



Home Office

Guide B(OS)

Registration as a British citizen

– A guide for:

- British Overseas citizens
- British subjects (under the British Nationality Act 1981)
- British protected persons
- British Nationals (Overseas)

who have no other citizenship or nationality

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The law covering registration is set out in the British Nationality Act 1981 and the regulations made under it. The information given here is meant only as a brief guide to the law and to the Home Secretary's policy. It is not a comprehensive statement of either the law or the policy.

CHAPTER 1: THE REQUIREMENTS YOU HAVE TO MEET

1. You must be:

- a British Overseas citizen; or
- a British subject (under the British Nationality Act 1981); or
- a British protected person; or
- a British National (Overseas)

AND

2. You must not hold any other citizenship or nationality.

AND EITHER

3. If you are a British Overseas citizen, a British subject or a British protected person, you must not, since 4 July 2002, have:

- renounced any citizenship or nationality; or
- voluntarily given up any citizenship or nationality; or
- lost through action or inaction any citizenship or nationality.

OR

4. If you are a British National (Overseas), you must not, since 19 March 2009, have:

- renounced any citizenship or nationality; or
- voluntarily given up any citizenship or nationality; or
- lost through action or inaction any citizenship or nationality.

NOTE:

- (i) It is possible to be a citizen or national of another country even if you have never held a passport issued by the authorities of that country;
- (ii) The requirement in paragraphs 2 and 3 apply to forms of British nationality as well as to non-British citizenship or nationality.

THE CITIZENSHIP YOU WILL ACQUIRE IF YOUR APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL

All successful applicants will become British citizens by descent. As a British citizen by descent you will not normally be able to pass on British citizenship to any children born outside the United Kingdom.

If you are resident in the United Kingdom you may therefore wish to apply for registration under section 4(2), on the basis of five years residence in the United Kingdom. This would give British citizenship otherwise than by descent, which would mean that you could pass on the citizenship to any children born abroad to you after registration. See form and guide B(OTA)

Further information about the requirements for citizenship can be obtained on our website: <https://www.gov.uk/register-british-citizen>, or by emailing the Liverpool Contact Centre: Email: nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

CHAPTER 2: HOW TO FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORM

You must ensure that your name, date of birth, and the place and country where you were born are clearly written in BLOCK LETTERS, in black ink. These details will be shown on your certificate. Any mistake you make is likely to end up on your certificate and may cause difficulties and delay in you becoming a British citizen or in obtaining a British passport.

Make sure that all the information is correct before you submit your application. It is a criminal offence to give false information knowingly or recklessly.

You may, if you wish, receive help completing your application form. You may use the services of an agent such as a solicitor or other competent adviser. For more information about competent advisers, see the box headed "OISC and Immigration Advice" on page 5.

You may also apply via the Nationality Checking Service. This is a partnership with local authorities, which has been introduced by a number of local authorities in the UK. The Nationality Checking Service enables people wanting to apply for registration to make their application in person at their local Register Office. In return for a small fee, local authority officers will help applicants to complete their application forms and check that the correct fee has been paid. They will also copy valuable documents and certify them as true copies, before returning the originals to you in person.

Local authorities provide the Nationality Checking Service at the point of application only, and will not act as your agent while your application is being considered. Local authorities are, like other competent advisers, registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

To check whether the Nationality Checking Service is available near you refer to our website at www.gov.uk. Please note that you may use any local authority offering Nationality Checking Service not just the one where you live.

However, applying for registration is a straightforward process which does not require the use of specialist agencies. You should be capable of applying successfully by following the guidance provided in this guide and ensuring that you are able to satisfy the requirements.

Information you give will be treated in confidence, but may be disclosed to Government Departments, the Security Service and other agencies, local authorities and the police, where it is necessary for immigration or nationality purposes or to enable these bodies to carry out their own functions.

Now turn to Section 1 of the application form.

Section 1: Personal information

These sections must be completed in all cases as fully as possible. If you are applying at the same time as your husband, wife or civil partner you should each complete separate application forms.

Where the applicant is a minor, the form should normally be filled in by a parent or guardian (giving the applicant's particulars).

1.1 Tick the box appropriate to your title or write in your title if it is different. Please note that royal titles should not be used.

1.2 Enter your surname or family name as you want it to appear on your certificate.

1.3 Enter your other names as you want them to appear on your certificate.

For example if your name is Taher Mohamed Hashim Al Hassan, and you are known as Mr. Al Hassan then put Al Hassan in section 1.2 and Taher Mohamed Hashim in section 1.3

1.4 The name that you give on the application form should be the same name that is on your current passport, travel document or Biometric Residence Permit. If you have married or entered a civil partnership and changed your name, and wish to be registered in that name, you should change your name on your other passport, travel documents and national identity card to reflect that name before sending us your application. HM Passport Office will not normally issue a passport in a name that is different to any other identity documents that you hold. This is to avoid a person having official documents in more than one identity.

1.5 If you are or have been known by any other names apart from the names you have given in sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, say what the other names are/were, when you were known by or started to be known by these other names, and why.

Your name at birth must be given on the application form, for identity purposes, but may be omitted from your certificate of registration if you have a special reason for requesting this - for example because you were adopted or are no longer living in the gender you were considered to have at the time of your birth.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE NAME, PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH ENTERED ON THE APPLICATION FORM WILL APPEAR ON YOUR CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION AND CAN BE CHANGED ONLY IN THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

1.6 Enter your National Insurance number if you have one.

1.7- Enter your date of birth, the village, town or city where you were born, and the

1.9 country where you were born. Please take care over these entries as they will appear on your certificate of registration. If they are different from the details shown in your passport/ birth certificate you should explain why on a separate piece of paper. Place and country of birth names shown on the certificate will be names in current acceptable use (and will be in English where an English version exists).

1.10 Indicate your sex by ticking the appropriate box.

1.11 Indicate your marital/civil partnership status by ticking the appropriate box.

1.12 Enter your present address and ensure that you give your postcode. We need this to

arrange a citizenship ceremony. If you do not give your postcode your application will be delayed.

It would be helpful if you would provide your telephone contact details to enable us to contact you quickly.

1.13- If someone is acting on your behalf such as a solicitor, you should provide their details so that we can contact them. Unless you are being represented by a private individual, it is the agent's business name, telephone number etc which should be put here.

OISC and Immigration Advice

Immigration or nationality advisers acting in the course of business (whether paid or unpaid) are regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), an independent body. The provision of such advice is prohibited unless a person works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the OISC or is authorised to practise (like solicitors and barristers) by a designated professional body.

Certain categories (e.g. public health bodies) are exempted from the regulatory scheme by Ministerial Order. It is a criminal offence to provide advice or services in contravention of the regulatory scheme.

Further information about the regulatory scheme can be obtained from:

Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
5th Floor, Counting House, Tooley Street, LONDON SE1 2QN
Tel: 020 7211 1500, Fax: 020 7211 1553

A full list of OISC regulated advisers is available on its website at www.oisc.gov.uk

1.17 If your application is approved, you will need to take part in a citizenship ceremony. The venue will normally be within a local authority area near where you live. If you want the ceremony in another area you should enter the name and address of that local authority office including the postcode.

You will be expected to attend a ceremony to become a British citizen. Successful applicants are exempted from ceremonies rarely and then only if they are physically unable to attend or if their mental state would make it inappropriate to attend. If you wish to be exempted you should say why on a separate sheet of paper and provide supporting evidence.

1.18- You may have an automatic claim to British citizenship through your parents/grandparents
1.41 so please give full details of your parents/grandparents as requested.

Section 2: Your current nationality

If you have ever held another citizenship or nationality, you should complete all parts of this section.

Explanation of birth, ancestry, registration and naturalisation.

Broadly speaking, for the purposes of this section of the form:

- you will be British by birth if you hold any form of British nationality because you were born on British territory;
- you will be British by ancestry if you were born on non-British territory and you hold any form of British nationality through a parent's or grandparent's birth, adoption, naturalisation or registration;
- if you are British by registration or naturalisation, this means that you were not British when you were born but acquired this status as a result of an application for registration or for a certificate of naturalisation (but see also the Notes below).

NOTES:

British Overseas citizenship, British subject status and British protected person status cannot be acquired by naturalisation but, if you are a British Overseas citizen or British subject, you may have this citizenship or status because you were originally naturalised as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies before 1983. If so, you should give details of your naturalisation as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies.

British National (Overseas) status could only be acquired by registration. If you are a British National (Overseas), you got that status on the date you were issued with a passport describing you as a British National (Overseas).

Section 3: Referees and identity

Your application must be endorsed by two referees and a recent passport size photograph stapled or clipped into the space provided. The photograph must show the whole of the front of your face in reasonable light. It should not show your face wholly or partly concealed by your hair (beards, sideburns and moustaches excepted) or by a scarf or traditional dress. It should not show you wearing dark glasses or a hat, hood, cap or scarf.

Each referee should have known you personally for at least 3 years.

One referee should be a person of any nationality who has professional standing, such as a minister of religion, civil servant or a member of a professional body, e.g. accountant or solicitor (but not representing you with this application). A list of acceptable professional persons can be found on our website.

The other referee must normally be the holder of a British citizen passport and either a professional person or over the age of 25.

Each referee should be:

- not related to you
- not related to the other referee
- not your solicitor or agent representing you with this application
- not employed by the Home Office

We will not accept a referee who has been convicted of an imprisonable offence during the last 10 years (unless that conviction can be disregarded in line with the table shown on page 8 of this guide)

If you are living abroad and do not know a British citizen who is qualified to act as one of your referees, a Commonwealth citizen or citizen of the country in which you are residing may complete and sign the form, provided he/she has professional standing in that country, has known you for three years and the Consul considers his/her signature to be acceptable.

Checks may be carried out to ensure that the referees do not have unspent convictions (see page 8) and are qualified to act for you and that their signatures are genuine. The referees should note that it is a criminal offence to provide false information knowingly or recklessly, punishable with up to 3 months imprisonment or by a fine not exceeding £5,000 or both under section 46(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

Once you have two referees and they have completed Section 3 you should recheck the information you have provided and go to Section 4.

The character requirement for referees

A person will not be qualified to act as a referee if he or she has a conviction that cannot be disregarded in line with the table below.

	Sentence	Impact on Nationality applications
1	4 years or more imprisonment	Conviction will not be disregarded, regardless of when it occurred.
2	Between 12 months and 4 years imprisonment	Will only be disregarded if 15 years have passed since the end of the sentence.
3	Up to 12 months imprisonment in the last 7 years	Will only be disregarded if 10 years have passed since the end of the sentence.
4	A non-custodial offence	Will only be disregarded if 3 years have passed since the end of the sentence.

Section 4: Biometric enrolment

As part of your application, all applicants are required to enrol their biometric details for the purpose of identity verification.

Children under 18 applying for registration as a British citizen, must also enrol their biometric details. Children under the age of 6 do not need to provide fingerprints, but must have a digital photograph taken of their face.

The requirement for fingerprints to be taken from the age of six comes from EU Regulation 380/2008. Up to the age of six the Home Office only requires a digitised image of the child's face, although the regulation does not prevent fingerprints being recorded from children aged less than six years. There is no upper age limit for biometric information to be taken.

Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at their biometric enrolment appointment.

You must complete the biometric enrolment section of the application form, and you will then be issued with an enrolment letter, instructing you to make an appointment at a designated Post Office to have your/your child's biometric details recorded.

You will be charged an additional handling fee for this service, payable to the Post Office Ltd. You must pay the fee by cash or debit card when you attend your biometric enrolment appointment.

If applying from outside of the UK, in order to book an appointment to enrol your Biometrics please visit www.vfsglobal.co.uk/Global/ sign up and follow the on screen instructions. Here you will find your nearest location. There may be a service charge of £10 per person to be paid online depending on location; this will be made apparent on the website.

Do not send the biometric enrolment fee with your application fee.

Your application may be rejected as invalid if you do not enrol your biometrics when requested. For more information about enrolling biometrics and the current fee, please visit the following section of our website: www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits

If you have previously enrolled your biometric details and been issued with a biometric residence permit, you must include this with your application.

You will not be issued with a new biometric permit, but your current biometric permit will be returned to you and your fingerprint details will be retained, until we are notified that you have attended your citizenship ceremony.

Section 5: Declaration by applicant

Read this section carefully before inserting your name clearly in box 4.1 and ticking each box at 4.2 - 4.5 to confirm the points raised.

If you meet the requirements described in this guide please sign and date the form in box 4.6. You are advised to read this guide carefully to ensure that you do satisfy all the requirements.

You must normally sign the form yourself. If you cannot sign the form you must make a mark or a fingerprint and ask one of your referees to sign saying that it is your mark or fingerprint. If the applicant is not of sound mind and you are acting on his or her behalf you should sign to indicate your responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. You must support this by explaining, in a covering letter, who you are and why the applicant cannot act on their own behalf. Confirmation from the applicant's medical practitioner or consultant should also be provided.

If the declaration in section 4 of the form is not completed, the application will be invalid.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO SEND IN WITH THE FORM

The Fee

The fee must be sent with the application form. Details of the current fee are available on our website at <https://www.gov.uk/becoming-a-british-citizen>

NB. If you do not send the correct fee, the application will be invalid.

Documentary evidence of your British nationality

Please send the following evidence that you are a British Overseas citizen, a British subject (under the British Nationality Act 1981), a British protected person or a British National (Overseas):

- Your passport; or
- Your registration or naturalisation certificate; or
- If you have no passport and your claim is through your birth and/or your parents' birth, your birth certificate and/or your parents' birth and marriage certificates.

Documentary evidence of no other citizenship or nationality

You must send:

- A letter from the authorities of the country in which you were born saying whether you have ever held that country's citizenship or nationality. If you have at any time held that country's citizenship or nationality but no longer hold it, the letter should also state the date on which you ceased to hold it and why; and/or
- If either of your parents holds a non-British nationality, a letter from the authorities of the country concerned saying whether you have ever held that country's citizenship or nationality. If you have at any time held that country's citizenship or nationality but no longer hold it, the letter should also state the date on which you ceased to hold it and why; and/or
- If you have lived for a period of 5 years or more outside the United Kingdom, outside the country where you were born and outside any country of which either of your parents is a citizen or national, a letter from the authorities of that country of residence saying whether you have ever held that country's citizenship or nationality. If you have at any time held that country's citizenship or nationality but no longer hold it, the letter should also state the date on which you ceased to hold it and why.

If your parents hold different non-British citizenships or nationalities, or if either of them holds more than one citizenship or nationality, you will need to get letters of confirmation from all of the countries concerned. Similarly, if you have resided for 5 years or more in more than one country, you will need to get letters of confirmation from all of the countries concerned.

If you do not provide documentary evidence, as described above, to show that you do not hold another nationality or citizenship, the Home Secretary may not be satisfied that you meet this requirement. If that happens, your application will normally be refused.

Send original documents - photocopies are not acceptable. Please provide any translations if these are applicable.

PLEASE NOTE: If you require your valuable documents to be returned by secure post you should enclose a pre-paid self-addressed Royal Mail Special Delivery (or Recorded Signed For delivery) envelope with your application. The pre-paid self-addressed envelope should be sufficient to accommodate the size and weight of your documents and be insured to the appropriate level for the value of your documents. If this is not enclosed your documents will be returned to you using Royal Mail 2nd class post. Please consult Royal Mail's web site at www.royalmail.com for further information.

CHAPTER 4: WHERE TO SEND YOUR APPLICATION FORM

Once you have completed and signed the application form and enclosed the documents, you must arrange to pay the correct fee. If you are paying by debit/credit card you should complete the payment slip attached to the fee leaflet. If you are paying by cheque you should ensure that funds are available in your account. Only cheques issued in sterling and drawn from a bank which has a UK based presence will be accepted. Those applying from overseas who wish to pay by cheque should therefore ensure that the issuing bank has a branch in the UK where the cheque can be cashed. Cash, transcash or postal orders are not accepted.

If your fee is paid through an account which belongs to someone else, please give their details in the space provided on the payment slip attached to the fee leaflet in case it is necessary to refund all or part of the fee.

Your application will not be valid if you do not pay the correct fee.

If you are currently in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland send the form with the fee and supporting documents to:

Department 1
UKVI
The Capital
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

If you are currently in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man you should send them to the Lieutenant Governor.

If you are currently in a British overseas territory you should send them to the Governor.

If you are elsewhere, including in a Commonwealth country, you should send them to:

Department 1
UKVI
The Capital
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

From 12th November 2015 applicants applying from Hong Kong should send applications to the above address.

You must submit your application as explained above. The date of application will be the date your form is received by the Home Office or the local British government representative as shown above. It is not the date on which you send it.

CHAPTER 5: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

It is important that you take care in completing the form and in making sure that you satisfy the requirements for registration. You also need to make sure that you have paid the correct fee (see <https://www.gov.uk/register-british-citizen>). If you pay by cheque you should ensure that you have sufficient funds available. Only cheques issued in sterling and drawn from a bank which has a UK based presence will be accepted. Those applying from overseas who wish to pay by cheque should therefore ensure that the issuing bank has a branch in the UK where the cheque can be cashed. We will also accept credit/debit card payment. Cash, transcash or postal orders cannot be accepted. If you do not pay the correct fee your application will be invalid and returned to you unprocessed.

What you can expect from us

Once we have received your application form we will create a computer file to track and process your application. Your application will be acknowledged. During busy times this may take up to 2-4 weeks.

The Liverpool Contact Centre at the UK Visas and Immigration will deal with any enquiries about your application once it has been made.

Email: nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 2253

We will check your application against the documents you have sent in and make a number of enquiries. The documents may be checked to ensure their authenticity. If you provide forged or fraudulently obtained documents you may be investigated and we may press for prosecution.

If we need more documents we will write and ask you for them. We will give you three weeks to respond. If you do not respond within the time we allow you, then we will decide your application on the information we already have, but there is a risk that your application will not succeed.

We undertake to process your application quickly and in accordance with the law and agreed policy and procedures. We will deal with any enquiries courteously and promptly. You must keep us informed of any changing circumstances including change of address or agent.

If your application is unsuccessful we will write and tell you why. Although there is no legal right of appeal or review we will consider representations if you consider that a decision to refuse your application was not soundly based on nationality law or prevailing policy and procedure as described in this guide or in any other communication you have received from us or on our website at www.gov.uk. Representations must explain why you think we have not correctly applied the law and policy in your case. We will respond either by confirming that law and policy had been correctly applied or by answering particular points you raise concerning the way that law and policy were applied.

We strive to provide a first rate service, but occasionally difficulties arise that prevent us from dealing with applications to our usual high standards. In the unlikely event that you wish to complain, details of how to make a complaint are given on page 16.

Waiting times

While we try to deal with cases quickly this cannot be guaranteed and we cannot register you until we are satisfied that all the requirements have been met.

Information on average waiting times can be found on the website at www.gov.uk

The length of time you will have to wait for your application to be decided will not affect your existing rights in the UK.

What we expect from you

Applications are considered quickly - usually within six months of receipt. We expect you to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that you can respond to our enquiries or requests for documents within the period we allow.

While the application is under consideration we expect you to tell us about anything which alters the information you have given us. This will include changes of marital or civil partnership status or home address or agents acting on your behalf. It also includes police investigation or anything that may result in charges or indictment.

We also expect to be treated politely and with respect by you and any agent acting on your behalf.

If your application is successful and you are living in the UK, you will be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony. You will receive an invitation letter from the Home Office and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony. We expect you to arrange to attend a ceremony within 3 months of receiving your invitation otherwise it will expire and you will have to reapply for registration and pay a further processing fee.

Citizenship ceremonies - What do you have to do?

At the ceremony you will be asked to affirm or swear an oath of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and to pledge your loyalty to the UK. Following this you will be presented with your certificate of registration as a British citizen.

You must make immediate contact with the local authority, as you only have 3 months in which to attend the ceremony. The date by which you must attend your ceremony will be given in your Home Office citizenship ceremony invitation letter. If you do not attend the ceremony within 3 months without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused.

Making the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge at a citizenship ceremony is a legal requirement, and the point at which you will become a British citizen. If you have special needs or concerns about saying the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge in English, you should bring these to the attention of the local authority once you have your invitation letter.

When you make contact with the local authority you will be asked a number of questions to establish your identity. Checks may be made to confirm your identity.

Ceremonies are arranged locally and reflect the particular community to which you now belong. You will meet a local dignitary or celebrity and be told something about the area and what can be expected of you as a British citizen.

Provision has been made by order under the Welsh Language Act 1993 for prospective British citizens making the citizenship Oath (or Affirmation) and pledge in Wales to do so in the Welsh language. The Citizenship Oath and Pledge (Welsh Language) Order 2007 contains the approved translations and came into force on 1st June 2007.

If you are overseas, arrangements will be made for you to make the oath/affirmation and pledge at the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate.

Deprivation of citizenship

You may be deprived of British citizenship if it is found to have been obtained by fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact. The Home Secretary may also deprive you of British citizenship if, in his opinion, it would be in the public interest for him to do so and you would not thereby be made stateless.

Ministers suggested during the passage of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 that deprivation may be appropriate where the person:

- has encouraged or assisted others to commit acts of terrorism;
- has committed war crimes, public order offences or other serious crime;
- has carried out acts seriously prejudicial to vital national interests, including espionage and acts of terrorism directed at the United Kingdom or an allied power.

A certificate of registration may, as a matter of law, be ineffective from the outset if it is obtained by means of impersonation.

And finally

We hope that this guide has helped you to prepare and successfully apply for British citizenship. If you have found it useful and our staff helpful, or if you had an enjoyable citizenship ceremony, or if you have found our service unsatisfactory or do not understand the outcome, why not tell us? You should email us in the first instance to:

nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

If you remain unhappy with the service provided, you may wish to complain by writing to:

UKVI
North West Customer Services Unit
PO Box 99
Manchester Airport
M90 3WW