

NSW Police Medical Assessment - Frequently Asked Questions

Medical Booking

1. Do I have to have book the Medical through UHG?

Yes. All bookings will be made through UHG.

2. How do I contact UHG?

Phone: (03) 8660 0889 Facsimile: 1300 784 128

Email: policemedical@medhealth.com.au

3. What should I wear to the medical appointment?

You should wear comfortable loose clothing ie a singlet and shorts. There are certain questions in the medical assessment itself where the medical assessor may request for the patient to disrobe.

4. How long does the medical take?

We recommend that you plan for the medical to take at least one hour from the time of your appointment.

5. Where can I get the hearing assessment done?

As part of most assessments the hearing test will be done at the UHG office, or in regional areas with the GP whom you are having the medical. If you need to go somewhere separately, the UHG staff member who books your medical will advise you which audio clinic to attend. Please note that you will have to arrange the appointment yourself, and the audiology assessment form can be downloaded from the UHG website.

6. Where can I get the vision assessment done?

If you do not wear glasses the vision assessment will be done during your medical appointment with UHG. If you do wear glasses, you are required to be assessed by an Optometrist. This assessment can be done by any qualified Optometrist. Please note that you will have to arrange the appointment yourself, the vision assessment form can be downloaded from the UHG website.

7. What happens after I see the doctor for my appointment?

All medical files are returned to UHG in Melbourne, where they are then reviewed by the NSW Police oversighting doctor who makes the final decision regarding your status. The oversighting doctor has extensive knowledge about the requirements of policing and communicates regularly with the doctors working with NSW Police. The doctor who undertakes your medical assessment will not have the same knowledge. If further information is required to make a decision regarding your medical status, you will be contacted by email and advised as to what is required.

8. How long does it take for my medical to be cleared?

Some medicals are cleared within a week of the appointment. If you provide all the correct information this will speed up your application. Otherwise, the time taken for your medical to clear (or not clear) will depend on how quickly you return any extra information that is required.

9. How will I know if you have received my faxed documentation?

Please send an email to policemedical@medhealth.com.au and include your name, the sender's name (e.g. doctors surgery), time and date the fax was sent, and how you can be contacted. If you do not get a response to your email within 48 hours please call (03) 8660 0889.

Payment

1. How much does the medical assessment cost?

The total cost is \$454.74 including GST.

2. What does my payment of \$454.74 cover?

Your payment covers the cost of your medical and initial audio and vision assessment, and Spirometry, if repeat audio or vision is requested the cost must be met by the applicant. Please note your payment doesn't cover ECG, Stress ECG costs or any specialist reports requested.

3. How can I pay for the medical?

The easiest method of payment is via credit card on the UHG website. Alternatively, an electronic funds transfer can be organised but this is more time consuming.

4. Do I have to pay for the medical in advance?

Yes.

5. What happens if I need a specialist report reviewed after my medical?

Please be aware that if, during your application, further medical report needs to be reviewed by a UHG doctor, an additional charge may apply for this medical review. This would need to be paid in full before your application can proceed.

6. Can I claim the cost from Medicare?

No.

7. Do I get a refund of my money if I don't pass the medical?

No.

8. What happens if I cancel my appointment?

Please note refunds can only be processed when more than 48 hours' notice is given prior to an appointment being cancelled. Bookings which are attended, or which have been cancelled within 48 hours of the assessment are not eligible. If you cancel your appointment and request a refund it must be done in writing, refunds can take up to 2 weeks from the date of request.

9. What happens if I need to reschedule my appointment?

If you need to reschedule your booking please contact Customer Service on (03) 8660 0889 or email policemedical@medhealth.com.au at least 48 hours before your appointment.

10. What happens if I am not medically cleared to proceed?

Should the overseeing doctor who has reviewed your NSW Police medical advise that you are not medically cleared to proceed, you are able to appeal this decision. An appeal can only be completed once. Any appeal must be accompanied by supporting medical evidence and forwarded to the General Manager NSWPF Recruitment Branch at Recruiting@police.nsw.gov.au

The GM Recruitment Branch will review the evidence and determine if there are sufficient grounds for an appeal. For an appeal to be considered there must be medical evidence that was not available at the time of the original medical or evidence of improper process in the conduct of the medical assessment.

Any appeal request must include the acknowledgement and agreement of the appeal fee of \$431.43. Should the GM agree that enough evidence exists for an appeal to be made, your entire NSW Police file including all reports will be provided to an external Occupational Physician who has extensive background in reviewing NSW Police applicant files against the NSW Police standards.

Should the original decision made be overturned, we will advise both you and NSW Police recruitment. However, if the external Occupational Physician agrees with the specialist doctor, then your application can not be moved forward.

If your appeal is to be reviewed by a psychiatrist or psychologist, a fee of \$1000 applies.

Medical Standards

1. What do I need to provide for my hepatitis B immunity to pass the medical assessment?

Applicants need to provide documentation confirming they have received age appropriate vaccinations (minimum three) and if it is more than one month since the last one, confirmation of immunity on blood testing.

2. What if I have had all my vaccinations but still have no immunity on blood testing?

Applicants will need to consult their general practitioner to commence further treatment under the care of their general practitioner using the guidelines in the Immunisation Handbook in relation to non responders.

3. What if I have confirmation of immunity to hepatitis B, but cannot locate documentation of my vaccinations?

Applicants are encouraged to make reasonable attempts to locate these records which may include their General practitioner (previous and current), myHealth records, Blue Book issued during childhood, school immunisation records, own records or Medicare immunisation records.

If you are unable to locate these records, you will need to sign a NSW Health Hepatitis B Vaccination declaration.

4. What if I have no immunity on blood testing?

You will need to consult your General Practitioner to arrange vaccinations and serological testing according to the recommendations made in the Immunisation Handbook. Documentation of these further vaccinations need to be provided.

5. What if I have not completed my course of vaccinations?

Applicants will need to commence (or continue) their vaccination schedule as guided by their general practitioner and provide evidence that they are up to date with their vaccination program at the time all other health issues have been deemed medically satisfactory.

For example if you have had your first and second vaccination, but are not yet due to have your third, then you will only need to provide confirmation of the first two vaccinations to be medically cleared.

Applicants must have completed at least 2 vaccinations before attending the Academy in Goulburn.

6. Do I need to meet the Commercial Driver's Licence standards?

Yes. This is without exception. All police applicants must meet the current commercial Driver's Licence Standards. This is due to the nature of policing requiring urgent and non-urgent driving as key components of the role of General Duties Police Officer. Please see <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roads/licence/health/fit-to-drive.html> for more information.

7. I wear glasses. Do I need to have any assessments done?

If you wear glasses or contact lenses (visual correction) for any reason, then you will need to have your vision assessed by an optometrist to complete the Vision Assessment form. You must meet the current medical standards to hold a commercial driver's licence.

8. Do I have to buy polycarbonate glasses even though I don't know whether I will be cleared or not?

You will have to purchase polycarbonate glasses to clear your medical. However, if you are requested to provide additional reports/assessments, then it reasonable to purchase these after all other aspects of your medical are deemed satisfactory.

9. I have a colour deficiency. Can I still apply?

Yes. You will need to be further assessed and routinely we ask you to see UNSW School of Optometry to determine the type of colour deficiency you have. Following this, after all other aspects of your medical history have been deemed acceptable, you will be required to undergo a practical colour vision test to determine its effect on daily function.

This determines if you are fit or not based on colour. If you have not yet applied and want a better indication of suitability, we recommend that you undertake a formal colour vision test at UNSW. If you pass the Farnsworth Munsell D 15 test, then it is more likely you will pass the practical test, however, this is not a certainty.

10. Am I allowed to wear tinted lenses to assist with my colour deficiency?

No.

11. I have had laser surgery done to improve my vision.

If you have had laser surgery to correct your vision, regardless of whether you currently require vision correction or not, you are required to have your vision tested by either an optometrist or ophthalmologist (eye specialist). The Vision Assessment form must also be completed.

If you have recently had surgery, then you must wait a minimum period of 1 months after the surgery to ensure stability of your vision and full recovery. At that time, a current assessment and report from your eye specialist is required (including completion of the vision assessment form).

Please note that an actual assessment and report is required and as such providing just the completed vision assessment form would be insufficient.

12. I have had previous eye surgery. What do I need to do?

If you have had any previous or recent eye surgery, then a current detailed assessment and report from an eye specialist is required. The vision assessment form must also be completed.

You will also need to meet the medical criteria to hold a commercial vehicle drivers licence and your fitness to hold the commercial licence must be clearly documented in the report from your eye specialist.

If you have had recent eye surgery, then you must wait a minimum period of 3 months after the surgery to ensure stability of the condition. At that time, a current assessment and report from your eye specialist is required (including completion of the vision assessment form).

13. I have an eye condition such as keratoconus. Do I need to provide further information?

If you have or have had any significant eye conditions, then a current detailed assessment and report from an eye specialist is required. The vision assessment form must also be completed.

You will also need to meet the medical criteria to hold a commercial vehicle drivers licence and your fitness to hold the commercial licence must be clearly documented in the report from your eye specialist.

14. I had a squint (turned eye) when I was younger. Do I need to provide further information?

Yes. As a minimum, you will need to have your vision tested by an optometrist to complete the vision assessment form. If there are any abnormalities identified, then you will need to also have a current assessment and report by an ophthalmologist.

If you currently still have the squint or any other abnormality, then you will need a current eye specialist assessment and report regardless of whether you have seen an optometrist or not.

You will also need to meet the medical criteria to hold a commercial vehicle drivers licence and your fitness to hold the commercial licence must be clearly documented in the report from your eye specialist.

15. I have abnormal stereopsis, abnormal depth perception or abnormal binocular coordination. Can I still apply?

Any problems that affect visual function could interfere with an officer's ability to perform their duties that could have serious implications on their own safety and that of others.

Therefore, applicants with issues such as abnormal stereopsis, abnormal depth perception and abnormal binocular vision are unlikely to be medically cleared. This is regardless of whether they meet the current commercial driving standards.

16. My BMI or my waist circumference is above the accepted ranges. Can I still pass?

The BMI required for all applicants is less than 30kg/m². The waist circumference for females is 88cm or less and for males it is 100cm or less.

This is strictly enforced and you are required to meet these requirements in order to proceed. Please note that the normal healthy range for BMI is between 20 and 25 kg/m².

If you do not meet these criteria at the time of your medical assessment, then your medical clearance will be deferred until you meet the criteria. At that time, you must provide a letter from your GP confirming your measurements.

17. I am 40 years of age. Do I need further assessment?

If you are 40 years or older including if you turn 40 during your training you will require further cardiac evaluation which must include a cardiac risk assessment and report from a cardiologist confirming that you have an ability to undertake beep test standard of at least 7.1, maximal exercise physical training program and no restriction on heart rate during exercise.

Any additional testing is at the discretion of your cardiologist. Please note that a recent stress test does NOT replace the need for a report from your cardiologist.

18. I need to have a cardiac risk assessment. What does this involve?

A cardiac risk assessment is an assessment of your risk of suffering a cardiac event. It takes into account factors including age, sex, smoking history, blood pressure, presence of absence of diabetes, cholesterol and a resting ECG. These factors are used to calculate your risk.

You must achieve a risk of no higher than 5% in the next 5 years. Your treating doctor should be able to undertake this.

19. I had a childhood fracture / sprain etc. Do I need an Orthopaedic report?

Generally no, unless you have some deformity or impairment of function as a result. Your assessing doctor will help you to determine if this is required.

You may wish to provide a current report from your GP about any minor injuries to help speed up your application.

20. I had a shoulder dislocation / knee (patella) dislocation. Can I apply?

Applicants who have suffered dislocations in the past, particularly relating to shoulders or knees, that are treated without surgery are often at increased risk of a further dislocation as the structures that stabilise the joint are damaged. Whilst you are able to apply, a detailed current assessment and report are required from an orthopaedic surgeon.

All conditions must have fully recovered with no further treatment required and you must demonstrate a return to full, normal activities without restriction for a period of time to demonstrate full capacity and stability. The duration of time this needs to be will vary depending on the nature of the condition.

You must be able to perform all policing duties without restriction and without increased risk of harm.

21. I have back or neck pain. Can I apply?

All conditions must have fully recovered with no further treatment required and you must demonstrate a return to full, normal activities without restriction for a period of time to demonstrate full capacity and stability. The duration of time this needs to be will vary depending on the nature of the condition.

You must be able to perform all policing duties without restriction and without increased risk of harm.

22. I have a history of asthma. Do I need a report for a Respiratory specialist?

If you have any history of asthma (or suggestive of asthma), a report from your treating doctor is required. This could be from your General Practitioner or a Respiratory Specialist.

You will also require a current bronchial provocation test. If you have a history suggestive of exercise induced asthma, then in addition to the bronchial provocation test, you will need a current eucapnic hyperventilation test.

Both of these test results must be normal in order to be considered.

If you have not had any asthma like symptoms and not used any inhaler for any reason over the past five years, then you will only require a report from your treating doctor regarding your history of asthma unless otherwise indicated.

23. I take medication for asthma. Can I apply?

Yes. If your asthma is well-controlled on medication you are still eligible to apply. You will require a current report from your General Practitioner or a Respiratory Specialist.

A current bronchial provocation test is required.

If you have a history suggestive of exercise induced asthma, then in addition to the bronchial provocation test, you will need a current eucapnic hyperventilation test.

Both of these test results must be normal in order to be considered. Your clearance would then be conditional on you continuing to take your medication and you will need to sign a conditional clearance letter stating this which UHG will supply.

24. I did not pass the bronchial provocation test/ eucapnic hyperventilation test. What do I do now?

If your test results are abnormal, then this would mean that your asthma is not optimally controlled. The nature of policing duties can expose all applicants to known asthma triggers including exercise, cold weather, and exposure to incapacitating sprays and would place you at increased risk of aggravating your asthma.

You would need to improve your asthma control and once your treatment eg preventer has stabilised (type of medication and dose) you must wait for a minimum period of 6 weeks before repeating the testing. At that time, an updated report from your treating doctor outlining your asthma history particularly from the time you had the abnormal test result and should also include the details of your medication.

Assuming that this is considered satisfactory, you will be offered a conditional medical clearance.

25. I have inflammatory bowel disease (including Crohn's Disease / Ulcerative Colitis). Can I apply?

Yes. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis.

Inflammatory bowel diseases are a chronic disease that fluctuates in intensity and can affect multiple body systems of varying severity. The medication used to treat the disease can also have significant side effects and adverse reactions.

A detailed current assessment and report from your treating specialist is required and a decision made on the basis of the all the available information at the time.

Due to the nature of the condition, a long period of stability needs to be demonstrated. **Although a specific timeframe cannot be provided, it is expected that this will be a minimum of at least one year.**

Policing duties are highly variable and both physically and emotionally demanding. All applicants must be able to perform all policing duties without restriction and without increased risk of harm.

26. I had counselling more than five years ago. Do I need a report from my treating practitioner?

Depending on the nature of the condition, a report from your treating practitioner (eg general practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist etc) may be required.

27. I have had a psychological condition, symptoms or treatment within the last 5 years. What do I require?

The medical requirements state that you must have fully recovered and be functioning normally without restriction for a **minimum period of 2 years** AFTER completion of all treatment (including but not limited to counselling or medication). This is due to the highly demanding nature of policing.

This is to ensure that you are not placed at increased risk of harm if you were to perform policing duties which are highly psychologically demanding. You do not have to have a diagnosable condition in order to be considered under these criteria.

It is highly likely that you will require a detailed current assessment and report from your treating practitioner. If this has occurred in the past 2 years, there is a high likelihood that your eligibility will be deferred until the minimum period has elapsed.

If these have occurred within the past 2 years, you may still be considered in exceptional circumstances, but it should not be expected that you will be deemed satisfactory. These are considered on a case by case basis.

28. I have had treatment including counselling or medications recently. Am I still eligible to apply?

The medical requirements state that you must have fully recovered and be functioning normally without restriction for a **minimum period of 2 years** AFTER completion of all treatment (including but not limited to counselling or medication). This is due to the highly demanding nature of policing.

This is to ensure that you are not placed at increased risk of harm if you were subject to a psychologically demanding environment. You do not have to have a diagnosable condition in order to be considered under these criteria.

In *exceptional circumstances*, applicants who have mild psychological conditions and are receiving treatment including medication and counselling may still be considered.

However, it is expected that in these situations, applicants:

- Are well controlled and in remission with no impairment in daily function,
- Have no changes in their treatment regimens.
- Treatment does not negatively impact their ability to perform all the inherent requirements of policing
- Are compliant with treatment,
- Have demonstrated insight into their condition and satisfactory supports available
- Have demonstrated an extended period of stability* without symptoms and without effect on daily function
- Must have demonstrated an ability to function in psychologically demanding environments for a substantial period of time*.

Those who have more significant diagnoses including but not limited to schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and psychotic disorders will not be considered as exceptional circumstance and the default minimum 24 month period applies.

The default minimum period of 24 months will also apply for those who are unable to provide satisfactory evidence or are considered to not meet the exceptional circumstances

As a minimum, detailed current reports are required from your treating practitioners such as your doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist and/or counsellors will be required. You are recommended to contact UHG prior to obtaining any reports so that we may provide you a 'request for report' letter outlining the minimum details that must be contained in the report.

* the length of time required is dependent on the nature of the condition and the type of environment experienced, however it should be expected that those with more serious conditions or prolonged duration will likely be longer. This is considered on a case by case basis.

29. I have Schizophrenia/Bipolar Disorder. Can I apply?

Generally, psychotic illnesses do not resolve, although they may be well-controlled with medication. Due to the nature of the condition and policing duties, applicants are not suitable for Policing.

30. I had ADD/ADHD at school. Can I apply?

If you have a history of ADD/ADHD you need to have achieved full remission and functioning normally without restriction or special accommodation for a minimum period of 12 months after completion of all treatment (including medication, counselling etc).

At the conclusion of this period, a detailed assessment and report from a **psychiatrist** must be provided. A report from your treating pediatrician or psychologist, whilst it may be useful and provide additional information, is not sufficient.

31. I have/have had a learning disorder eg dyslexia. Can I apply?

If you have any history of a learning disorder, it is highly likely that you will need to have a current assessment with an educational psychologist.

You will also need to demonstrate that you have been able to undertake study/work commitments to a satisfactory standard without use of any accommodations or restrictions.

Given the nature of policing, you will not be permitted any accommodations or restrictions during training or whilst undertaking police work.

32. I have epilepsy. Can I still apply?

Yes. The policing medical requirements indicate you must be free of all seizures for a minimum period of 24 months. You must also be compliant with medication (if applicable) and have a normal recent EEG and MRI Brain.

Applicants MUST also meet the medical criteria to hold a Commercial Driver's Licence without exception which is often stricter than the requirements outlined above.

A detailed report from your treating neurologist is required as well as a copy of the actual investigation results. The report must clearly indicate your fitness to hold a Commercial Driver's Licence.

33. I have insulin dependent diabetes mellitus. Can I apply?

Yes. In order to be considered, your diabetes must be strictly and well controlled.

You must have demonstrated good control over a 12 month period confirmed with regular blood test (HBA1c) results three monthly over this period (5 results in total) with results of 8.0 or less. This is strictly enforced.

You must have no long term complications of diabetes (end organ damage). You must not have had any hypoglycemic episodes (disturbed consciousness) for a minimum period of 12 months as confirmed by your endocrinologist and a statutory declaration from yourself confirming this.

A cardiac risk assessment is also required in which you would need to provide a resting ECG reported by a cardiologist, a recent fasting blood test for total cholesterol and HDL.

Applicants MUST also meet the medical criteria to hold a Commercial Driver's Licence without exception which is often stricter than the requirements outlined above.

A detailed report from your treating endocrinologist is required as well as a copy of the investigation results. The report must clearly indicate your fitness to hold a Commercial Driver's Licence.

34. I have hypertension. What do I need to do?

You will need to provide a current detailed assessment and report from your cardiologist.

35. What do I need to provide if I have testosterone deficiency?

Applicants with testosterone deficiency must provide a current detailed assessment and report from an endocrinologist.

Applicants must have demonstrated resolution of symptoms and demonstrated stability for a suitable period of time after they have been stabilised on their current treatment as demonstrated by resolution of symptoms and stable blood test results (a series of regular blood tests are required). In addition, a copy of the pre-treatment blood test results must also be provided. The suitable time period is anticipated to be not less than 3 months.

Please note that anabolic steroids and other associated drugs such as HCG or estrogen inhibitors that are not uncommonly prescribed are not compatible with policing. If an applicant is using these medications, their suitability for policing will be deferred/withdrawn until such time the medication has been ceased, a suitable duration after cessation has elapsed and they have provided a subsequent report from an endocrinologist that has been deemed satisfactory by UHG.

36. I currently use isotretinoin. What do I need to provide to be considered?

Isotretinoin is a medication with known potential side-effects that may be an impairment for safety-critical operational police work. However, if it can be sufficiently established that you are not experiencing any significant side-effects of the medication, as evidenced by a comprehensive medical report then it would be reasonable to allow you to proceed with recruitment to become a police officer.

As noted in the Australian Medicines Handbook, Isotretinoin has the following potential side-effects to cause the following side-effects that may affect safety-critical operational police work:

- **Eye Disorders (Ophthalmic):** Dry eyes are common and can result in irritation, conjunctivitis, blepharitis and reduced tolerance to contact lenses; keratitis and corneal ulceration may occur. Visual changes may include blurred vision, impaired night vision, photophobia and decreased colour vision. Corneal opacities may also occur. Cataracts and optic neuritis have been reported.
- **Dyslipidaemia (Cardiovascular):** May increase cardiovascular risk by leading to an increase in serum triglycerides and total cholesterol and decreased HDL may occur; these effects are dose-dependent and occur early during treatment (may be controlled by dietary measures while continuing therapy). It also can cause raised liver enzymes.
- **Psychiatric/Psychological:** There is evidence for an association between isotretinoin and psychiatric/psychological disorders, however it is conflicting. Acne itself has been associated with psychiatric/psychological disorders, so it is hard to say whether it is from the medication itself or incidentally related.

Otherwise, other side-effects of the Isotretinoin for you to be aware of is that it can cause dry skin (so use a moisturiser if required), increase sensitivity to the sunlight/ultraviolet (so use sunscreen), you should avoid taking Vitamin A supplements (it can cause vitamin A toxicity, and you avoid falling pregnant whilst on this medication (it can cause significant birth defects of the foetus).

Based on the above, it would be reasonable to request the following information to gain reassurance of that the Isotretinoin is not at significant risk and liability of impairment for safety-critical operational police work:

- Dermatologist to provide a report that includes the following:
 - Explains the diagnosis of acne and the necessity for treatment with Isotretinoin, including the prognosis and length-of-course of the medication and possibility of requiring further subsequent courses in the future.
 - Attests that you have been on a stable dose of the Isotretinoin for a substantial period of time, and there are no significant side-effects apparent, with specific note of the ophthalmic, cardiovascular and psychiatric/psychological ones.
 - Counselling and informed you of the side-effects of Isotretinoin, including awareness of early warning signs of developing side-effects and how to monitor for them ongoingly.
 - Agreeable to continue to follow-up and monitor with you at least every 6 months into the foreseeable future whilst taking Isotretinoin.

- Additional reports required from the following:
 - General Practitioner (GP), if not otherwise done so by the Dermatologist: blood test results of liver function and lipids/cholesterol and findings of a mental state examination*
 - *if GP (or Dermatologist) is unable to perform a mental state examination or the mental state exam findings are concerning or there is a clinical history of mental health disorders, then to refer to Psychologist/Psychiatrist to provide findings of a comprehensive mental health assessment.
 - Optometrist/Ophthalmologist: attests that visual acuity, visual fields colour vision, night vision function is acceptable... ‘

Provided the medical reports noting the above is satisfactory, the applicant/student/officer may proceed with safety-critical operational police work, subject to the undertaking that they follow-up with their treating Dermatologist (and/or other relevant treatment providers) at least every 6 months into the foreseeable future for ongoing monitoring and cares, and they are obliged to notify their commander if there is any significant change in their medical condition.

If you have any further queries, please feel free to contact UHG on (03) 8660 0889 or via email - policemedical@medhealth.com.au