



Home Office

Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route

Version 2.0

This guidance tells you how to consider applications for entry clearance and permission to stay on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route. It is based on Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) to the Immigration Rules.

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About this guidance

This guidance tells you how to consider applications for entry clearance and permission to stay under the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route. Guidance on how to consider applications for settlement will be provided in due course.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with [Appendix Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\)](#) to the Immigration Rules, and any other Rules or guidance referred to in this document.

Please consult operational instructions on any measures in place as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) in conjunction with this guidance.

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 Hong Kong Central 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 **2.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **08 April 2021**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This version includes updates on families making an application together and to the conditions of an applicant's stay relating to access to public funds and police registration.

Related content

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Key requirements

This section shows you the key requirements for the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

Area	Requirements
Eligibility requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • main applicant is a BN(O) status holder • ordinary residence in Hong Kong (overseas applications) • ordinary residence in Hong Kong, UK or Crown Dependencies (in country applications) • adequate maintenance and accommodation for 6 months • valid Tuberculosis test certificate
Suitability requirements	<p>The applicant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not fall for refusal under Part 9: grounds for refusal • if applying for permission to stay, not be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in breach of immigration laws, unless an exception in paragraph 39E of the Rules or another exemption applies ○ on immigration bail
Application forms	Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa using the UK Immigration: ID Check app (when available); or Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa
Cost of application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £180 for 30 months' permission • £250 for 5 years' permission
Entry clearance mandatory?	Yes, if applying from overseas
Is biometric information required?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>BN(O), Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and dependant European Economic Area (EEA) passport holders will provide only facial biometrics, unless they cannot use the app to apply and must therefore attend a Visa Application Centre (VAC) or UKVCAS in the UK.</p> <p>Any visa national and/or third country national dependants (and if the chip checker fails for a BN(O) or HKSAR passport holder) will need to book an appointment at a VAC or UKVCAS in the UK and provide their passport and fingerprint biometrics.</p>
Immigration Health Surcharge payable?	Yes, payable in full on application by each applicant
Conditions of entry or permission to stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no access to public funds • work permitted (except as a professional sportsperson or sports coach)

Area	Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study is allowed, subject to the requirement to obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate if required by Appendix ATAS to the Immigration Rules • registration with the police for certain passport holders over the age of 16
How long is permission normally granted for?	30 months or 5 years as requested by the applicant
Are dependants allowed?	<p>Yes. Dependent partners and children can apply with the main applicant. Adult children and their dependent partners and children, as well as adult dependent relatives may also be eligible to apply with the BN(O) main applicant.</p> <p>All family members must apply at the same time as the BN(O) main applicant. Family members cannot join later if they do not apply with main applicant.</p>
Work and study allowed?	Work allowed (except as a professional sports person or sports coach), study allowed
Is switching into this category allowed?	Yes
Does this category lead to settlement (indefinite leave to remain)?	Yes, after 5 years' continuous residence on this route for all applicants.
Is knowledge of language and life required?	Not for entry clearance or permission to stay applications
Immigration Rules paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration Rules: Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) • Grounds for Refusal (Part 9)

Related content

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Definitions

This section provides a list of terms frequently used in this guidance and their definitions. The following definitions apply to the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

Term	Definition
Hong Kong BN(O) route	This means the route in Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) to the Immigration Rules
BN(O) Status Holder Route	The pathway for the dependants of a BN(O) (dependent partner; household child; adult dependent relative) to apply on the Hong Kong BN(O) route
BN(O) Household Member Route	The pathway for the Household Member and their dependants to apply for the Hong Kong BN(O) route due to their connection to a BN(O) main applicant
BN(O) status holder, or BN(O) main applicant	A person aged 18 or over who registered for BN(O) status prior to the handover on 1 July 1997
Dependent Partner/Spouse	The spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner for more than 2 years of a BN(O) status holder
BN(O) Household child	The child or grandchild aged under 18 of a BN(O) status holder or a BN(O) status holder's partner
BN(O) Household member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adult child (aged 18 or over) of a BN(O) or a BN(O)'s partner born on or after 1 July 1997 for subsequent grants of permission, a person who was granted permission as a BN(O) household child (child or grandchild) when they were under 18 on the BN(O) Status Holder Route and who is now aged 18 or over
Dependent partner of a BN(O) Household member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the partner of a BN(O) household member
Dependent child of a BN(O) Household Member	The child under 18 of a Household Member or Household Member Partner
BN(O) Adult dependent relative	The brother, sister, parent, grandparent, son or daughter of a BN(O) main applicant or a BN(O) main applicant's partner, aged 18 or over, in exceptional circumstances where there is a high level of dependency
Permission	This means 'permission to enter' or 'permission to stay'
Permission to stay	This means 'leave to remain' under the Immigration Act 1971 (and includes a variation of leave to enter or remain and an extension of leave to enter or remain).
Settlement	This means 'indefinite leave to enter' or 'indefinite leave to remain'

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Introduction

This section sets out the context for British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status.

BN(O) status is a form of British nationality created for people from Hong Kong so they could retain a form of British nationality and a connection to the UK after the handover to China in 1997 in line with the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Anyone who was a British Dependent Territories citizen through a connection with Hong Kong was able to apply to register as a BN(O) status holder and apply for a BN(O) passport. People could apply for BN(O) status for a period of 10 years prior to the handover to China on 1 July 1997. Some children aged under 18 were also listed in their parents' BN(O) passports at the time of the handover. It is not possible to apply for BN(O) status now.

The UK government is introducing a new immigration route for BN(O) status holders, providing the opportunity for them and certain family members who form part of their household to live, work, and study in the UK. This follows the imposition by the Chinese Government of a national security law on Hong Kong, in breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which restricts the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong.

A [policy statement](#), published on 22 July 2020, set out the intentions for the new immigration route for BN(O) status holders.

Exceptionally, the UK government announced that eligible BN(O) status holders and certain family members would be able to come to the UK before the launch of the route on 31 January 2021 to apply for 'Leave Outside the Rules at the border', recognising that some applicants may wish to travel to the UK sooner. This grant of permission gives entitlements to work and study, but no recourse to public funds.

Prospective applicants for the Hong Kong BN(O) route already in the UK on another route, for example a Tier 2 Visa, whose permission has expired, may have applied for, and been granted, 'Leave Outside the Rules' in-country.

This means that there will be applications for the Hong Kong BN(O) route for permission to stay in the UK, as well as entry clearance from overseas.

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Overview of the Hong Kong BN(O) route

This section introduces the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route and gives you an overview of the qualifying requirements.

What is the Hong Kong BN(O) route?

The Hong Kong BN(O) route allows BN(O) status holders and certain family members to live, work and study in the UK. After 5 years, applicants will be able to apply for settlement, and after a further year, British citizenship, providing they meet the requirements.

There are 2 pathways under the Hong Kong BN(O) route in the rules: the BN(O) Status Holder Route and the BN(O) Household Member route.

Applicants will be able to apply for permission for either 5 years or 30 months. Those granted entry clearance or permission to stay will be able to work in almost any capacity and study in the UK. They will not be able to access public funds.

Applications for the Hong Kong BN(O) route can be made online on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and via the UK Immigration: ID Check app.

Where to find the rules

The route-specific Immigration Rules are contained in [Appendix Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\)](#). These apply to all applications for entry clearance, permission to stay and settlement.

Structure of Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas)

Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) is divided into 3 main parts:

- BN(O) Status Holder route
- BN(O) Household Member route
- Settlement on the Hong Kong BN(O) route

Each part is further subdivided into the following sections:

- validity requirements
- suitability requirements
- eligibility requirements
- decision (including period and conditions of stay)

The BN(O) Status Holder route is for BN(O) status holders, their partner or spouse, their dependent children or grandchildren under the age of 18, and an adult relative with a high degree of dependency on the BN(O) or the BN(O)'s partner.

Uniquely, the BN(O) Household Member route allows an adult child of a BN(O) status holder or of the partner of a BN(O) status holder born after the handover on 1 July 1997 to apply on the Hong Kong BN(O) route as a dependant of a BN(O) status holder or their partner where they form part of the same household. The BN(O) Household Member's partner or spouse and dependent children can also apply with the BN(O) Household Member on the Hong Kong BN(O) route.

The BN(O) Status Holder and BN(O) Household Member routes ensure that family households can move to the UK together, provided that family members are part of the same household as the BN(O) status holder.

The table below sets out the relevant paragraph numbers for each part and section of Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas):

Part	Validity	Suitability	Eligibility	Decision
BN(O) status holder: entry clearance or permission to stay	HK 1.1 to 1.3	HK 2.1 to 2.2	HK 3.1 to 7.4	HK 8.1 to 9.2
Dependent partner or BN(O) Household Child: entry clearance or permission to stay	HK 10.1 to 10.2	HK 11.1 to 11.2	HK 12.1 to HK 20.4	HK 21.1 to HK 22.5
BN(O) Household Member: entry clearance or permission to stay	HK 23.1 to 23.5	HK 24.1 to 24.2	HK 25.1 to HK 29.4	HK 30.1 to HK 31.3
Dependent partner or child of a BN(O) Household Member: entry clearance or permission to stay	HK 32.1 to 32.3	HK 33.1 to 33.2	HK 34.1 to HK 42.2	HK 43.1 to 44.5
BN(O) Adult Dependant Relative	HK 45.1 to 45.4	HK 46.1 to 46.2	HK 47.1 to HK 52.4	HK 53.1 to HK 54.3
Settlement	HK 55.1 to HK 55.3	HK 56.1 to HK 56.2	HK 57.1 to HK 63.1	HK 64.1 to HK 64.2

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Considering evidence

This section provides general guidance on considering evidence submitted by an applicant on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route, including when it may be appropriate to request further information, and verification or translation of documents.

Supporting documents and information

All applicants are required to submit relevant information and supporting documents (including but not limited to evidence of their BN(O) status, finances, or valid TB test certificate) to show they meet the requirements of the route. The application form provides guidance to applicants on what evidence to submit.

Burden and standard of proof

The burden of proof is on the applicant to show they meet the validity and eligibility requirements of the rules. In some circumstances the burden may shift to the Home Office to show the applicant does not meet the suitability rules. See relevant guidance on suitability for further information.

You must review the information on the application form and supporting evidence before deciding whether you are satisfied on the balance of probabilities (in other words that it is more likely than not) that the applicant has met the requirements of the rules.

Requesting more information

If you need more information, or clarification of certain details, to decide whether an application is valid, or if it meets the suitability and eligibility requirements, you should consider requesting more information. You should apply the guidance on validity and evidential flexibility and consult the sections on [validity](#) and [evidential flexibility](#) below.

Verifying documents

You must conduct verification checks if you have any doubts about whether any supporting document an applicant has submitted is genuine.

Documents not in English or Welsh

All documents submitted with an application should be in English or Welsh. If the applicant submits documents in another language and you are unable to understand or interpret the evidence, you must ask them to submit a certified translation if they have not already provided one with their application. The translation must:

- confirm that it is an accurate translation of the original document
- be dated

- include the full name and signature of the translator or an authorised official of the translation company
- include the translator or translation company's contact details
- if the applicant is applying for permission to stay or settlement, be certified by a qualified translator and include details of the translator or translation company's credentials

If the translation does not meet these requirements and you are unable to understand or interpret the document, you may disregard it as evidence. This may result in the application being refused. For example, if you are unable to understand or interpret the applicant's evidence of their relationship to the BN(O) status holder (and they have not provided a suitable translation), and there is no other relevant evidence, you must refuse the application on the basis that you are not satisfied that they are the dependant of a BN(O) status holder. For further information, see guidance on Example refusal wording for applications on the Hong Kong BN(O) route.

Translation of Welsh documents

Birth, marriage, civil partnership and death certificates issued in Wales are issued either in English only or bilingually (that is, with both Welsh and English printed on the same document). Such documents will therefore not require translation.

If you receive any supporting documentation in Welsh only (for example, an employer's covering letter), and you and your colleagues are unable to understand Welsh, you must arrange for the document to be translated into English.

Under the Home Office Welsh language scheme, customers living in Wales are entitled to correspond with the Home Office in Welsh. If an applicant writes to you in Welsh, they must receive a reply in Welsh.

The Home Office has a framework agreement with [the Big Word](#) translation company to translate material to and from Welsh. The cost of any translation must be met by your unit or directorate.

For guidance on handling correspondence in Welsh and how to procure Welsh translation services, see the 'How the Welsh language scheme affects you' page on Horizon.

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Validity requirements for entry clearance or permission to stay

This section tells you what validity requirements an applicant must meet for a grant of entry clearance or permission to stay in the UK on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) 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.

For further information, see the guidance on Applications for leave to remain: validation, variation and withdrawal.

Overview

Before you consider an application for entry clearance or permission to stay, you must check whether the application is valid. The validity requirements for the Hong Kong BN(O) route are set out in the following paragraphs of the Immigration Rules:

Applicant	Paragraphs
BN(O) Status Holder	HK 1.1 to 1.3
Dependent partner	HK 10.1 to 10.2
BN(O) Household Child	HK 10.1 to 10.2
BN(O) Household Member	HK 23.1 to 23.5
BN(O) Household Member's dependent partner	HK 32.1 to 32.3
BN(O) Household Member's dependent child	HK 32.1 to 32.3
BN(O) Adult Dependent Relative	HK 45.1 to 45.4

Requirement: applications made online

Applicants must apply by using the specified online application form on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), or using the UK Immigration: ID Check app.

The table below shows which application form applicants can use according to which nationality they hold.

Applicant	Specified form
Applicants with a chipped BN(O), Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), or	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa using the UK Immigration: ID Check app; orHong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa

Applicant	Specified form
European Economic Area (EEA) passport	
Other applicants of any other nationality	Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa

Requirement: fee payment

The application fee for the Hong Kong BN(O) route is £180 for 30 months' permission and £250 for 5 years' permission.

The fee applies to each applicant.

Check the fees regulations and [UK visa fees](#) on GOV.UK for the most up to date information.

Requirement: Immigration Health Charge payment

The applicant must have paid the Immigration Health Charge (IHC), which is sometimes called the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). For further information, please see the guidance on the Immigration Health Surcharge.

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Requirement: biometrics

Under the Immigration (Provision of Physical Data) Regulations 2006 (as amended), all applicants are required to provide a passport-style facial photograph of themselves as part of the application process.

BN(O), HKSAR, or EEA passport holders applying from overseas or in the UK will not have to provide fingerprints if they successfully apply on the UK Immigration: ID Check app. However, if an applicant is not able to use this application route (for example because they do not hold a biometric chipped passport or chip checker

fails), they must provide fingerprint biometrics at a registered [visa application centre \(VAC\)](#) overseas or at a [UKVCAS service point](#) in the UK.

All other passport holders will be required to present their passport and give their fingerprint biometrics at a registered visa application centre overseas or at a UKVCAS service point in the UK as part of the application process.

See the published biometric guidance for more details.

Requirement: proof of identity and nationality

The application form includes guidance for applicants on what they can submit as proof of identity to meet the requirements set out in Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas).

An applicant must provide, either:

- a valid passport
- 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 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

Requirement: age

A BN(O) status holder must be aged 18 or over on the date of application.

A BN(O) Household Child must be under the age of 18 at the date of application.

A BN(O) Household Member must have been born on or after 1 July 1997 and must be aged 18 or over on the date of application.

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Suitability requirements

This section tells you where to find the suitability requirements an applicant must meet when they apply for entry clearance or permission to stay on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

You must check the application meets the suitability requirements by referring to the suitability requirements set out at the following paragraphs of Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas):

Applicant	Paragraphs
BN(O) status holder	HK 2.1 to 2.2
Dependent partner of a BN(O) status holder	HK 11.1 to 11.2
BN(O) Household Child	HK 11.1 to 11.2
BN(O) Household Member	HK 24.1 to 24.2
Dependent partner of a BN(O) Household Member	HK 33.1 to 33.2
BN(O) Household Member Child	HK 33.1 to 33.2
BN(O) Adult Dependent Relative	HK 46.1 to 46.2

To meet the suitability requirements above for entry clearance or permission to stay, you must check that the applicant does not fall for refusal under any of the grounds for refusal in [Part 9 of the Immigration Rules](#).

For guidance on assessing this requirement, see Grounds for refusal and cancellation (suitability). You should consult the relevant part of the guidance according to the circumstances of the applicant.

Overseas convictions and offences not recognised in the UK

Some overseas convictions do not have a direct equivalent in the UK and would not be recognised. For example, some convictions may be for offences which are not crimes in the UK. Furthermore, some overseas offences may carry a much higher penalty than an equivalent offence would in the UK. Such convictions would not count as automatic grounds for refusal on this route. See the criminality policy guidance: 'Overseas convictions and offences not recognised in the UK' for more information. You must consult your senior caseworker and the Hong Kong Central Team if this consideration applies.

See the sections [Grant or refuse entry clearance](#) and [Grant or refuse permission to stay](#) for more information about refusing an application.

Permission to stay

If the applicant is applying for permission to stay, you must check that:

- the applicant is not in breach of immigration laws, except periods of overstaying discounted under paragraph 39E. Refer to the full guidance on overstaying.
- Is not on immigration bail

Overstaying

In addition to the provisions in [Paragraph 39E](#) of the Rules, a person who has overstayed their grant of permission between 1 July 2020 and 31 January 2021 will be able to apply for the Hong Kong BN(O) route. Any such applications must be made by 31 March 2021. Decision makers should consider whether the applicant meets other suitability and eligibility requirements of this route.

Applicant refused on suitability grounds

If you are not satisfied the applicant meets the suitability requirements, you must refuse the application. You should still fully consider whether the applicant meets the eligibility requirements for entry clearance or permission to stay, as appropriate. If the applicant also fails under any of the eligibility criteria, you must also include these in the refusal notice.

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Eligibility for entry clearance or permission to stay

This section tells you the eligibility requirements for entry clearance or permission to stay for British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) main applicants and certain family members.

BN(O) status holder requirement

Under HK 4.1, the main applicant must be a BN(O) status holder.

The definition of a BN(O) status holder can be found in the Passports of UK and British Overseas Citizens guidance and the British Overseas Citizens guidance. Evidence of BN(O) status may include a valid or expired BN(O) passport, a subject access request from Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) and/or confirmation of registration as a BN(O) status holder using Home Office records such as the relevant HMPO database.

BN(O) status holders who were registered as children

Some applicants who were under 18 on 1 July 1997 may have been added onto their parent's passport. You should therefore check their parent's details on the relevant HMPO database. Furthermore, some BN(O) status holders were born between 1 January 1997 and 30 June 1997. Their parents were given until 30 September 1997, after the handover, to register them as BN(O) status holders.

Lack of evidence of BN(O) status

If the applicant claims to be eligible for BN(O) status but cannot produce evidence of their eligibility, for example their BN(O) passport or their parent's BN(O) passport is lost or has been stolen, you should check the relevant HMPO database. If you have no grounds to believe there is fraud or abuse, confirmation with HMPO will be sufficient for meeting this requirement. If the passport has been stolen and there are concerns around the applicant's identity, you may consult Intel and/or refuse the application.

Official - sensitive: start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official - sensitive: end of section

If a BN(O) is deceased or dies during the application process

Family members of a BN(O) status holder who died before an application was made under the Hong Kong BN(O) route will not be eligible to apply as if they were dependants of the deceased BN(O) status holder, unless they are a BN(O) status holder in their own right or the family member of another BN(O) status holder.

This does not apply if the BN(O) status holder dies during the application process for the Hong Kong BN(O) route. If appropriate, and on a case by case basis, you may grant family members leave outside the rules. You must consult your senior caseworker in these exceptional cases. They may refer to the Hong Kong Central Team for advice.

Financial requirement

This section tells you about the financial requirement for the Hong Kong BN(O) route for entry clearance and permission to stay. For further information please refer to the Financial requirement guidance.

There is no set level of funds an applicant must hold. However, all applicants, including their dependants, must be able to prove they can adequately maintain and accommodate themselves in the UK for 6 months without access to public funds. Evidence of finances must be shown as set out in [Appendix Finance](#) to the Immigration Rules. The most recently dated piece of evidence should be dated within 31 days of the date of application.

Applicants can rely on credible offers of financial support and/or accommodation from a third party (for example, a relative or friend) to meet this requirement. The test for adequate maintenance is whether you can show that, after your accommodation costs have been paid, you have at least as much money as you would if your family were receiving income support in the UK.

For further guidance on assessing adequate maintenance, see the Financial requirement guidance.

Applicants will not have to meet the financial requirement if they have already been living in the UK for 12 months when they apply for permission to stay on the Hong Kong BN(O) route with the exception of those who have been granted 12 months' leave outside the rules where their BN(O) application has been refused previously and those switching from the Youth Mobility Scheme. See 'Applicants who have lived in the UK for 12 months with permission' in the Financial requirement guidance for further information on how to assess this.

Entry clearance applications

If you are not satisfied that the applicant and their dependants can meet the financial requirement, you must refuse the application for entry clearance.

Permission to stay applications

If the applicant and their dependants are applying for permission to stay in the UK, but their applications fall for refusal because you are not satisfied they can meet the financial requirement, you can exercise discretion to grant 12 months' leave outside the rules. See the guidance on ['Exceptions: leave outside the rules following a refusal'](#) in the ['Grant or refuse permission to stay'](#) section for further information.

Ordinary residence requirement

This section sets out what documentary evidence an applicant must provide to prove their ordinary residence.

Ordinary residence has the following features:

- it is a regular, habitual mode of life in a particular place
- its continuity has persisted despite temporary absences
- it may be of long or short duration
- it must be lawful
- it must have been adopted voluntarily
- it must be for a settled purpose

The sections below provide non-exhaustive lists of the type of documentary evidence which the applicant will be able to provide. The guidance below is not prescriptive or definitive. Some applicants may lack documentary evidence in their own name for various reasons, you must work flexibly with applicants to help them evidence their ordinary residence by the best means available to them.

Periods of absence do not necessarily mean that a person's ordinary residence has ceased. Applicants for the Hong Kong BN(O) route can apply for entry clearance from any country outside the UK but must be able to demonstrate their ordinary residence in Hong Kong.

For example, students studying abroad, businesspeople working away from Hong Kong or applicants visiting family overseas when they apply for the Hong Kong BN(O) route would usually meet the requirement for ordinary residence in Hong Kong. However, an applicant for the Hong Kong BN(O) route with a permanent or settled immigration status in another country would likely not meet the ordinary residence requirement for entry clearance.

For further information, see 'Absences during a period of residence' in the guidance on Nationality policy: assessing ordinary residence.

Entry clearance applications

Applicants who have submitted an application for entry clearance must be outside the UK and must show they are ordinarily resident in Hong Kong at the date of application.

Evidence of ordinary residence in Hong Kong:

- an official Hong Kong ID card
- a letter from an employer confirming their employment in Hong Kong
- a visa or residence permit or other immigration documents (a colour photocopy would be acceptable) showing residence in Hong Kong
- an educational record, for example a school report
- tax records
- records of rent or mortgage payments
- payslips
- household or utility bills

Permission to stay applications

Applicants for permission to stay must be in the UK and must show they are ordinarily resident in the UK, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Isle of Man or Hong Kong at the date of application.

If the applicant is applying for permission to stay, for example they were granted leave outside the rules at the border or they have a previous grant of permission, you should check whether there is an existing immigration footprint for them to evidence their ordinary residence (for example, a passport stamp confirming entry at the UK border). If they do have an existing immigration footprint then further evidence of this is not required.

If there is no existing immigration footprint, evidence of ordinary residence in the UK, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, Bailiwick of Jersey, or the Isle of Man could be:

- a letter from an employer or education provider confirming their employment or study
- a dated bank statement showing payments received or spending
- a dated letter from a GP or other healthcare professional confirming the applicant's attendance at appointments, or a card issued by the healthcare professional confirming those appointments
- a payslip or most recent P60
- a dated, UK or Islands-addressed domestic utility bill or council tax bill
- a letter from the local council or a government
- a voter's card
- an educational record, for example a school report
- other immigration documents
- records of rent or mortgage payments
- tax records

If the applicant and their dependants are applying for permission to stay in the UK, but their applications fall for refusal because you are not satisfied they can meet the ordinary residence requirement, you have the discretion to grant 12 months' leave outside the rules. See the guidance on ['Exceptions: leave outside the rules following a refusal'](#) in the ['Grant or refuse permission to stay'](#) section for further information.

In most cases this will be a simple assessment. In more complex cases, the principles of establishing whether someone is ordinarily resident in the UK may be applied here. The guidance can be found here: [Nationality Policy - assessing ordinary residence](#).

Tuberculosis (TB) certificate requirement

Applicants and their dependants are required to provide a valid TB certificate for entry clearance or permission to stay applications, unless a qualifying exemption applies.

Entry clearance applications

Where an applicant is applying for entry clearance, they will need to provide a valid TB certificate with their application if they have been residing within a country listed in [Appendix T](#) of the immigration rules for the 6 months immediately preceding the application.

The requirement is met if the applicant provided a valid TB certificate as part of a successful application for entry clearance in the 12 months prior to the date of application for the Hong Kong BN(O) route, for example they were granted entry clearance on a family visa or family permit.

If an applicant on the BN(O) route has not supplied a valid TB certificate when they are required to do so, you should make one attempt to contact the applicant and give them 10 working days to provide the certificate. If the applicant fails to provide a valid TB certificate following this, the application should be refused. If an applicant's certificate shows that they have tested positive for TB, their application should also be refused.

Permission to stay applications

For in-country applications, if the applicant has last been granted permission to stay in the UK for 6 months or less at the date of application, they must provide a valid test certificate obtained either from an [approved clinic in the UK](#) or an [approved clinic outside the UK](#) if they were previously in a country listed in [Appendix T](#) of the rules.

The requirement is met if the applicant provided a valid TB certificate as part of a successful application for entry clearance in the 12 months prior to the date of application for the Hong Kong BN(O) route, for example they were granted entry clearance on a family visa or family permit.

For permission to stay applications, where applicants have tested positive for TB and can demonstrate that they are getting treatment (for example a letter from a GP), their application should not be refused but should be kept on hold, allowing the applicant to stay with 3C leave for a minimum of six months while they undertake a full course of treatment. If the applicant provides a positive test certificate and then a negative test certificate shortly afterwards, this should not be taken as proof that the

applicant no longer has TB. The applicant must complete a full course of treatment (minimum 6 months) and have written evidence of successful treatment before being reassessed for TB infection.

For further information regarding which applicants are required to obtain a TB certificate before applying and the approved test centres, see [Tuberculosis tests for visa applicants](#) on GOV.UK.

Children

All children must see a clinician at an approved clinic who will decide if they need a chest x-ray. If the clinician decides the child does not have TB, they will provide a certificate which should be included in their application.

Evidential flexibility

Consult the guidance on evidential flexibility further information on how to assess cases where evidence is missing.

Related content

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Eligible dependants

As set out in the [overview of the Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) \(BN\(O\)\) route section](#), a person who is a BN(O) may apply under the Hong Kong BN(O) route. The route also allows dependants of that main applicant (their partner, or children or grandchildren under the age of 18) and, in some cases, other members of their household to apply to come to the UK or remain in the UK with the main applicant. Family members can be of any nationality and hold any passport.

On their first application under the route all family members must be able to demonstrate that they meet a relationship requirement which links them to a BN(O) status holder being granted permission at the same time as them and that they form part of the same household as that BN(O) status holder. In subsequent applications, following a successful grant of permission, it will be sufficient for the partner, adult child or partner of the adult child to show that they already hold permission on the route.

However, a child or grandchild who is under the age of 18 or an adult dependent relative must continue to demonstrate that they meet a relationship requirement which links them to a person who has permission under the route. This is to ensure that those who have an on-going need to be cared for or supported by a relevant family member cannot have their application disconnected from that family member.

A child who is under the age of 18 on their first application, but following a successful grant of permission is aged 18 or over on their subsequent application, should apply as a BN(O) Household Member in that subsequent application and, as with other adult children, will not need to demonstrate that they continue to meet a relationship requirement.

Any dependants must meet the eligibility and suitability requirements of this route.

Applying together

BN(O) status holders and relevant family members must usually apply for the Hong Kong BN(O) route together, although they may choose to travel to the UK separately. In practice, this means that the main applicant who is a BN(O) status holder should apply first and receive their Unique Applicant Number (UAN) or Global Web Form (GWF) reference. Any dependants applying will need to quote this UAN or GWF in their applications. You should check whether dependants have applied within 48 hours of the main applicant unless the concession below applies.

It is permissible for the BN(O) status holder's spouse or partner and dependent child under 18 to apply for the Hong Kong BN(O) route separately from the lead applicant. For example, this includes any children born whilst their parents are on the BN(O) route; you should grant them permission on the route in line with that of their parents'. Additionally, if a BN(O) status holder meets a new partner after a grant of permission on the BN(O) route, their partner would be able to come to the UK, providing they otherwise meet the requirements for a dependant partner on the

route. Some applicants may have staggered their applications so that one parent moves to the UK first to arrange affairs before the other parent and children join them; this would also be permissible under this concession.

However, if a BN(O) status holder is granted entry clearance or permission to stay and a BN(O) Household Member or BN(O) adult dependent relative makes a subsequent application, you should refuse the application.

For a grant of settlement on the Hong Kong BN(O) route, a BN(O) household child must be being granted at the same time as their BN(O) status holder parent, and/or their other parent who is already settled or a British citizen. A BN(O) adult dependent relative must also be applying for settlement at the same time as the BN(O) status holder or the partner of a BN(O) status holder, or who is already settled or a British citizen.

If the BN(O) status holder and their dependent BN(O) household child or BN(O) adult dependant relative travelled to the UK separately, the continuous residence requirement for settlement may mean that these dependants may have to apply for further permission to stay beyond 5 years if the BN(O) status holder has not yet fulfilled the continuous residence requirement.

Dependent partner

The dependent partner must:

- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying for entry clearance (HK 34.2)
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying for permission to stay in the UK (see HK 42.1 to 42.4)
- meet the maintenance requirements (HK 40.1 to 40.5)
- be ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, the UK, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, or the Isle of Man (HK 41.1 to 41.2)

Assessing the relationship

The dependent partner must meet the relationship requirement. If they are applying for permission to stay and have permission as a dependent partner on the BN(O) Status Holder route on the date of application, they will meet the relationship requirement. Otherwise they must demonstrate they meet the following.

The relationship must be genuine and subsisting. The partner should normally live with the BN(O) and intend to live with the BN(O) once in the UK. The partner and BN(O) status holder should apply together.

A BN(O) status holder's spouse or civil partner should enclose a digital copy of their marriage or civil partnership certificate along with their application.

If the partner is not the spouse or civil partner of the BN(O), they must show that:

- they have been living together in a relationship similar to marriage or civil partnership for 2 years before applying
- any previous relationships of the BN(O) or the partner must be permanently broken down
- they can marry in the UK, such as they are not prohibited by law to marry due to being closely related

See the Relationship section of the Family life (as a partner or parent), private life and exceptional circumstances guidance for further information.

BN(O) Household Child

A BN(O) Household Child is the child or grandchild under the age of 18 of a BN(O) status holder or their partner.

Both of the BN(O) Household Child's parents must apply together with the Household Child, or have permission to be in the UK (except as a visitor). The following exemptions apply:

- the parent who is a BN(O) or the partner of a BN(O) is the only living parent
- the parent who is a BN(O) or the partner of a BN(O) has sole responsibility for bringing up the child
- there are serious and compelling reasons to grant the child entry clearance or permission to stay with the parent who has permission on the Hong Kong BN(O) route
- there are serious and compelling reasons to grant the child entry clearance or permission to stay with the BN(O) grandparent or BN(O) grandparent's partner who has permission on the Hong Kong BN(O) route (HK 15.1(b))

The household child must:

- normally live with the BN(O)
- live with a parent who has permission on the Hong Kong BN(O) route during their stay in the UK (HK 16.1)
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying for entry clearance (HK 34.2)
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying in country (see HK 42.1 to 42.4)
- meet the maintenance requirements (HK 36.1 to 36.5)
- be ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, the UK, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, or the Isle of Man (HK 41.1 to 41.2)

Assessing the relationship

The main applicant must show evidence that they are the parent, adopted parent or guardian of the household child, such as:

- a full birth certificate
- an adoption certificate
- a court order, such as a special guardianship order

The best interests of a child

The duty in [section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child under the age of 18 in the UK, together with Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, means that consideration of the child's best interests must be a primary consideration in immigration decisions affecting them. This guidance and the Immigration Rules it covers form part of the arrangements for ensuring that we give practical effect to these obligations.

Where a child or children in the UK will be affected by the decision, you must have regard to their best interests in making the decision. You must carefully consider all the information and evidence provided concerning the best interests of a child in the UK and the impact the decision may have on the child.

Although the duty in section 55 only applies to children in the UK, the statutory guidance – [Every Child Matters – Change for Children](#) – provides guidance on the extent to which the spirit of the duty should be applied to children overseas. You must adhere to the spirit of the duty and make enquiries when you have reason to suspect that a child may be in need of protection or safeguarding, or presents welfare needs that require attention. In some instances, international or local agreements are in place that permit or require children to be referred to the authorities of other countries and you are to abide by these and work with local agencies in order to develop arrangements that protect children and reduce the risk of trafficking and exploitation.

Further guidance can be found in paragraphs 2.34 to 2.36 of the [statutory guidance](#).

BN(O) Household Member

A BN(O) household member is the child of a BN(O) status holder, or the partner of a BN(O) status holder, who was born on or after 1 July 1997. The BN(O) Household Member route may also be used where a person had permission as a BN(O) Household child but no longer qualifies for that route because they are aged 18 or over. The applicant cannot have or have last had permission as a BN(O) Adult Dependent Relative on the BN(O) Status Holder route.

The household member must:

- normally live with the BN(O)
- be the child of someone who is being granted permission as a BN(O) or the partner of a BN(O)
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying for entry clearance (HK 25.2)
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying in country (see HK 29.1 to 29.4)
- meet the maintenance requirements (HK 27.1 to 27.5)
- be ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, the UK, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, or the Isle of Man (HK 28.1 to 28.2)

Assessing the relationship

Where the BN(O) Household Member applicant does not have permission on the Hong Kong BN(O) route, the BN(O) main applicant must show evidence that they are the parent, adoptive parent or guardian of the applicant, such as:

- a full birth certificate
- an adoption certificate
- a court order, such as a special guardianship order

Dependent partner of a BN(O) Household Member

The dependent partner of a BN(O) Household Member must:

- normally live with the BN(O) Household Member
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying for entry clearance
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying in country
- meet the maintenance requirements
- be ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, the UK, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, or the Isle of Man

Assessing the relationship

The dependent partner must meet the relationship requirement. If they are applying for permission to stay and have permission as a dependent partner on the BN(O) Household Member route on the date of application, they will meet the relationship requirement. Otherwise they must demonstrate they meet the following.

The relationship between the Household Member and the Household Member partner must be genuine and subsisting. The Household Member partner should normally live with the BN(O) Household Member and intend to live with the BN(O) Household Member once in the UK. The partner and BN(O) Household Member should apply together, along with the main applicant who is a BN(O) status holder. A BN(O) household member's spouse or civil partner should enclose a scan of their marriage or civil partnership certificate along with their application.

If the partner is not the spouse or civil partner of the BN(O) household member, they must show that:

- they have been living together in a relationship similar to marriage or civil partnership for 2 years before applying
- any previous relationships of the BN(O) household member or the household member partner must be permanently broken down
- they can marry in the UK, such as they are not prohibited by law to marry due to being closely related

See the Relationship section of the Family life (as a partner or parent), private life and exceptional circumstances guidance for further information.

Dependent child of a BN(O) Household Member

The Household Member's Child must be the child of an applicant granted permission as a BN(O) Household Member or their partner.

Both of the parents of a dependent child of a BN(O) Household Member must apply together with the dependent child, or have permission to be in the UK (except as a visitor). The following exemptions apply:

- the parent who is a BN(O) Household Member or the partner of a BN(O) household member is the only living parent
- the parent who is a BN(O) Household Member or the partner of a BN(O) household member has sole responsibility for bringing up the child
- there are serious and compelling reasons to grant the child entry clearance or permission to stay with the parent who has permission on the BN(O) Household Member route

The child of a BN(O) Household Member must:

- normally live with the BN(O) Household Member
- live with a parent who has permission on the BN(O) Household Member route during their stay in the UK
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying for entry clearance
- hold a valid TB test certificate when applying in country
- meet the maintenance requirements
- be ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, the UK, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, or the Isle of Man (HK 41.1 to 41.2)

Assessing the relationship

The Household Member or their partner must show evidence that they are the parent, adoptive parent or guardian of the household member child, such as:

- a full birth certificate
- an adoption certificate
- a court order, such as a special guardianship order

BN(O) Adult Dependent Relative

An adult dependent relative is the:

- parent aged 18 or over
- grandparent
- brother or sister aged 18 or over
- son or daughter aged 18 or over

of a BN(O) status holder or BN(O) status holder's dependent partner.

Assessing high dependency

Cases of exceptional high dependency can be considered outside of the definitions of dependants above (dependent partner/spouse, household child, household member, household member partner/spouse, household member child). Assessing high dependency is guided by, but not limited to, the following factors (HK 49.2):

- their age, illness, or disability requires long-term personal care to perform everyday tasks
- the applicant normally lives with the BN(O) status holder
- the applicant is unable to access care in Hong Kong, even with the practical and financial support of the BN(O) status holder or the BN(O) status holder's partner/spouse

You can request further information to establish whether the dependent adult relative is part of the same household as the BN(O) status holder and the level of their dependency on the BN(O) status holder or the BN(O) status holder's partner/spouse, such as evidence of medical conditions, how long have they been living together and how care is provided.

See the guidance on adult dependant relatives for further information.

Related content

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Grant or refuse entry clearance

This section tells you about how to grant or refuse entry clearance on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

Grant entry clearance

If the applicant meets all of the [suitability](#) and [eligibility](#) requirements of Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas), you must grant entry clearance.

Official - sensitive: start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official - sensitive: end of section

Biometric information for entry clearance

Successful applicants for entry clearance are given either a digital status or a vignette in their passport. If the entry clearance application is successful, you must issue a 90-day entry clearance vignette to allow them to collect their biometric residence permit (BRP) after they have arrived in the UK. Entry clearance vignettes have been temporarily extended from 30 days to 90 days due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Refuse entry clearance

You must refuse the application if you are not satisfied the applicant has met all the suitability and eligibility requirements.

Consult the guidance on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route: refusal wordings for more information about refusing an application on the Hong Kong BN(O) route.

If you require further information you must discuss the case with your senior caseworker who may refer to the Hong Kong Central Team for further advice.

Family members

A family member applying for entry clearance can only be granted permission in line with the main applicant – the BN(O) status holder – so cannot be granted entry clearance if the BN(O) status holder’s application is refused.

A BN(O) status holder’s application may meet the suitability, and eligibility requirements but one or more of their family members’ applications may not. In these cases, you must grant entry clearance for the applicants that meet the suitability and eligibility criteria and refuse those who do not.

Right to administrative review: entry clearance applications

If an application for entry clearance is refused, the applicant cannot appeal against the refusal. However, if they think the Home Office has made an error in considering their application, they can apply for an administrative review.

Related content

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Grant or refuse permission to stay

This section tells you when to grant or refuse permission to stay on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

Grant permission to stay

If the applicant meets all of the [suitability](#) and [eligibility](#) requirements, you must grant permission to stay.

Biometric information

Successful applicants for permission to stay are given either a digital status or a [biometric residence permit \(BRP\)](#).

Refuse permission to stay

You must refuse the application if you are not satisfied the applicant has met all the suitability requirements of [Appendix Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\)](#), or if any of the grounds for refusal in [Part 9: Grounds for Refusal](#) apply.

Consult the guidance on Example refusal wording for applications on the Hong Kong BN(O) route on Horizon for more information about refusing an application on the Hong Kong BN(O) route.

Where an application for permission to stay does not meet the eligibility requirements you must consider whether the following [exceptions](#) apply.

Exceptions: leave outside the rules following a refusal

If an applicant cannot meet the eligibility requirements for permission to stay because, either:

- they cannot demonstrate they meet the financial requirement
- they are not ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, the UK, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man

You must inform the applicant of the reasons why their application does not meet the eligibility requirements under Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) using the relevant decision template. However, you have the discretion to grant the applicants 12 months' leave outside the rules (LOTR) to allow them further time to meet the eligibility requirements for a further application for the Hong Kong BN(O) route. Family members should only be granted LOTR where the BN(O) status holder is also being granted permission.

This grant of LOTR does not apply if the applicant has not met all the suitability requirements of the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route.

This grant of LOTR gives applicants the right to work and study in the UK, but no recourse to public funds. The conditions of their stay are set out in the relevant decision template.

BN(O) status holders and their family members who fell for refusal under the Hong Kong BN(O) route would be granted LOTR via the same application, meaning they would not have to pay again for a separate in country LOTR application. Hong Kong BN(O) applicants will have paid either 30 months or 5 years of IHS with their application, but would only receive 12 months' permission, so you must refund the difference in IHS. They would not get a refund of the original fee paid.

If you are considering granting Leave Outside the Rules you must discuss the case with your senior caseworker who may refer to the Hong Kong Central Team for further advice.

Right to administrative review

If an application for permission to stay is refused, there is no right of appeal against the refusal. However, if the applicant thinks the Home Office has made an error in considering their application, they can apply for an administrative review.

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Conditions of entry clearance or stay

This page tells you about the conditions of stay a Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status holder and their family members must comply with if they are granted entry clearance or permission to stay.

No access to public funds

Hong Kong BN(O) status holders and their family members are granted permission on the condition that they cannot access public funds and can maintain themselves. This term is defined in [paragraph 6](#) of the Immigration Rules and includes most state benefits and housing or homelessness assistance. However, those who have been granted permission on the Hong Kong BN(O) route who are destitute or are at imminent risk of falling into destitution can [apply to change their conditions to lift the No Recourse to Public Funds condition](#).

Police registration

BN(O) status holders are not normally required to register with the police, including when they also hold a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport. Holders of HKSAR passports, and holders of other specified passports over the age of 16, must be required to register with the police.

See the Police registration guidance for further information.

Work

Hong Kong BN(O) status holders and their family members can take any kind of employment or self-employment. The work can be full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid, does not have to be with a licensed Tier 2 or Tier 5 sponsor, and they do not need any additional permission or endorsement from the Home Office to work once they have been granted permission. They cannot, however, be employed as a professional sportsperson or sports coach.

Study

Hong Kong BN(O) status holders and their family members are allowed to study in the UK. There is no limit on the number of hours they can study or level of course they undertake. Study may be undertaken anywhere the applicant chooses and does not have to be with a licensed Tier 4 sponsor.

ATAS condition

If they intend to study a discipline listed in [Appendix ATAS to the Immigration Rules](#) and are 18 years of age or over, they must obtain an [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\) clearance certificate](#) from the Counter-Proliferation Department of the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) in relation to this course before beginning their study.

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