

Foreign Documents

Guidance - translation of foreign documents submitted

Search requests for foreign marriage and birth certificates

Requesting foreign passports when considering passport applications for those born abroad

Guidance relating to the translation of foreign documents submitted with a passport application

Where a document written in a foreign language is submitted in support of a passport application it should be submitted with an English translation attached. It should be provided by a translator registered with an official organisation such as the Institute of Linguists or the Institute of Translation & Interpreting. A translator who is employed by a recognised Translation company the latter being a member of the Association of Translation Companies is also acceptable.

An official translation prepared overseas may be accepted provided the examiner is satisfied that the translator is a member of an official body in their own country, or where the translation has been certified as a true copy by the relevant Foreign Embassy.

Where a passport applicant asks that the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) recommend an acceptable translation service the applicant should be advised that it is not IPS policy to recommend any particular service. The applicant should be advised to contact the Embassy of the country where the document originated for details of appropriate translation services.

Search requests for foreign marriage and birth certificates

In no circumstances should the customer be advised to contact the British authorities at the post abroad for help in obtaining documents. The correct procedure is always for the customer to contact the representatives of the country concerned in the UK in the first instance. That is the relevant Embassy or High Commission.

Please see Statutory Declarations for information on British nationals born outside the UK and who are claiming British nationality for the first time within the UK. The page reinforces the message that the applicant should enlist help from the relevant Embassy or High Commission and advises that the Foreign and Commonwealth (FCO) helpline may, for a fee, help in obtaining documents.

Requesting foreign passports when considering passport applications for those born abroad

Section 03 of the passport application form asks "Has the person named at section 02 had ANY sort of passport, British or otherwise, or been included in any before?" It then states "All such uncanceled passport(s) must be submitted with the application."

Requesting sight of any passport currently held establishes that an applicant who was born abroad is currently in the UK. It also provides additional evidence that can assist in determining identity, and entitlement in descent claims.

Sight of the passport the applicant entered the UK on will provide additional useful information to IPS examining staff which should suggest how we will proceed with the application. Posts abroad are always willing to check their records to assist us in determining identity/entitlement.

There will of course be applications submitted where the applicant does not hold a passport of their other nationality and where they entered the UK on a relative's passport. There will also be instances where the foreign passport is declared lost or stolen.

Where the customer states that the passport was taken by the Home Office and not returned, where possible the Home Office file should be requested to ascertain the facts.