is given
- Common practice rather than required by law

Who

- Public screeners with access to criminal records
 - only screen the jobs dictated by law (e.g., national, economical, and ecological security, critical infrastructure)
 - clear separation between HR (recruitment/selection) and compliance (screening)
- Most employers who use screening hire commercial screeners (who also often request a VOG via Justis)
- Very few employers conduct (part of) the screening themselves

How effective is screening considered to be?

Effectiveness difficult to establish

- Most people pass screening ($\geq 95\%$)
 - So instruments may be too lenient (*“Albert Heijn at Schiphol has many issues with theft despite airport screening”*)
 - Organized crime may try to place “clean” workers (e.g., drug collectors at airports)
- Screening provides only a “snapshot”
- Almost no respondents think screening raises awareness
- May work via self-exclusion of unsuitable candidates (see also Ramakers et al., 2017)
 - Unclear whether self-selection also applies to suitable candidates (see Boekhoorn et al., 2019)
 - Some anecdotes of suitable candidates dropping out of procedure due to screening
- **Screening is perceived as more of an administrative process rather than a risk assessment procedure**

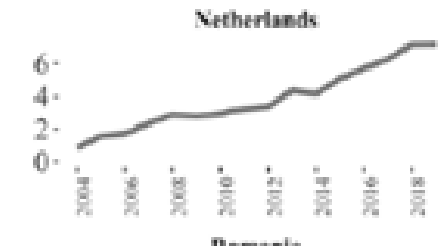
Towards a definition of screening

- **Screening is the use of one or more methods to determine the risks of a person in a particular job in a specific contexts such as integrity violations, susceptibility to undue influence and conflicts of interests. These methods include, but is not limited to, verifying the truthfulness of information, checking background information such as criminal records and financial debt.**

Findings in context

Increases in screening (Barends & Van 't Zand, in prep)

- Increases in pre-employment screening in numbers and sectors
- Number of CoC (VOG) evaluations rising (Rovira, 2023; Van 't Zand, 2020)
- Increases in perceptions of risk classifications of jobs over time (e.g., secret service VGB needed)
- Introduction of in-employment screening and continuous screening



Number of people potentially affected

- 8% of the Dutch population (12+) has a criminal record (CBS, 2022)
- 7.6% of the households have problematic financial debt (ABN AMRO, 2022)
- 75% of CVs contain untruthful information of these 25% outright lies (Algemeen Dagblad, 2019)
- Public problematic social media outings (?)



Signal detection theory of screening (Bushway & Kalra, 2021)

- **Signal detection theory (e.g., fire alarm)**

- Ratio false positives, true alarms. false negatives and correct rejection
- “Better safe than sorry”

	Low risk	High risk
Hired	Safe hire	Mis-hire
Not hired	Missed hire	Correct non-hire

- **Applied to screening**

- Ratio missed hires, correct non-hires, mis-hires and safe hires
- Negligent hiring laws lead to risk aversion (“better safe than sorry”)
- EU closed system should lead to less risk aversion (better balance societal cost-benefit + employer cost-benefit)

- Effectiveness findings suggest this may be the case

- However, dark number of missed hires due to self-selection
- Dark number of mis-hires (e.g., Norway: 10% detection rate; prosecution is rare; Gottshalk & Gunnesdal, 2017)

Implications

- **Other/additional contexts needed for pre-employment screening than negligent hiring**
 - Most work focus only on legal context (what is allowed)
 - (better) theory needed (cf. Binns & Kempf, 2021)
- **Screening focuses on more than collateral consequences of convictions (cf. criminological research)**
- **Potential connections**
 - Rise of the preventive state to limit risk (Zedner & Ashworth, 2019)
 - Responsibilisation of employers as co-producers of public safety (Garland, 2001; Van 't Zand-Kurtovic & Boone, 2023)
 - Export of US screening practices (Rovira, 2022)

Next steps

- **Current project: More interviews**
 - Until saturation is achieved
 - Need more multinationals & some “non-criminological” employers
- **Future research**
 - International comparisons (given the unique Dutch context)
 - Quantitative studies into applicant, screener and employer perceptions of screening methods
 - Self-selection effects of pre-employment screening (recruitment outcomes)

Thank you!



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