



Home Office

Validation, variation and withdrawal of applications

Version 4.0

Contents

Contents.....	2
About this guidance.....	4
Contacts	4
Publication	4
Changes from last version of this guidance	4
What is a valid application?.....	5
Discretion.....	5
Requirement: a specified application form.....	5
Mandatory sections of the application form.....	6
Requirement: Fee payment	7
Payment of fees	8
Fees	8
Retention of an administration fee	8
Dependants and ‘part payments’	8
Fee waiver or fee exemption and validation	10
Applicants making a paper application and requesting a fee waiver.....	10
Applicants making an online application and requesting a fee waiver.....	10
Partial fee waiver applications.....	11
Requirement: Immigration Health Charge payment.....	11
Requirement: Proof of identity	12
Exceptions to the requirement to provide proof of identity	13
Requirement: Consent for applicants who are under 18 years old (only for routes where paragraph 34 of the Immigration Rules applies)	14
Requirement: providing biometrics	14
Identity Verification App (IDV) process	15
Standard application process	15
Other validity requirements: when to give time to rectify any errors, and when to reject straight away.....	15
Service of Notice of invalidity.....	16
Simultaneous applications in the UK.....	18
Varying an application made in the UK.....	18
Date of application: original application	19
Date of application: application to vary	20
Variation of an application for leave: example scenarios	20
Attempts to make multiple applications in a single form	21

Withdrawn applications.....	22
Applications made from outside the UK.....	24
Overstayers who make an application and then leave the UK.....	24
Void applications.....	24
Postal strikes.....	25
Letters and packages posted immediately before or during strikes	25
Evidence the application was made after the last full collection day before the strike started	25
Requesting further information	25
Unofficial strikes.....	25

About this guidance

This guidance is for decision makers and describes how to decide whether an application for leave to remain in the UK is valid, and what to do if it is not. It also describes how an applicant can vary and withdraw an application and how to calculate the date of application.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email the Admin Policy team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- Version **4.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **15 October 2021**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Changes have been made to reflect the revisions in the October 2021 Immigration rules change: we have updated the Date of Application: Application to vary and Withdrawal of Application sections.

Related content

[Contents](#)

What is a valid application?

For applications where paragraph 34 applies, an application for leave to remain in the UK is valid when the requirements of paragraph 34 of the [Immigration Rules](#) are met, or where one of the exceptions set out in paragraph 34 apply. The requirements must be met by each applicant. For example, if the main applicant meets the validation requirements, but a dependent on the same application form does not, the main applicant's application is valid, and the dependant's application can be rejected as invalid.

For applications where route specific validation requirements apply, the validation requirements are as set out in immigration rules that apply to the route. Route specific validation requirements are currently only applied in country; they will be rolled out to applications made out of country when the technology is in place.

Discretion

It is not mandatory to reject an application which does not meet the validity requirements (except fees, biometrics and IHC). The validity requirements are usually objective and intended to avoid the need for detailed consideration of the application where it is clear it should not be granted, so it will usually be appropriate to reject the application as invalid. However; there may be circumstances where it is appropriate to accept an application as valid even when it does not meet all the non-mandatory validity requirements, and the sections below set out examples of when applying discretion should be considered.

Any decision to exercise discretion and treat an invalid application as valid should be clearly recorded, with reasons, on the caseworking system.

Requirement: a specified application form

Paragraph 34(1) and the route specific validation requirements of the rules sets out that the application must be made on a specified application form. There is a specified form for all types of application for leave to remain. An application form is specified when it is posted on the visa and immigration pages of the [GOV.UK website](#). It may be an online or a paper form. Some application routes have both paper and online forms, some only online and some only paper.

The application form must be specified for the immigration route under which the applicant is applying.

When applying on a paper form, an applicant must normally use a current version of the paper specified application form. However, where the applicant submits an application on a previous version of an application form, this will be treated as made on a specified form so long as, at the date the application is made, the version of the paper form they use:

- is no more than 21 days out of date

- was previously specified for the immigration route under which the applicant is applying

Paper forms are marked with the version number and the date they are valid from.

An application made on a previous version of a specified application form must still meet the other route specific validation requirements as these apply or [paragraph 34 of the rules](#). This includes paying the correct fee specified by the fee regulations on the date of application, not the fee stated on the previous version of the form, which may be different.

For information on how to calculate the date of application see: [Date of application: original application](#).

If an applicant has not applied on the correct specified form, you must contact them using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen or the IC and OOC validation reminder on Atlas telling them, (indicating what the correct form is) and give them 10 working days to submit an application on that form.

If the applicant has attended the Service and Support Centre as part of their application, you can tell them in person if you think they should consider making an alternative application, and complete template ICD 5259 to give the applicant to take away to take advice on.

If the applicant does respond to the request and complete the correct form, the date of application is the date the earlier incorrect form was submitted.

If they do not do this, you should normally reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC and OOC validation rejection on Atlas.

Mandatory sections of the application form

All mandatory sections of the application form must be completed. This is only relevant to paper forms as it is not possible to complete an online form without completing the mandatory sections.

An application must not be rejected as invalid if an applicant fails to complete non-mandatory sections of the application form.

If an applicant has not completed the mandatory sections of a paper form correctly, you may contact them using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen or the IC and OOC validation reminder template on Atlas and give them 10 working days to correct the errors or omissions.

If the applicant does not respond correcting all the errors or omissions within 10 working days, you may reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

You can use discretion and accept the application as valid if a mandatory section of the form is not completed but the applicant provides the required information elsewhere in the application. For example:

- an applicant does not enter a required passport number on the form but provides the passport
- a UK-born dependant does not answer each question in the 'immigration history' section of a form

Requirement: Fee payment

Each applicant must pay any relevant fee for their application in full and in accordance with the application process. The fee to be paid is the one in place on the date the of application (for information on how to calculate the date of application see: [Date of application: original application](#)). If the fee changes after this date and whilst an application is being considered, this does not make the application invalid.

The fees can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

If an applicant has not paid the correct fee, or IHC fee you must contact them using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen, or the IC and OOC validation reminder on Atlas, and give them 10 working days to rectify their mistake. You must provide instructions on how to pay the correct fee. If they do not do this, you must reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

If the correct fee is paid within 10 days the date of application is the date the original application was made.

You do not have discretion to treat an application as valid where the applicant has not paid the correct fee or IHC even when the other requirements of paragraph 34 (or the other route specific validation requirements as these apply) have been met. Paragraph 16 of the Fees Regulations states where the fee is not paid an application may be rejected as invalid but allows the Secretary of State to request the outstanding amount. Therefore, it is important that you give the applicant the opportunity to pay the correct fee. If this is not paid within the timescale specified you must reject the application as invalid. However, in certain cases the applicant can apply for a fee waiver or claim a fee exemption. See: [Fee waiver or fee exemption and validation](#).

You must include all the evidence you can to support the decision that the applicant has not paid the correct fee. You should note on the caseworking system how you know that the applicant has not paid the fee. However, the reasons a payment is declined are only available to the account holder and so it is not always possible for the Home Office to say why a payment was not received, only that it was not paid. If the applicant provides evidence of how they paid the fee i.e. they provided the correct bank details the Home Office must prove that the fee was not paid as confirmed by the Upper Tribunal in [Mitchell \(Basnet revisited\) \[2015\]](#).

Payment of fees

Fees

You cannot accept an application as valid if a specified fee is not paid and no exemption or fee waiver is applicable. The requirements for the payment of fees are set out in the relevant fees regulations and the Fees and Income Planning Team can advise if needed.

Retention of an administration fee

Fees regulations provide for the Home Office to retain an administration fee when rejecting an application as invalid. It applies to all charged applications except applications made under the EU settlement scheme (EUSS); see separate EUSS case working guidance.

Where the fee has been paid but the application is invalid, the caseworker must reject the application and process a refund for the application minus £25 per person included in the application form.

If an incorrect fee has been paid and the application is rejected as invalid, an administration fee must be retained against the incorrect fee.

An administration fee cannot be retained if an application is void, withdrawn before an appointment to enrol biometrics on the standard route, or the expiry of 25-day period to upload evidence on the IDV app route (where we refund the fee paid) or the applicant has died.

Dependants and 'part payments'

The application process provides guidance on whether a dependant can apply on the same form as the main applicant and when they need to apply on a separate form.

If the applicant includes any dependants on their paper application form who are not permitted to apply on the same form, you must contact them and give them 10 days to submit the correct application form. You must treat the main applicant and any permitted dependants' applications as made on date submitted.

The table below gives you examples of what to do if only part of the fee is paid and tells you how to process the application.

Applications made	Action to take
An application route where the dependant can apply on the same form as the main applicant.	The only valid application is that of the main applicant. You must notify the applicants, including the dependants, by post/email or in person if they attend the

Applications made	Action to take
<p>The main applicant has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> included dependants on their application form only paid the fee sufficient to cover the main applicant 	<p>Service and Support Centre, that the dependants' applications are not valid and give them 10 working days to pay the fees for the dependants in the manner set out in the notification. If they do not do this, consider the main applicant's application and reject the dependant's applications.</p>
<p>An application route where the dependant cannot apply on the same form as the main applicant.</p> <p>The main applicant has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> named dependants on their application form only paid the fee for the main applicant not submitted any dependant application forms 	<p>The only possible valid application is the main applicant's. You must notify the applicant by post/email, or in person if they attend the Service and Support Centre, that no dependant applications have been received and that each dependant must complete a separate dependant form and pay the appropriate fee.</p>
<p>The main applicant has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> named dependants on their application form only paid the main applicant's fee submitted a dependant form for each family member 	<p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contact the main applicant to request the dependant fees are paid within 10 working days of the date on the request if the fee is received within the deadline, consider the main applicant's and the dependant's (or dependants') applications if the dependant's (or dependants') fee is not received within the deadline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reject the dependent applications inform the main applicant and dependants that separate dependent applications will need to be made
<p>The main applicant has submitted an application which requires dependants to submit their application on a separate form, and has:</p>	<p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contact the main applicant, or notify them in person if they attend the Service and Support Centre, that the missing information must

Applications made	Action to take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • named dependants on their application form • paid the correct fee, including the additional fee for each dependant included with their application • submitted completed dependants' application forms • not met the validation requirements set out in paragraph 34 or as specified in the route and the exceptions do not apply 	<p>be provided within 10 working days of the date of the request in the manner set out in the request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the information is received within the deadline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consider the application as normal • if the information is not received within the deadline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reject the main application ○ if any of the dependants have not met the validation requirements, reject the dependant applications

Fee waiver or fee exemption and validation

Some applicants can apply for a fee waiver or qualify for a fee exemption. The most common is the fee waiver for particular human rights based applications. For guidance on fee waivers for these applications see: Fee Waiver: Human Rights Based and other specified applications.

Applicants making a paper application and requesting a fee waiver

If an applicant has made a paper application for leave to remain and also requested a fee waiver, if the application is made 'in time' (before their current leave has expired), and the request for a fee waiver is refused, you must contact them by using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen or the IC and OOC validation reminder template on Atlas and give them 10 working days to pay the application fee. If they do not pay the fee within that deadline, you must reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas. If the fee is paid within 10 working days the application date is the date the paper form was submitted.

If an applicant has made a paper application for leave to remain and also requested a fee waiver, if the application is made 'out of time' (where the applicant does not have current leave) and the request for a fee waiver is refused, you must inform them that request for a fee waiver has been refused and their application for leave to remain is therefore invalid and has been rejected using the notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

Applicants making an online application and requesting a fee waiver

For online applications for leave to remain, fee waiver requests are made using the online request form. An applicant who wishes to apply for a fee waiver must submit the fee waiver request for consideration and receive a decision before they submit their application for leave to remain. Once the applicant is notified of a decision on their fee waiver request, they will be given 10 working days from the date they are notified to submit an application for leave to remain.

If the fee waiver request is successful, the applicant is sent an email providing them with a fee waiver token code to enter into their application form to enable them to submit an application for leave without an accompanying application fee. If the fee waiver request is refused, the applicant may still submit an application, but it must be accompanied by the relevant fee.

If the applicant fails to submit the application with the relevant fee following rejection of the fee waiver request you must reject the application for leave to remain as invalid using the template: ICD4946 on Doc Gen or IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

Partial fee waiver applications

The table below sets out what to do if an applicant has paid the fee in full for one applicant, but has applied for a fee waiver in respect of another applicant or applicants, for further detailed guidance, see: Fee Waiver: Human Rights Based and other specified applications.

Paper applications made	Action to take
<p>The main applicant has submitted a paper application which either requires dependants to submit their application on a separate form or allows the dependants to submit their application on the same form and has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed the main application form and any dependant application forms as relevant • part-paid the fee, for example only paid for the main applicant • applied for a fee waiver for portion of the fee not paid 	<p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider whether the main application is valid under paragraph 34 • consider the fee waiver applications in respect of the dependants • if granted, consider the dependant applications as well as the main applicant's application • if rejected, and application was made out of time, reject dependant applications at the same time as rejecting the fee waiver application • if rejected and application was in time, reject the fee waiver application and give the dependent applicants 10 days to pay the fee before rejecting the application

Requirement: Immigration Health Charge payment

The Immigration Health Charge (IHC), often referred to as the 'immigration health surcharge' (IHS), was introduced on 6 April 2015. All applications submitted on or after this date, including applications to vary those made before 6 April 2015, must include payment of the IHC unless the applicant is exempt.

If an applicant applies for entry clearance which will take effect as limited leave for more than 6 months, or limited leave to remain, they are required to pay the IHC as part of their application (unless exempt). They must do so in accordance with the process set out in [Pay for UK healthcare as part of your immigration application](#).

The IHC is refunded if an application for entry clearance or limited leave to remain is:

- refused
- rejected
- withdrawn
- void

Those exempt from the IHC include, but are not limited to, those seeking asylum and humanitarian protection.

Those applicants who qualify for a fee waiver are also exempt from paying the IHC. For a full list see the [Immigration \(Health Charge\) Order 2015](#) as amended.

To check the correct IHC has been paid, check the amount paid on the caseworking system or, for cases in Atlas, the IHC system. You must also check the notes to verify a refund request or other fee issues have not been submitted to the charging support team

If an applicant (including a dependant applicant) has not paid the correct IHC, you may write to them by using the template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen or the IHC payment template on Atlas and give them 10 working days to pay correctly. If they do not respond, you should reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

Requirement: Proof of identity

For applications where paragraph 34 applies, the application form includes guidance for applicants for leave to enter or remain on what they can submit as proof of identity to meet the requirements set out in [paragraph 34 of the rules](#).

Paragraph 34 sets out that an applicant must provide, in order of preference:

- a valid passport
- a valid national identity card - this option is not available for PBS applicants
- their most recent passport - this is the last one they held if no longer valid
- their most recent national identity card - this is the last one they held if no longer valid

- a valid travel document – this means a document, other than a passport or nationality identity card, which has been issued by the government of the UK or another state and which enables travel from one country to another

A passport, national identity card or travel document will not be valid if it:

- has been cancelled
- has expired
- was not issued by the government or authority by which it purports to have been issued
- has been altered in some way

For applications made where paragraph 34 does not apply, the applicant must provide one of the documents specified in the route specific validation rules; a valid passport, a travel document or other document. The Identity Security policy team can provide guidance on these documents.

Exceptions to the requirement to provide proof of identity

If the Home Office has the applicant's proof of identity on the date of application, then the applicant obviously cannot provide it again and you must not reject their application as invalid on this basis.

If the applicant's proof of identity has been lost or stolen, the applicant should have contacted the relevant authorities to request a replacement.

Where the applicant states their proof of identity has been stolen, they should provide a crime reference number with their application if possible.

Where an applicant does not have a replacement document, or an alternative document specified in the Rules, then you may ask them to provide the reason why they have not sought to replace their proof of identity.

There may be a good reason why the applicant cannot provide the required document, which may include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- there is no longer a functioning national authority to provide a new document
- there is no Embassy or consular service for their country in the UK
- there is a national authority to apply for a document, but they have run out of documents
- the applicant has made an application for a replacement document, but the issuing authority was not able to provide it before the application was made
- the applicant cannot obtain a document for reasons of national or personal security
- the national authority has unreasonably refused to provide a document, for example, if the national authority:
 - will only provide a passport if the applicant applies in person but there is no provision to apply in person in the UK
 - puts unreasonable barriers in place for the applicant

Where the applicant has good reason why they cannot provide the required document you may ask them to provide alternative satisfactory evidence of their identity and nationality. For example, this could be a combination of:

- birth certificate
- driving licence
- national health card
- national service document

The Identity and Security policy team can provide further advice on alternative documents.

If an applicant has not provided satisfactory proof of identity, and no exception applies, you may contact them by using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen or the IC and OOC validation reminder template on Atlas or tell them in person at the SSC and give them 10 working days to provide satisfactory proof of identity. If they do not do so, you may reject the application as invalid using the approved notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

Requirement: Consent for applicants who are under 18 years old (only for routes where paragraph 34 of the Immigration Rules applies)

If the applicant is under the age of 18, and not a dependant on an adult's application, then their parent or guardian must provide their written consent to the application. This is a mandatory requirement set out in [paragraph 34\(7\) of the rules but only in relation to the routes to which it applies](#).

Where a parent or guardian completes an application on behalf of a child that should normally be regarded as written consent to the application as they should have completed the relevant parental consent section on the application form.

If the parent or guardian of an applicant who is under 18 does not provide written consent with their application, you may contact them by using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on Doc Gen or the IC and OOC validation reminder template on Atlas and give them 10 working days to provide it. If they do not do so, you may reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas. If the applicant attends a Service and Support Centre with their parent or guardian and you have proof of the relationship you may ask them to provide written consent to the application at the appointment. However, you should consider any explanation given for the absence of written consent whether it is appropriate to exercise discretion to treat the application as valid.

Requirement: providing biometrics

You cannot accept an application as valid if the applicant has not provided their biometric information and none of the exceptions apply. The requirement to provide biometrics and the exceptions are included in the [Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) Regulations 2008](#).

Identity Verification App (IDV) process

On some routes EEA citizens who hold a chipped EEA passport will be able to submit their facial image using the Identity Verification App (the IDV app).

If the applicant uploads a facial image of inadequate quality you must contact them on the contact email provided as part of their registration and give them 10 working days to provide a replacement. An automated reminder will also be sent from PRS after 5 days. If a replacement photo is not provided you must reject the application using the IC and OOC rejection template on PRS.

If an EEA citizen cannot use the IDV app they will use the standard application process.

Standard application process

Applicants using the standard process will submit their application on paper or online and pay the relevant fee and any IHC (where applicable). They will then be directed to book an appointment either at a Visa Application Centre if overseas, or at a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Centre (UKVCAS) or (Service and Support Centre) SSC if in the UK. The applicant will enrol their biometrics and provide all supporting evidence at this appointment if they haven't already uploaded their documents.

If the applicant does not book and attend their appointment to enrol their biometrics within the specified timescale, you must reject the application as invalid using the notice of invalidity template ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas. The Immigration (Biometric Registration) Regulations 2008 (as amended) make clear that no discretion can be exercised to accept an application as valid if there are no biometrics provided.

Family members included on the application will need to attend an appointment at the same time. Children aged under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Other validity requirements: when to give time to rectify any errors, and when to reject straight away

Where an applicant has paid the correct fee and provided biometric information but has not yet met the other validity requirements set out in the routes themselves or in paragraph 34, you must contact them using the validation warning template ICD 4944 on DOC Gen or the IC and OOC validation reminder template on Atlas, advising them of what is still required and giving them at least 10 days to provide it (in some cases it may be clear that a longer period is necessary).

Example

The student route requires the applicant to provide CAS details in order to submit a valid application. If they have not been able to provide the CAS details with the application, they may have provided a reason for this on the form, for example, the University has delayed issuing the CAS, or the Home Office has caused the delay. In these cases you should allow the time necessary for the applicant to provide the CAS details, and you can reflect this timescale in the validation reminder letter.

There are some exceptions to when you must contact the applicant with a validation reminder. Where it is clear that the applicant cannot meet the validity requirement, for example, where the applicant did not meet a minimum age requirement or a nationality requirement, and you do not consider it appropriate to exercise discretion (for example if they missed the age requirement by one day), providing a further opportunity to provide evidence that they do meet the requirement would be futile. In these cases you may reject the application without seeking further evidence using the 'Validation rejection no write out' template on Atlas.

Service of Notice of invalidity

In accordance with [Appendix SN](#) of the Immigration Rules, a notice of invalidity is deemed to be served if:

- posted, 2 days after the date of posting of the letter
- given by hand by an officer acting on behalf of the Home Secretary, on the date it is given
- sent by e-mail, on the date it was sent

Please see table below for what to do with documents submitted with a paper application when an application is rejected:

Circumstances of the rejected application	Documents to retain	Documents to return
The applicant either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• applied out of time• applied in time but leave has now expired• is liable to removal	The applicant's: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• passport• travel document• national identity card	Send the following to the applicant, or their immigration adviser, with the ICD.4946 or Atlas template: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the application form• supporting documents
The applicant applied in time and the application was rejected but the applicant still has extant leave which isn't going to be curtailed	None	You must return all documents to the applicant, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• passport• travel document

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• national identity card |
|--|--|--|

If the application is made online there will be generally be no physical documents to return, as these will have been digitally scanned and uploaded with the application except where identity documents are retained. These will be returned to the applicant/their legal representative at point of decision where leave is granted.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Simultaneous applications in the UK

An applicant cannot submit simultaneous applications, only one form of leave can be granted at any time. If an applicant in the UK attempts to submit more than one paper application on the same day, you must normally explain to them, in writing or in person at a Service and Support Centre, that only one application can be made at a time. You must ask them to indicate within 10 working days which application they would like to be considered and which application or applications they would like to withdraw. If they do not clarify within this timescale you must reject all applications as invalid using the approved notice of invalidity template: ICD 4946 on Doc Gen or the IC Validation rejection template on Atlas.

If they do respond, record the response on the caseworking system and you must mark as withdrawn the application they have said they wish to be withdrawn, and, if biometrics not enrolled, return the fee they have paid for that application. This does not apply if one of the applications is a claim for protection.

Varying an application made in the UK

An applicant can vary the purpose of an application at any time before a decision on the application is served. Any application submitted where a previous application has not yet been decided is a variation of that previous application. An applicant can only have one application outstanding at any one time. See [Variation of an application for leave: example scenarios](#).

If the applicant wishes to vary the purpose of their application, they must complete the specified form and meet all the requirements of [paragraph 34](#) of the Immigration Rules for the variation to be valid.

If an applicant writes to request a variation of an application but does not submit an application form, you should write back to them confirming that they must complete a specified form and tell them which form to use. See: [Requirement: a specified application form](#).

When the original and variation applications are made online, the applicant will have paid 2 fees. You must refund the fee for the first application. If both applications, or the second application, are on paper, the applicant must pay the difference between the original fee and the new higher fee and you should write to them to tell them what the difference is. See: [missing fees](#).

Where an EU national or their family member varies a previous application made under the Immigration Rules with that of an application under the EU Settlement Scheme for either settled or pre-settled status, the fee for the first application should be refunded and only the second fee should be retained.

Where a dependant is included as part of an original application that is later varied, they can be included in the variation application if that application allows dependants to be included. If not, and the dependants have not submitted an application in their

own right, then you must write to the dependants on the application confirming that the original application has been varied, that they are not included in the variation application and that their original application has fallen away. You should tell the dependant that they should now make a separate application. See: [specified application forms](#).

If a dependant was not included in the original application, they can be added to the variation application; however, their date of application will be the date of the variation application and not the date of the original application.

A valid variation of purpose will look like a new application. You must check the caseworking system to see if an earlier application exists which has not yet been decided. This will tell you whether the new application is a variation of an existing application or a new application. If it is a new application you must consider whether it can be made. Guidance on applications made while a person is on section 3C leave can be found in the 3C guidance.

If an applicant submits an application to vary, but a decision has already been made on the original application, you must write to them and tell them that the application will be treated as a new application.

Date of application: original application

The date of application for paper applications sent by post by Royal Mail, including Parcel Force, is the date of posting that is indicated on the tracking information, or if not tracked, on the postmark on the envelope.

The date of application for postal applications delivered by courier is the date it is delivered to the Home Office.

If the envelope in which the application was posted is missing, or if the postmark is illegible, you must take the date of posting to be at least one working day before it is received. You must take the date of processing on the payment contractor's stream sheet as the date the application was received. If there is also accompanying correspondence with the application that matches the likely date of posting, and that date is earlier than postage date calculated using the above method, you must take this earlier date as the application date. If you are unsure, you must accept the probable date most favourable to the applicant.

The date of application for an online application is the date it is submitted using the online process.

If you withdraw a decision to treat an application as invalid and instead accept it as valid, the date of application is the date the application was originally made.

If an application, or variation, was previously rejected as invalid and the applicant then submits a valid application, the date of application, or variation, is the date the valid application is submitted.

Date of application: application to vary

Where an application is varied, the application date remains the date of the original application for the purpose of whether an applicant has, or will have, section 3C leave. For further information see: [Leave extended by section 3C \(and leave extended by section 3D in transitional cases\)](#).

There is one exception to this; where a dependant partner or child was not included in the original application but is included in the variation application (the new application), the date of application for the dependant's application is the date the new application was made.

However, where a variation application is made, the date the variation application is made is the date to be used for the purposes of assessment against the requirements of the Rules: for example, if the applicant must have funds of x amount on the date of application you should assess whether they had funds of that amount on the date on variation.

Variation of an application for leave: example scenarios

An applicant can only have one application outstanding at a time, except for one very specific exception as set out in example scenario 4 below, and where one application is a human rights or protection claim. See: [Varying an application for leave to remain](#). When an applicant submits an application for leave followed by another application for leave, the second application will either be a variation of the first application, or a new application. The examples below explain how this works.

Example scenario 1

An applicant submits application A in time. They then submit application B before application A has been decided, but after the applicant's leave has expired when the applicant transitioned to 3C leave.

As the applicant transitioned to 3C leave and a decision has not yet been made on application A, application B is automatically considered as a variation of application A. The date of application is the date application A was submitted.

Example scenario 2

An applicant submits application A in time. They then submit application B before application A has been decided, whilst they still have extant leave.

An applicant cannot be granted more than one type of leave at a time. Where 2 applications have been submitted whilst the applicant has extant leave, the second application will be considered as a variation of the first application. The date of application is the date application A was submitted.

Example scenario 3

An applicant submits application A out of time. They then submit application B before application A has been decided.

An applicant cannot be granted more than one type of leave at a time. Where 2 applications have been submitted out of time, the second application will be considered as a variation of the first application. The date of application is the date application A was submitted.

Example scenario 4

An applicant submits application A in time. They transition to 3C leave and application A is refused, and the decision is served with a right of appeal. The applicant then submits application B, whilst still on 3C leave (for example, before the time limit to appeal has ended).

In this scenario, if application B is a human rights claim or protection claim, application B must be decided before the person can be removed from the UK. If application B is any other type of application, then the applicant must be notified using the Applications during 3C appeal non protection or human rights Void template that the application is void as there is no longer an application to vary. For further information on 3C leave, see: [Leave extended by section 3C \(and leave extended by section 3D in transitional cases\)](#).

Example scenario 5

An applicant submits application A (either in or out of time). Application A is refused and the decision is served, with a right to Administrative Review. The applicant then submits application B.

The submission of application B brings the administrative review period and therefore any period of 3C leave, to an end. Application B cannot be a variation of application A, because the decision on application A has already been decided. Application B should be considered as a new application.

Attempts to make multiple applications in a single form

An application form can only be used for its specified purpose. Sometimes applicants try to make multiple applications as part of a single form, for example, they may raise human rights claims as part of an application for leave to remain as a student. This is not allowed unless the form is designed to include a human rights claim. Almost all of the application forms on GOV.UK and the paper forms include a message reminding applicants of this. This message is not included on specified forms for human rights routes. If you are unsure of whether the applicant would have seen this message, you can check with the [Guidance, rules and forms team](#).

Where multiple applications are raised in an application form or an accompanying letter, you must write out to the person using the multiple applications template ICD 5187 on Doc Gen or the relevant template on Atlas. This template explains again to the applicant that they have raised issues that cannot be considered as part of that

specified application. The template explains that the applicant can make a variation application to raise those issues.

Where a further application is submitted before a decision is made on the existing application, it has the effect of varying the existing application. Where a further application is made after a decision has been made on the existing application, this must be treated as a new application. If no further application is submitted, consider the current application only in relation to those issues which can be raised on that specified form.

Withdrawn applications

An applicant can withdraw their application by written request by email or post or by using the 'cancel your application' process on GOV.UK. If the request is ambiguous, you must confirm the withdrawal request with the applicant. The date of withdrawal is the date the request is received by the Home Office, calculated in line with the information set out in [Date of application: original application](#).

The case of [Qadeer v SSHD](#) clarified that the SSHD does not have to agree to the withdrawal of an application but may still consider and decide the application even where that might lead to a refusal.

The most common reason to refuse to accept a withdrawal request from an applicant and decide an application is where there is a suspicion that deception has been exercised by the applicant. For example, if they have knowingly submitted fraudulent documents.

If a person travels outside the common travel area (CTA) before a decision is made on their application for leave to remain, you must treat the application as withdrawn on the date they leave the CTA. This is set out in [paragraph 34K of the Immigration Rules](#). If biometrics have already been submitted you must not refund the application fee but any IHS must be refunded. For guidance on when the full fee must be returned see the Immigration and Nationality refunds guidance .

The CTA includes the:

- UK
- Republic of Ireland
- Channel Islands
- Isle of Man

Where the Home Office has retained a person's passport, you must not treat an application as withdrawn if the person requests the return of their passport for purposes other than travel or for travel within the CTA. For example to open a bank account, take the Life in the UK Test or apply for an identity document not related to travelling outside the CTA.

If a person whose passport has been returned to them travels outside the CTA you must treat their application as withdrawn on the date they left the CTA.

If a person with an outstanding application travels outside the CTA, the application is withdrawn and so does not give them any right to re-enter the UK to receive a decision on their application. They are liable to be refused entry, unless:

- they are allowed to re-enter the UK with a different type of leave their existing leave has not yet expired (unless it is cancelled on arrival).

Request to withdraw an application that is not yet valid where an applicant has extant leave at time of request to withdraw

If a person with extant leave requests the withdrawal of their application before they have fulfilled the validation requirements, you must notify them using ICD.5142 or the Withdrawal Application Template on Atlas, that their application has been withdrawn but that, at the point of withdrawal, the application was not yet valid. The applicant's extant leave will continue.

Request to withdraw an in-time application which is not yet valid where an applicant's leave has expired at time of request to withdraw

If a person makes an in-time application and requests withdrawal of the application before they have fulfilled the validation requirements but after their original leave has expired, you must notify them using ICD.5142 or the Withdrawal Application Template on Atlas. You must tell them that their application has been withdrawn and at the point of withdrawal, the application was not valid under paragraph 34 of the Immigration Rules and that, therefore, their leave expired on the date their previous grant of leave had come to an end.

Request to withdraw an in time valid application where the applicant has extant leave

If a person wishes to withdraw their application, you must notify them using ICD.5142 or the Withdrawal Application Template on Atlas, to say that their application had been validated and has now been withdrawn as requested and that their extant leave will continue.

Request to withdraw an in time valid application where the applicant's leave has expired and they had transitioned to 3C leave

If all validation requirements have been met but the applicant still wishes to withdraw their application, you must notify them using ICD.5142 or the Withdrawal Application Template on Atlas, to say that their application has been withdrawn as requested and that their leave ended on the date the application was withdrawn.

Request to withdraw an application for settled and pre-settled status made under the EU Settlement Scheme by an EU citizen or their family member

Requests for withdrawal of an application for settled or pre-settled status from an EU national or their family member is covered in the EU settlement scheme guidance.

Applications made from outside the UK

A person can make an application to vary their continuing leave from outside the UK. [Paragraph 33A of the Immigration Rules](#) confirms this. Although such an application can be made from abroad, paragraph 33A is clear that the Secretary of State is not obliged to consider such an application. However, if the applicant leaves the UK with extant leave, makes an application to extend that leave from abroad before their leave expires, they transition onto section 3C leave and will have 3C leave indefinitely if we do not decide the application.

Overstayers who make an application and then leave the UK

Where Home Office records indicate that an applicant for leave to remain who has no valid leave has left the UK, the outstanding application must be voided. See: [Void applications](#).

The applicant's passport, where in our possession, must be returned to their Embassy. You must retain all documents provided in support of the application.

You must notify the applicant of this outcome using ICD.5057 on Doc Gen or the relevant template on Atlas.

Void applications

An application is void when the Home Office cannot process it. For example an application for:

- limited leave to remain from a person who already has indefinite leave to remain
- applications for leave to enter or remain by those who are exempt from immigration control, such as members of the home forces or diplomatic staff—exemption is a matter of law
- leave to remain from a person who has their leave extended by 3C pending an appeal, unless the application is a human rights or protection claim – see: 3C guidance and for details on what applications are treated as human rights claims see the Rights of Appeal guidance
- an application for leave to remain from a person who is outside the UK without continuing leave
- a dependant's application where the main applicant withdraws their application or varies their application to a route that does not allow for dependants
- an application made by a British Citizen or an Irish Citizen who does not need leave to enter or remain in the UK (see Common Travel Area guidance on Irish citizens) Common Travel Area

Related content

[Contents](#)

Postal strikes

You must consider how an official postal strike affects:

- an applicant's ability to post their application and related correspondence
- the time it takes for an applicant to receive decisions made or correspondence sent by the Home Office

Letters and packages posted immediately before or during strikes

Letters and packages posted immediately before or during strikes may have postmarks dated some days later and applicants may be unable to post their applications during a strike.

If a postmark is dated within 2 days, excluding Sundays and bank or public holidays, of the end of any national postal strike, you can consider the application was submitted on the last full collection day before the strike. If a Global email is issued to Home Office staff following a postal strike to advise which dates you can accept, follow the instructions in the email.

Evidence the application was made after the last full collection day before the strike started

If there is evidence to suggest the application was posted after the last full collection day before the start of a strike, you must ask your manager if you can consider the date of the correspondence as the application date.

Evidence can include:

- the application form was signed after the last collection date
- supporting evidence, such as letters or bank statements dated after the last collection day

Requesting further information

If you have requested more information from an applicant, you must allow the applicant more time to provide the information if their ability to submit the evidence is affected by the strike action. This must be equivalent to the number of strike days plus an additional 3 days. You must only consider rejecting or refusing the case on the non-production of information or evidence after this time has passed.

If the evidence does not clearly identify the date of postage and if the delivery time was affected by a strike, you must give the benefit of doubt to the applicant.

Unofficial strikes

If there is evidence to suggest the posting of an application, related correspondence or the receipt of a decision may have been affected by unofficial strike action, you must consult your manager with a view to applying the principles that apply during an official strike. You must give the benefit of doubt to the applicant.

Related content

[Contents](#)