Client onboarding checklist

Australia edition

Work through the groups in order. Replace [bracketed] items with your own. Group 2's AML/CTF items apply only to a designated service.

1. BEFORE YOU ACCEPT

- [ ] Run a conflict check on the client, its directors, trustees and related entities
- [ ] Write down the scope you are quoting for, and what is excluded
- [ ] Agree the fee, how it is billed and what triggers a change
- [ ] The client's permission to contact the previous accountant
- [ ] Decide whether any service you will provide is an AML/CTF designated service
  Holding or disbursing client money, setting up companies or trusts, and acting as a director or trustee are on the list.

2. IDENTITY AND DUE DILIGENCE

- [ ] Proof of identity for each individual client before providing tax or BAS services
  Sight original or certified photo ID, in person or through a secure electronic method. The ATO's client-to-agent linking does not replace this check.
- [ ] For an entity, the identity of the person acting for it and their authority
- [ ] For a designated service, initial customer due diligence before you provide it
- [ ] The entity's beneficial owners, where AML/CTF due diligence applies
- [ ] A record of the documents sighted, kept five years after the engagement ends
  The TPB expects the record to confirm the IDs were legible and gave no reason for doubt.

3. TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

- [ ] A letter of engagement for each entity, trust and individual
- [ ] Terms documented and communicated under APES 305 before work begins
- [ ] Any outsourced service, with the provider, its location and what it does
- [ ] Where cloud providers will store the client's information
- [ ] The TPB register, complaints process and client rights, in writing
- [ ] The client's signature on the letter, in your own signing tool or wet ink

4. AUTHORISATION WITH THE ATO

- [ ] For an entity with an ABN, the client nominates you in Online services for business
  Sole traders and individuals follow a separate linking process for individuals.
- [ ] Give the client your registered agent number for the nomination
- [ ] Add the client to your client list within 28 days of the nomination
  After 28 days the nomination expires, though the client can extend it by another 28.
- [ ] The principal authority's myID, linked to the ABN in RAM

5. ACCESS TO SYSTEMS

- [ ] Adviser access to the accounting software, not the owner's login
- [ ] Bank feeds, or monthly statements for every account
- [ ] Access to the payroll software used for Single Touch Payroll
- [ ] A record of every login the client has granted you, to revoke when you part

6. THE PRIOR-YEAR FILE AND OPENING DOCUMENTS

- [ ] The last two years of income tax returns and notices of assessment
- [ ] The last four BAS lodged and any amendments
- [ ] The depreciation schedule and asset register
- [ ] Trust deed, company constitution and any partnership agreement
- [ ] Tax losses carried forward and Division 7A loan agreements

7. COMMUNICATION AND PORTAL SET-UP

- [ ] A client portal login for each person who will send or receive documents
- [ ] Agree how documents will travel, and that ID will not go by email
- [ ] One named contact on each side, and a backup
- [ ] Where the client's documents will be stored, and who at your practice can see them

8. THE FIRST DEADLINES

- [ ] The next BAS, monthly on the 21st or quarterly on the 28th

- [ ] Add new income tax clients to your client list by 31 October
  A client added after that date may not get the later due date the lodgment program allows.
- [ ] Single Touch Payroll pay events on or before each payday
- [ ] Superannuation guarantee payments, within seven business days of payday

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