

Useful Records to Request

Gathering documentary evidence is one of the most important things you can do for a client facing serious charges abroad. Records from the client's home country can establish vulnerability factors, support a mitigation case, challenge the reliability of a confession, or demonstrate that the death penalty should not apply.

Not all records will be available or relevant in every case. Work with the client's family to identify what exists and where it is held. Begin with the highest-priority categories first — birth, mental health, and medical records are often the most time-sensitive.

Useful Records to Request

1. Identity and Birth

- Birth certificate
- Birth records of mother and child
- Marriage certificates
- National identity documents

2. Child Welfare

- Department of Social Services (or equivalent) records
- Family Court records relating to neglect or care proceedings
- Foster care or social care agency records
- Residential facility records

3. Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

- Psychiatric hospital records
- Community-based mental health facility and treatment records
- Records relating to developmental or cognitive disabilities
- Psychological evaluations (including any associated with school records)

4. Medical Records

Obtain all available records if the client has a history of significant illness, hospitalisation, or injury, particularly head injuries and traumatic brain injuries. Where possible, seek input from a medical expert or the client's treating doctor to understand the nature and impact of any injury.

- Hospital admission and discharge records
- Records of any major injuries or operations
- General practitioner or clinic records

5. Substance Use

- Substance abuse treatment programme records
- Any health records related to substance dependency

6. Juvenile and Youth Records

- Family Court records relating to delinquency proceedings (or equivalent)
- Defence lawyer files from juvenile cases
- Juvenile detention facility records
- Residential or youth facility records

7. Education

- School attendance records
- Disability-related programming records
- Psychological evaluations conducted in an educational context
- Higher education records

8. Employment

- Employment history
- Employer files or references

9. Immigration

- Immigration status records
- Immigration detention history (if applicable)

10. Community Participation

- Records of participation in voluntary, community, or religious programmes
- Letters confirming involvement in religious activities or associations
- Athletics or sports programme records

11. Criminal Records

- Prior criminal history
- Defence lawyer files from previous cases
- Probation or parole records

12. Prison and Detention Records

- Prison records, including medical records held by the facility
- Local or remand detention facility records

13. Military Records

- Full military service records, where available

14. Other Useful Documents

- Autopsy reports (where relevant)
- Banking records or financial history
- Death certificates of close family members
- Newspaper articles referencing the client or case
- Real estate or rental history
- Utility and telephone records