



DATAFLOW



'Verifying Qualifications: Reducing Risk'

A case study paper outlining the use of Primary Source Verification as a solution for preventing fraud and mitigating associated risks in education



Author

Mayce Y. Khoury, Content Manager, the DataFlow Group

Disclaimer

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Introduction

UK NARIC is collaborating in partnership with the DataFlow Group - a global provider of background screening and immigration compliance services - to provide Primary Source Verification (PSV) of qualifications and other documentation as a practical solution for its members.

This document outlines and explains the principles of PSV, and how it is used to detect fraudulent applications that could potentially endanger an institution's compliance with Home Office regulations when recruiting international students and workers. A selection of case studies is included - detailing how the DataFlow Group conducts PSV and the effectiveness of its outcomes.

What exactly is Primary Source Verification (PSV)?

To put it simply, Primary Source Verification or PSV is the authentication of documents directly from the original issuing source. Documents are verified and a report including the status of each completed check is shared.

How does PSV differ from other verification procedures?

- Guarantees optimal information integrity - due to its unique, thorough approach.
- Verifies content listed on the presented document, as opposed to the superficial authentication of signatures or stamps - a widely common practice that is insufficient to confirming the genuineness of a credential.
- Includes an additional layer of security through a check on the accreditation of the issuing authority, course and mode of study - as well as through a check on whether the staff at the institution is authorized to have issued the document.
- Differs from what is known as pre-employment screening - which is carried out for compliance purposes and is not necessarily based on the actual certificate issued officially against the information submitted by the applicant.

How does the DataFlow Group approach PSV?

The DataFlow Group utilises cutting-edge technologies, leverages an expansive network of issuing entities and establishes alliances with key partners across the globe to conduct hundreds of thousands of PSV transactions for individuals each year on behalf of various government, quasigovernment, regulatory and large multinational organisations worldwide.



- Global outreach covering over 200 countries
- Worldwide network of more than 60,000 issuing authorities
- Uniquely customizable services
- Fast turnaround time
- International partnerships and affiliations
- Qualified experts and researchers
- Multilingual capabilities



- State-of- the-art online process flow
- Robust platforms
- Industry leading information security
- Fast and accurate data
- Proprietary databases

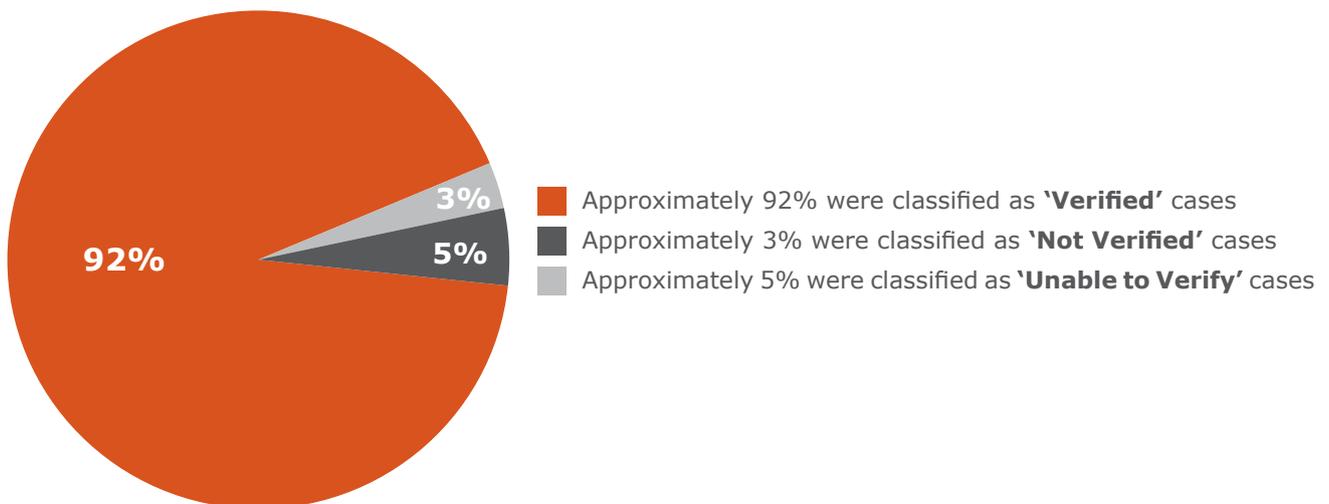
A Global Picture

Given its powerful track record over the years, the DataFlow Group has been trusted by a growing number of governments and organizations to authenticate applicant documents across various industries, including critical sectors like education and healthcare where fraudulent applications may result in substantially more severe consequences.

To this end, the DataFlow Group has become renowned for consistently obtaining global verifications, including those from countries that may be deemed as higher risk markets or from more challenging geographies that are either conflicted or affected by natural disasters - as per the examples to be shared throughout this paper.

Between March 2014 and February 2017, the DataFlow Group conducted approximately 500,000 PSV checks, 13,836 of which were marked as 'Not Verified' - where at least one component of the check returned a discrepant or negative result - amounting to 3.15% of total checks. Some of the most prominent sources of fraud included, but were not limited to: China (12.88%), Indonesia (9.57%), Russia (6.03%), USA (3.34%), Romania (3.30%) and the UK (2.85%).

In tandem, since 2007, total DataFlow Group figures for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region alone show the following trends within a particular sector:



As of October 2017, the rate of global document forgery stood at 3.35% - based on the outcome of DataFlow Group PSV checks

Case Studies



Case Study 1: Verification from a War-Torn Country

A professional of Iraqi nationality submitted one experience certificate to the DataFlow Group for PSV. The presented certificate mentioned that the applicant had worked at a hospital in Nineveh Governorate in Iraq. However, obtaining verifications from Iraq is particularly challenging given the crippling wars that have affected the country over the past few years.

Following intensive investigations, we learned that the hospital is closed due to the war situation and were unable to identify any valid contact details. As such, we attempted to contact the Nineveh Directorate of Health - which also happened to be closed. We then got in touch with the Iraqi Medical Association, which informed us that the Nineveh Directorate of Health now operates from an alternative location. Shortly after, we managed to get a hold of more than five individuals working at the directorate, none of whom would cooperate and provide us with any verification in fear of aggravating the extremist group ISIS, which we later discovered had occupied the hospital that issued the certificate submitted by the applicant.



Result

Faced with yet another obstacle, we engaged with another directorate that gave us an email address through which we finally received the verification from. Once we crosschecked the information and found no misrepresentations or discrepancies, the DataFlow Group marked the case as 'Verified'.



Case Study 2: Professional Certificate from Unaccredited Institution

An applicant submitted their professional qualification to the DataFlow Group for verification. The presented document stated that he had attained the certificate from Beijing Jinhua Medical University in China.

Following extensive screening and research conducted by the DataFlow Group, it became clear that the mentioned university is unrecognized and unlisted as an approved institute under the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. To support this finding, the DataFlow Group took the PSV procedure one step further and contacted an official from the Beijing Municipal Education Commission who confirmed that Beijing Jinhua Medical University is not permitted to enroll new students and was undergoing deregistration at the time.



Result

The DataFlow Group classified the case as 'Not Verified' - ultimately showing that the mere existence of an educational institution does not guarantee its accreditation by official authorities.



Case Study 3: Deceptive University Name

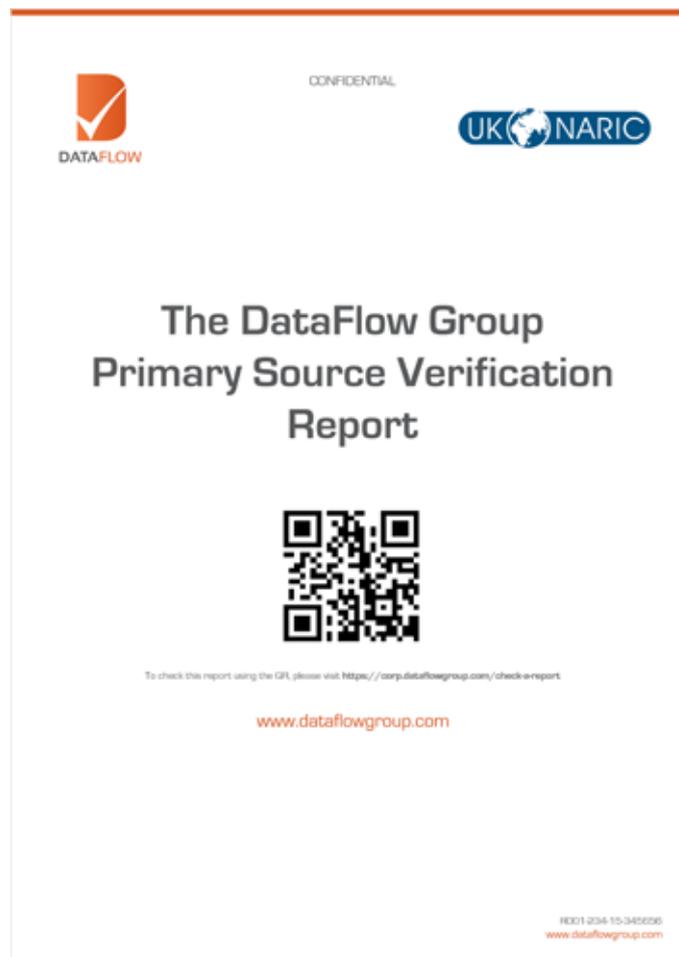
An applicant handed over his academic qualifications to the DataFlow Group for screening. The submitted certificate stated that he had attained his diploma from 'Toronto International University'. Intensive research, strategic email communications and rigorous PSV carried out by the DataFlow Group revealed that the mentioned university has been luring prospective students by replicating its name from one of the most prominent universities in the city - namely the 'University of Toronto'. Response from the Education Department of Ontario confirmed that 'Toronto International University' is not permitted to use the term 'University' - nor is it qualified to offer degree programs in the province.



Result

Based on extensive online research and investigations, the case was concluded as 'Not Verified' - consequently highlighting the importance of authenticating all academic institutions including those that initially seem official.

A sample of a 'Not Verified' PSV report shared with both the educational institution and applicant is shown below:



CONFIDENTIAL 1

Verification Report

The DataFlow Group hereby certifies that the following credential(s) have been authenticated. The result is stated below.

Report Summary	
Applicant Name	[REDACTED]
DataFlow Case Reference	[REDACTED]
Client Reference	-
Profession	Medical Imaging Technologist
Issued to	Dubai Health Authority P.O. Box 118990 Dubai United Arab Emirates
Issued on	20 August 2015
Document(s) Submitted for Verification	Education Certificate Employment Certificate
Result	Not Verified

Report Status Color Reference Table

Not Verified	Cases where at least one component check has returned a negative or discrepancy result.
Unable to Verify	Cases where a document cannot be authenticated due to an unresponsive issuing authority, applicant or have a slight discrepancy in the information submitted.
Verified	Cases where all components have returned positive results.

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DataFlow Case Reference	Client Ref Number	Name of Applicant	Passport Number
[REDACTED]	-	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Report Breakdown

Document Details	Information	Verification Result
Educational Credential	Issuing Authority	University of Health Sciences - Correct
	State, Country	Punjab, Pakistan - Correct
	Qualification	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Medical Imaging Technology - Correct
	Graduation Date	2012/02/10 - Correct
	Is Graduate	Yes - Correct
	Comments	Verified - Education details have been verified by [REDACTED] Director and Administrator and Coordinator in-charge of Degree Cell at University of Health Sciences.
Employment 1	Issuing Authority	Shaheed Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre - Correct
	State, Country	Punjab, Pakistan - Correct
	Designation	Junior Medical Imaging Technologist - Correct
	Start Date	2014/04/14 - Correct
	End Date	2014/12/01 - Correct
	Comments	Verified - Employment details have been verified by [REDACTED] Assistant Manager of Human Resources Department of Shaheed Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre.



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Conclusion

With an increasing number of individuals misrepresenting or forging their documents in order to secure academic or employment opportunities worldwide, education fraud has become a global problem. The thousands of documented cases of credential forgery identified by the DataFlow Group reinforce the value of conducting rigorous background and screening checks, particularly for those operating in vital industries such as education and healthcare. Through incorporating PSV as a routine component of the admission and selection processes, institutions are able to safeguard themselves against countless internal and external risks associated with document forgery, protect their T2 and T4 sponsor Key Performance Indicators, as well as actively uphold the integrity of admission and employment opportunities of genuine students and academic professionals across the world.

About the DataFlow Group

A leading global provider of specialised PSV solutions, and background screening and immigration compliance services - the DataFlow Group partners with entities across the public and private sectors to assist them in mitigating fraud by verifying the authenticity of documents and ensuring that applicants have the qualifications they claim.

Internally, all PSV procedures are handled based on a multitier approach that is divided into sub-processes - each of which is undertaken by different associates operating from separate office locations - thus guaranteeing maximum accuracy and eliminating any bias or potential conflict of interest when verifying the authenticity of a document. Further complementing this approach, DataFlow Group associates are barred from accessing or using information from cases on which they are not actively deployed, and cannot identify the upstream or downstream associate for the case they are currently handling.

Headquartered in Dubai, the DataFlow Group has established offices in multiple regions across the globe to cater to its growing business and client base. Through its worldwide locations, the DataFlow Group provides clients across more than 200 countries and territories with multilingual services that are uniquely tailored to their local markets and native languages.

Over the years, the DataFlow Group has emerged as the leading international provider to solely focus on background screening and immigration compliance solutions. Leveraging extensive intellectual property expertise in its field, the DataFlow Group has cultivated skills and processes that guarantee the highest levels of information integrity, as well as time and cost-efficient results for clients.

To request DataFlow Group PSV solutions that are tailored to your educational institution's unique needs from UK NARIC, simply email us at members@naric.org.uk or call us at 01242258605.

