



Home Office

British nationals (overseas)

Version 1.0

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About this guidance

This guidance tells nationality caseworkers about British nationals (overseas).

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 Nationality 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 **1.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **14 July 2017**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This is new guidance.

Related content

[Contents](#)

British national (overseas) status

This page tells you about British national (overseas).

British nationals (overseas) status was created by [Article 4\(1\) of the Hong Kong \(British Nationality\) Order 1986](#) which came into effect on 1 July 1987.

British national (overseas) status:

- can be acquired only by the persons, and in the manner, described in this [guidance](#)
- can be held with another nationality or citizenship, including another form of British nationality such as British citizenship
- cannot be transmitted
- can be renounced
- once renounced, it cannot be resumed
- can be [lost automatically](#)
- can be lost by deprivation
- the holders of it are (uniquely among British nationals) entitled to hold a passport in that status

Related content

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Acquisition of British national (overseas) status

This page tells you about the criteria and process that an individual had to meet to register as a British national (overseas).

Under [Article 4\(2\) of the Hong Kong \(British Nationality\) Order 1986](#), adults and minors were entitled to be registered as British nationals (overseas), and to hold a passport in that status if they:

- were a British dependent territories citizen by connection with Hong Kong
- would not have been a British dependent territories citizen but for a connection with Hong Kong

The deadline for applications to register under these provisions depends on the year in which the individual was born. These are set out in the [Hong Kong \(British Nationality\) \(Amendment\) Order 1993](#).

Registration

As an application to register as a British national (overseas) was made at the same time as an application for a passport, registration in the UK was done by the Passport service. Arrangements were also made within the Order to allow governors in the British overseas territories to register people as British nationals (overseas).

Determination of applications

Where an application was approved, the holder will have been issued with a passport describing the holder as a British national (overseas). They will not have been issued with a certificate of registration.

If you need to check whether an individual is a British national (overseas) you can contact the BNO team in Her Majesty's Passport Office.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Nationality policy: renunciation of all types of British nationality

Automatic loss

This page tells you about the circumstances in which an individual will have lost their British national (overseas) status.

[Article 4\(3\) of the Hong Kong \(British Nationality\) Order 1986](#) explains that a British national (overseas) ceased to be a British national (overseas) if, before 1 July 1997, they ceased to be a British dependent territories citizen.

This means that a British national (overseas) automatically lost that status if, before 1 July 1997, they ceased to be a British dependent territories citizen by renunciation or deprivation.

Related content

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