



Home Office

DNA testing for British passport applications

Version 9.0

Guidance for His Majesty's Passport Office staff about inviting customers to volunteer DNA evidence to support a biological relationship, during a UK or overseas British passport application

Contents

Contents.....	2
About: DNA testing for British passport applications	4
Contacts	4
Publication	4
Changes from last version of this guidance	4
DNA to support a British passport application	5
DNA: definition.....	5
DNA evidence: the customer’s decision	6
DNA and proof of paternity	6
DNA and proof of maternity	7
Sibling and other family members testing	7
Sibling and other family member testing: decision making.....	7
Customer chooses not to send us voluntary DNA evidence	8
DNA test standards and results.....	9
Checking the DNA company’s accreditation.....	9
Checking the DNA test meets Home Office standards	10
Understanding DNA test results	10
If DNA test results are lower than the threshold.....	11
DNA evidence to support a passport application: UK.....	12
When DNA evidence must not be accepted: UK applications	12
Offering customers the opportunity to volunteer DNA.....	12
Dealing with UK applications including voluntary DNA evidence	12
OTL dealing with UK applications including DNA evidence	13
QuEst dealing with applications including DNA evidence	13
DNA evidence to support a passport application: overseas	14
Applications from overseas with DNA evidence	14
When a customer can be voluntarily offered DNA testing.....	14
When DNA testing must not be used for overseas applications	15
DNA testing: Supporting an overseas passport application.....	17
How to invite an overseas customer to a voluntary DNA test	18
Customer accepts our offer of a voluntary DNA test	19
Customer does not accept an offer of a voluntary DNA test	19
If an overseas customer volunteers or suggests a DNA test	19

If an overseas customer voluntarily supplies a DNA test	19
How to use DNA evidence from other sources	19
Issues that prevent a voluntary DNA test taking place.....	20
Referring a customer to a supplier for a DNA test.....	21
Using Case Management Tool to monitor a DNA referral.....	22
Contact: when the application is with the supplier.....	22
If a DNA test customer is in the UK	22
DNA testing kits and witnessing of sampling	22
Customer does not contact the supplier	23
Customer does not attend 3 appointments.....	23
DNA testing declined: application with the supplier	23
Concerns or complaints about the supplier.....	23
Extending deadlines when applications are with the supplier	25
Customer unable to attend a DNA test	25
If an overseas customer submits a new application	26
Getting DNA test results from our suppliers	27
Overseas examiner: checking a DNA test for	27
Recording and keeping DNA results	28
Recording DNA results as a case note	28
Keeping DNA results as a permanent record	28
If DNA results confirm we have issued a passport incorrectly	29

About: DNA testing for British passport applications

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff:

- that we follow Home Office DNA guidance
- that we cannot require customers to provide DNA evidence as part of their passport application
- that we have no specific statutory power to require DNA evidence
- what we do when we receive DNA evidence to support a British passport application

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards.

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 Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards.

Publication

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

- version **9.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **11 September 2023**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to:

- merge the 2 sections relating to when a customer does not accept an offer of a voluntary DNA test, into one section
- confirm if DNA evidence is not available examiners must consider the information provided

Related content

[Contents](#)

DNA to support a British passport application

This section tells HM Passport Office staff dealing with British passport applications about how DNA can be used to support a passport application.

HM Passport Office must consider identity, nationality, entitlement and safeguarding when we check passport applications. We usually do this using a range of evidence (for example, birth records and documents linking a customer to a claimed parent for proof of paternity, as determined by the British Nationality (Proof of Paternity) Regulations 2006 (amended 2015).

Customers will decide what extra evidence they choose to send to us to prove a claimed parental link (for example, court orders, declaration of parentage, DNA). This evidence would be in addition to the core documents requested by HM Passport Office to support a passport application.

HM Passport Office must not insist on DNA evidence from a customer, as we do not have statutory power to demand it and it may not be the correct evidence to confirm a customer's parents for nationality purposes, for example, a customer's father can be their mother's husband rather than the biological father. This guidance is in line with the Home Office DNA policy guidance.

DNA evidence on its own does not provide enough grounds to issue or refuse a passport. It must be used together with other supporting evidence linking the customer to the claimed parents. You must not use DNA results instead of gathering the necessary documentation you need (for example, a full birth certificate registered within 12 months of the birth) to confirm nationality and identity. DNA evidence must also be considered alongside the British Nationality Proof of Paternity Regulations 2006 (amended in 2015).

DNA: definition

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a chemical found in every cell in the body. It carries genetic information from one generation to the next. Half the DNA is inherited from a person's mother and half from their father. Siblings inherit different combinations of DNA from the same parents and are different from each other. Each new generation of individuals represents a new combination of genetic material from the previous generation.

DNA is taken usually by swabbing the inside of the cheek to collect cells. The technique of DNA profiling involves analysing and measuring the differences in lengths of these sequences. The chance of 2 people having identical profile records is less than 1 in a billion. However, the technology does not yet show every single difference between individuals. Aside from sex, a DNA profile does not reveal any

other characteristics of the person it's taken from (for example, ethnicity or physical appearance).

DNA cannot confirm the age of the person being tested. It can only provide a biological link between those tested.

DNA evidence: the customer's decision

A customer can volunteer DNA evidence as one of the options to establish a biological parental relationship for a UK (or overseas) application.

The person who has parental responsibility must give consent if the person to be tested is a child under the age of 16.

However, DNA testing is not a substitute for supporting documentation (for example, a birth certificate) in the passport application process. It may help in certain applications where supporting documents may be difficult to get, where the standard and integrity (reliability) of the documentation falls below the standards we need for verification or we have a reason to believe the claimed relationship is fraudulent and this has a bearing (impact) on the customer's claim to British nationality.

A customer may choose not to provide us with DNA evidence, in this instance, see: customer chooses not to send us voluntary DNA evidence.

Original documents must be used to support an application and if possible from a reliable source.

DNA evidence must only be used to support an application from the person who has actually been tested. It must not be used to support an application from customers claiming they are siblings or related to those named in a DNA test and have not been tested.

DNA and proof of paternity

Under the British Nationality Proof of Paternity Regulations 2006 (amended in 2015), if a customer's mother was married when they were born, the mother's husband is the customer's father for nationality purposes. This is the case, even if the father is not biologically related to the child or if another man is named on the birth certificate. You must not consider DNA evidence as proof of paternity (as defined by the regulations).

You must check if the Proof of Paternity Regulations 2006 (amended in 2015), applies but if an examiner has concerns about the integrity (reliability) of the customer's documents to support the claimed relationship, you must look to see if the customer can volunteer alternative evidence proving the claimed relationship which may include DNA testing.

To prove paternity, we need samples from both parents and the child, although there may be situations where it is not always possible, for example, a single parent (see also: sibling and other family members testing).

DNA and proof of maternity

Under the British Nationality Act 1981, a mother is the woman who gives birth to the customer.

If an examiner has concerns with the integrity of the documents to support an application, you must look to see if the customer can volunteer alternative evidence including DNA testing.

To prove maternity, we need samples from both parents and the child, although there may be situations where it is not always possible (for example, a single parent) see also: sibling and other family members testing).

Sibling and other family members testing

DNA tests on another immediate family member (such as, a sibling of the customer) may help to confirm a claimed parental relationship, although the result will not offer the same level of matching as a direct parental test.

We will only accept DNA evidence from another family member in exceptional or compassionate circumstances (for example, if the parents are deceased).

You, the examiner, must be satisfied that the person providing the DNA evidence:

- is an immediate relative of the person who is unable to provide DNA evidence (for example, a parent or sibling of the deceased relative or a sibling of the customer)
- consents to an offer of taking a voluntary DNA test
- can provide the proper documentary evidence (or other evidence) to confirm the claimed relationship to the person (who is unable or unwilling to provide a DNA sample)

If you need to establish a relationship other than parental links, you must refer the application to a higher executive officer (HEO) or higher-grade officer for a decision.

Sibling and other family member testing: decision making

A HEO or higher-grade officer must agree to the customer taking a DNA test with someone other than the claimed parent.

Before looking at the reasons why the examiner proposed a DNA test, the HEO must consider:

- the concerns which require additional evidence and consider if DNA will provide the proof required

- the concerns a child being linked to another family member are not likely to be resolved through family member testing
- all the documentary evidence provided by the customer and check the examiner has requested additional evidence to support the claimed relationship

You must case note your decision on the application.

Customer chooses not to send us voluntary DNA evidence

If a customer does not want to accept an offer of a voluntary DNA test or chooses not to provide DNA evidence, you must consider their passport application using all the available documentary evidence, based on the balance of probability.

You must not automatically refuse a customer's application because they did not provide a voluntary DNA sample or evidence.

You must ask the customer if there is any other additional evidence, they want us to consider supporting a relationship to the claimed parent. If the information provided is insufficient to support the claimed relationship, it must be reflected in your decision.

If you must refuse an application, you must follow the refusing passport applications and passport facilities guidance. You must tell the customer all the reasons why we have refused the application including that we had insufficient evidence to establish a biological link between them and their British parent.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Definition of father

Legitimation and surrogacy

DNA test standards and results

This section tells HM Passport Office staff dealing with UK and overseas applications how to check DNA test standards, results and whether they comply with HM Passport Office and Home Office standards.

If a customer chooses to provide DNA evidence, GOV.UK tells them it must meet both:

- a suitable International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standard accreditation, this is usually ISO/IEC17025 accreditation
- Home Office DNA collection standard

Checking the DNA company's accreditation

If a customer voluntarily supplies DNA test results, you must check the company's accreditation.

If a customer uses a company with ISO/IEC17025 accreditation, you must accept the collection standards have been met.

If a customer submits DNA test results from a DNA testing laboratory:

- that does not hold ISO/IEC17025 accreditation, such as ISO 15189 (this is for medical testing laboratories)
- where the customer is volunteering DNA evidence to confirm other types of biological relationships

You (the examiner) must check the company's accreditation, using the:

- [United Kingdom Accreditation Service \(UKAS\)](#) (for UK organisations)
- [European cooperation for Accreditation](#) (for European laboratories)
- [International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation](#) (for overseas laboratories)

1. Ask the customer to send a copy of the testing laboratory's "schedule of accreditation".
 - this is to confirm the company is accreditation to do paternity testing or other relevant biological relationship testing
2. Check an accreditation body (that has demonstrated its technical competence in accrediting testing laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189) has awarded the testing laboratory's accreditation.
 - you can confirm this by the accreditation body being a signatory to the European (European cooperation for Accreditation – EA) or International (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation – ILAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangements.
3. Check (after confirming the suitability of the accreditation body) the testing laboratory holds appropriate accreditation for paternity testing by checking with

the accreditation body that awarded the accreditation, on the accreditation body's website.

Checking the DNA test meets Home Office standards

Staff must check that DNA tests were completed using the Home Office DNA collection standard. This will form part of the report. If it's not in the report, you must ask the customer to provide evidence on how the DNA samples were collected and sent to the laboratory.

If any documents are missing (or have not been completed) you must tell the customer, to either:

- ask the testing company for them
- provide written consent allowing us to verify the details with the testing company

If a customer cannot provide satisfactory evidence that their DNA test was done in an accredited laboratory and that samples were collected following Home Office DNA collection standard, you must disregard the evidence.

If the customer provides new DNA evidence, it must be voluntary.

Understanding DNA test results

DNA testing companies will supply descriptive result, this can be:

- positive
- relationship proven
- inconclusive
- unable to establish claimed relationship

You must be aware that DNA testing companies can use other descriptive results.

The best practice for the DNA laboratory is to show the test results as a ratio. However, some laboratories may use a percentage to describe the results, for example:

- 'there is 99.99% probability the tested male is the father'
- 'it is 10,000 times more likely the tested male is the father'
- 'the alleged parent is excluded as the biological parent', meaning there is zero probability the person is the biological parent
- 'the alleged parent is not excluded as the biological parent', meaning there is almost 100% probability the person is the biological parent
- 'there is 99.99% probability the tested male is the father'

You must not rely solely on any percentage result provided by the DNA testing laboratories.

You must read the DNA testing laboratory's explanation of the result, when considering the application.

DNA test results, to confirm a biological relationship, are shown as a likelihood ratio (for example, it is 10,000 times more likely the tested male is the father) to confirm a relationship rather than confirming there is no such relationship. Using the likelihood ratio is clearer and helps the courts to confirm the differences of opinion between experts.

If DNA test results are lower than the threshold

A result that is lower than the 10,000 times' threshold may show a risk of a claimed parent being a close relative (for example, an uncle or aunt).

If the DNA test does not reflect positive result, you must refer the application to your operational team leader (OTL) and not automatically reject the passport application. You must handle these results with sensitivity and look at the application as a whole, using all the documentary evidence available and make a decision using the balance of probabilities.

If DNA test results do not meet the threshold to support a claimed parental relationship, you must refer the application to your OTL.

An OTL can refer an application to the Quality and Examination Support team member (QuEST) for additional coaching or a second opinion.

An OTL or QuEST must consider each case individually, using all the available evidence to make a balance of probabilities decision. If a customer provides DNA evidence, you must consider it as one piece of evidence to prove a claim to paternity. You must then refer the application back to the examiner.

If you have doubts about the integrity of the testing process (or you suspect fraud), you must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team (CFT).

Related content

[Contents](#)

DNA evidence to support a passport application: UK

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to tell a customer when they can volunteer DNA evidence to support their UK application and how to consider DNA evidence if it's sent to support a UK application.

If you need a customer to send more documents to support their passport claim, you must offer them a range of options (for example, a court order specifically defining the paternity). This can include volunteering DNA test results.

If the documents, the customer sent with their application, do not support the claimed relationship between the intended passport holder and the claimed parents, you must send the Application Management System (AMS) letter number 308 to the customer.

When DNA evidence must not be accepted: UK applications

You must not accept a customer's DNA evidence, if the British Nationality (Proof of Paternity) Regulations 2006 (amended 2015) determines the father and a nationality claim. The applicant will need to apply via UK Visas and Immigration if they wish a claim to British nationality through someone else by way of registration.

Offering customers the opportunity to volunteer DNA

HM Passport Office does not provide a DNA test referral process for UK customers. You must not insist that the customer give us DNA evidence. If a customer wants to voluntarily provide it, they must arrange the DNA test themselves.

A customer can choose not to send us voluntary DNA evidence

Dealing with UK applications including voluntary DNA evidence

If you (the examiner) need more documents to support and confirm proof of paternity, 1 of the documents a customer can voluntarily provide is DNA evidence to support a parent (or child) relationship.

You can make a decision or ask for support from your operational team leader (OTL).

You must check that the DNA test is the full report and includes:

- sample declaration forms (this shows who attended the sampling and what identity documentation was sent at the time of sampling)
- copies of the identity documents

OTL dealing with UK applications including DNA evidence

When you, the OTL, are asked to support an application from an examiner, you must consider each case individually, using available evidence to make a balance of probabilities decision. If the customer provides DNA evidence, you must consider it as 1 piece of evidence to prove a claim to paternity.

If a customer provides DNA test results voluntarily to support their application, you must consider it as part of the application if it is from a company we accept to conduct a DNA test and the results are acceptable.

You can ask for support from the Quality and Examination Support team (QuEst).

You, the OTL (or examiner), must pigeonhole any applications waiting for a decision.

QuEst dealing with applications including DNA evidence

An OTL can request support from QuEst.

QuEst must support the OTL and examiner in assessing the application. You must consider each case individually, using available evidence to make a balance of probabilities decision. If the customer provides DNA evidence, you must consider it as 1 piece of evidence to prove a claim to paternity.

If a customer provides DNA test results voluntarily to support an application, you must consider it as part of the application if it is from a company we accept to conduct a DNA test and the results are acceptable.

You can ask for support from the Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards.

QuEst must not retain applications. The examiner or OTL must pigeonhole any applications waiting for a decision.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

DNA sampling supervised by other government departments

DNA evidence to support a passport application: overseas

This section tells HM Passport Office staff dealing with an overseas passport application, how to tell a customer they can volunteer DNA evidence to support their application and consider DNA evidence submitted.

The following staff can suggest (and arrange), but not insist upon, DNA testing to support an overseas passport application. This depends on the country we get the application from, and who is processing the application:

- an examiner who deals with group 3 applications
- an enhanced application checking (EAC) examiner
- a Counter Fraud team (CFT) officer
- an examiner dealing with group 1 or 2 applications, with an operational team leaders (OTLs) agreement

You must make sure that you have the correct documents and complete the relevant checks for overseas applications.

Applications from overseas with DNA evidence

If a customer provides DNA evidence, their application will remain with the team who deal with overseas applications, unless you have fraud concerns that mean you need to refer to CFT.

When a customer can be voluntarily offered DNA testing

If you, the examiner, are unable to make a decision, you can invite customers to send other forms of evidence to support their claim, if their application:

- has insufficient documents to support a claim to a British passport
- is missing documents to support a claim to a British passport
- includes low integrity documents that you can't verify
- includes a genuine birth certificate registered after 12 months (registered after 3 months for US birth certificates only)
- causes concerns about documents or the interview
- causes doubts over documents or parental relationship
- causes doubts over the validity of marriage (if it's relevant to the claim)

Other forms of documentary evidence to support the customer's claim to a relationship with a British parent, includes:

- a UK court order that specifically defines paternity
- a court order from an overseas court that specifically defines paternity

- DNA evidence results (as long as they meet all Home Office conditions)

The customer can also submit other contemporaneous evidence (existing from the time of the event) the customer believes will prove the claim. This documentary evidence must form part of the application as a whole and be assessed using balance of probability. Unless there are doubts over the validity of a document.

You must check that volunteered DNA evidence can be used as proof of paternity. If the customer's mother is confirmed as married at the time of birth, you must not use DNA evidence. You must use definition of parent guidance for nationality purposes to confirm who is a customer's father.

You can offer the customer the opportunity to send these documents at any time during the passport application, if you do you must make clear what you are seeking to prove and what options are available to the customer. DNA must not be requested as an option on its own without providing the customer with other options that may be more relevant for example a court order.

Customers must attempt to provide all mandatory documents. If a customer is unable, you, the examiner, must ask for alternative contemporaneous evidence (for example, an original certificate or document issued around the time of the event).

You must remember that DNA testing is expensive for customers and you must only consider it as an option for customers to provide when it is necessary or adds value. You must decide if:

- the customer can provide other evidence
- you already have enough evidence to make a balance of probability decision on a customer's nationality and identity
- the steps a customer has taken to show their relationships are genuine (given the local conditions)
- if there are gaps, concerns or inconsistencies in the customer's evidence or if you can take the credibility of the documentation (or responses) they provide at an interview, at face value
- it is likely to be months (instead of weeks) before a customer sends us additional information, based on the quantity (or quality) of documentation already provided

You must not consider a customer's volunteered DNA evidence, until the:

- results from document validation or verification are received
- interview has taken place, if an interview is mandatory

When DNA testing must not be used for overseas applications

You, the examiner, must not accept a customer's volunteered DNA evidence, if:

- the British Nationality (Proof of Paternity) Regulations 2006 determines the intended passport holder's father
- it's being used, to replace standard documentation to support the application
- it's unlikely to move the application forwards (for example, we still need further evidence that has not yet been provided)
- it's being used for the wrong purpose e.g. where marriage is in doubt
- the documentation and evidence already provided with the application can prove a parental link, unless there is concern over the validity of the documents
- there is a dispute around the age of a customer, and it has an impact on the claim

Related content

[Contents](#)

Definition of father

Legitimation and surrogacy

DNA testing: Supporting an overseas passport application

This section tells HM Passport Office staff the process they must follow when DNA testing is offered as an option to support an application for a customer to confirm a biological relationship with a British parent.

Customers can choose to voluntarily provide DNA evidence to us. We will accept a customer's DNA evidence if it was collected and processed by:

- our commercial suppliers, TLS contact or VFS global, who work with an appointed Ministry of Justice (MOJ) approved DNA testing company
- a laboratory we have not recommended that meets the Home Office collection standards and the company is acceptable to conduct a DNA test

We recommend that customers use our commercial supplier, if possible, especially when they are:

- wanting to volunteer DNA evidence. This is because our commercial supplier meets the Home Office collection standards and the company is acceptable to conduct a DNA test.

The following list of countries provides DNA testing at a set cost to the customer, but all family members must be available for testing in that country.

If family members are not in the same country or in a country not listed below, the supplier will confirm the cost of the DNA test to the customer at the time of booking their appointment.

- Afghanistan (via Pakistan)
- Albania
- Algeria
- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- France
- Ghana
- Hong Kong
- India
- Iraq
- Jamaica
- Kenya

- Lebanon
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- South Africa
- Thailand
- Turkey
- Uganda
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- USA
- Vietnam
- Zambia

Customers may need to travel long distances, including to other countries, to reach an office that offers DNA testing.

The customer is responsible for funding all their travel arrangements, as well as being aware of any exit and entry requirements of that country. HM Passport Office will not become involved in any financial transactions.

We will not provide a British emergency travel document (ETD) to anyone who has not previously held a British passport; including where the travel is needed to complete a DNA test. If a customer needs consular assistance, they must seek advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

There may be cases where there is an issue that prevents a DNA test taking place.

How to invite an overseas customer to a voluntary DNA test

If you are offering a DNA test as an option to a customer, you must send them:

- a DNA offer letter
- TLS DNA offer letter: AMS letter 120
- VFS DNA offer letter: AMS letter 121

After you have sent the letters, you must pigeonhole the application and wait for the customer's response. You must deal with the application, in line with international withdrawal policy (see passport application withdrawals).

Customer accepts our offer of a voluntary DNA test

You, the examiner, must receive a letter from the customer (in writing or by email) saying they accept:

- our offer of a voluntary DNA test, this can be done through our commercial partners or independently (as long as it meets the acceptable standards and accreditation)
- the results to be shared with us

You must:

- keep this confirmation with the application
- case note the customer's agreement to go ahead with the DNA test

We will not accept verbal consent during an interview or a conversation with the customer.

Customer does not accept an offer of a voluntary DNA test

If a customer does not want to accept an offer of a voluntary DNA test, see: Customer chooses not to send us voluntary DNA evidence

If an overseas customer volunteers or suggests a DNA test

A customer may voluntarily supply a DNA test, when you (the examiner) has not offered it, you must decide if the DNA test can support the application, using the DNA testing standards.

If an overseas customer voluntarily supplies a DNA test

A customer may voluntarily supply a DNA test to support an application, but it was not offered as an option for the customer by you (or our suppliers). You must accept it, if it's from a company acceptable to HM Passport Office to conduct a DNA test.

How to use DNA evidence from other sources

You must accept evidence you receive from other sources, for example:

- from Home Office files through accessing notes on the case information database (CID) or entry clearance files
- the customer tells you they supplied DNA evidence to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) that was used and accepted in entry clearance requests for immigration, visas or settlement
- UK Courts or Immigration tribunal

You must accept them, unless:

- there are concerns with the test process or results

- the testing process was flawed

You must case note that previous DNA results with referrals were used for the application.

Issues that prevent a voluntary DNA test taking place

If there are issues that prevent a voluntary DNA test from taking place, you must contact the Supplier Management team. They will liaise between the examiner and the supplier to agree the suppliers' input and their cost. Some examples of these issues are:

- a parent is in prison so arranging for a sample to be taken is difficult or not possible
- sibling tests (other than non-parentage test)
- the customer is unable to travel, due to:
 - political unrest, war or crisis in their location
 - disability that causes the travel to be difficult or not possible
 - customer has no passport
 - customer is unable to cross borders safely or lawfully
 - the chance that a customer could jeopardise their own safety or security by travelling in areas (or countries) where the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel](#)

The examiner must still manage the process and any interactions, other than those directly with the supplier.

Related content

[Contents](#)

DNA testing process for overseas applications

This section tells HM Passport Office staff, how to arrange and refer a customer for a voluntary DNA test to support an overseas application.

You, the examiner, must:

- send the customer a 'What Happens Next' letter for the relevant supplier by email:
 - TLS What happens next letter: AMS letter 122
 - VFS What happens next letter: AMS letter 123
- add a case note on the application, including:
 - the date of referral
 - confirmation that the letter has been sent to the customer
- confirmation of the location where the customer is being tested
- refer the application to the supplier

Referring a customer to a supplier for a DNA test

Within 48 hours of receiving consent from a customer for a voluntary DNA test, you must:

1. Complete all sections on the DNA referral form and include:
 - the application reference number - these are unique reference numbers (URN) by the supplier and must be included in all letters
 - the customer (or child) data
 - the country where the persons are being tested
 - an image of the customer (or child) for identification
 - the details of the claimed parents being tested
 - the parents' photo identification
 - any photo identification included on the form (or attached as a separate scan)
 - all linked family cases on 1 referral form
2. Save the form as a Portable Document File (PDF).
3. Send the form to the correct supplier, using the contact details in the International Submission Routes and Local Service Booklet, based on the country of application and residence of the 'lead' customer (for example, the child, if the application is for a first-time child) from the examination team's mailbox.
4. In the subject line of the referral email, you must include:
 - DNA referral – [country & city or region where customer is resident]; [appn ref]; [appn surname]
5. You must place the application in the correct virtual box or pigeon hole with a bring-up date for 11 weeks from the date of referral, to allow the supplier to contact the customer and arrange and process the DNA test.

6. If you do not receive results, updates or notifications from the supplier within 11 weeks of referral, you must raise the case with the supplier through the correct mailbox found in the International Submission Routes and Local Service Booklet

Using Case Management Tool to monitor a DNA referral

The staff member referring the customer must update the case on the Case Management Tool, for each application they refer to a supplier. If there is no previous case, you will have to create a new one. It must include, the:

- customer's core details (for example: name, application details, parent's detail)
- supplier's details
- date the referral was made

Contact: when the application is with the supplier

If the customer informs us to confirm they have not received any contact from the supplier, you, the examiner, must contact the supplier by email, using the International Submission Routes and Local Service Booklet to confirm contact with the customer has been made.

If you cannot contact the supplier, you must use the Supplier Management team.

If a DNA test customer is in the UK

If one of the persons volunteering to be tested from an overseas application is currently in the UK, their testing will be done in a UK based DNA testing centre. The customer must pay all costs involved for their DNA test, including the costs of the individuals that witness the collection of the DNA sample.

You must let the supplier know that a customer needs to be tested in the UK.

DNA testing kits and witnessing of sampling

DNA tests are arranged by either TLS contact or VFS global. If a customer arranges a DNA kit personally or arrives to the test with one, it must not be used or accepted.

If a DNA testing kit arrives in error, you must send it to either:

- the appointed office (Mission, Embassy or Visa Application Centre) at the cost of HM Passport Office
- the team dealing with the application, or if CFT if appropriate

A witness to the collection of the DNA samples must be independent and not a family member or a representative of the customer (for example, their solicitor). Customers are expected to cover any costs of the individuals that witness the collection of DNA samples.

Customer does not contact the supplier

If the supplier is unable to contact the customer, they will return the application to the examination team with details of the attempted contact.

You, the examiner, must:

- case note the contact attempts on the application
- check that the customer has not contacted us during the time the application was with the supplier

If contact has been made with the customer and there is a reasonable explanation why they did not respond to any requests, you must refer the application to an OTL who must make a decision whether to refer again. If a re-referral is correct, you must refer the application to the supplier.

You must consider the application using the documentary evidence provided on the basis of a balance of probability. Failure to attend DNA testing must not be included in the decision on the application, if:

- no explanation has been provided
- the explanation has not been accepted as reasonable by the OTL

Customer does not attend 3 appointments

If a customer does not attend 3 booked DNA appointments, the supplier will return the application to the examination team with details of the times and dates the appointments were booked. You must case note the appointment booking details on the application and withdraw the application using the withdrawing passport applications guidance.

DNA testing declined: application with the supplier

If a customer tells the supplier they do not want to continue with a DNA test, the supplier will return the application to the examination team.

You must case note the customer's decision to not go ahead with the voluntary DNA test and review their application, using existing documentary evidence on the basis of a balance of probability. A customer's failure to attend DNA testing must not have any negative effect on their application.

Concerns or complaints about the supplier

If a complaint or concern is raised by a customer about the supplier or the service provided, for example:

- late acknowledgements
- delays in engaging with the DNA Testing Company

You must contact the Supplier Management team_who will liaise with the supplier.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Overseas: cancelling applications awaiting DNA results

This section tells passport examiners dealing with an overseas passport application the process they must follow if a customer wants to cancel or withdraw an application after agreeing to a voluntary DNA test.

If a customer does not want to go ahead with DNA testing at any stage, you must follow the same process as if a customer chooses not to have a DNA test.

The customer will need to contact the DNA testing company themselves to ask for a refund of the fee. You can return the DNA kit to the testing provider or destroy on their request.

You must not give it to the customer.

Extending deadlines when applications are with the supplier

You, the examiner, can use discretion to extend a withdrawal deadline when a customer's application is waiting for DNA test results and:

- there is a lack of available appointments at the closest testing location
- the customer must attend monthly arranged appointments
- there is a delay (at no fault of the customer)
- the customer has to travel to another country for testing
- the DNA testing causes the customer to have significant extra costs

You can only allow up to 28 days extra for the test results, unless the delay is on the part of HM Passport Office.

If an application is withdrawn due to our error or because of a reason listed above, you must allow the customer to submit a new application (free of charge) if you receive it within 12 months of the original application.

If DNA testing has not been carried out for any other reason, you must treat the application as if a customer chooses not to have a DNA test.

Customer unable to attend a DNA test

Issues that may prevent the customer from travelling to a DNA test, can include:

- the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice](#) advising against all travel to the country or region the customer is due to attend
- evidence of a medical condition (for example, doctors letters or hospital records)

- evidence of a compassionate issue (for example, a death certificate of a relative)
- any other evidence that shows the customer is prevented from normal travel

You must ask the customer, if they want to:

- continue with their appointment
- suspend their appointment (for up to 6 weeks)
- not proceed with their appointment (if they wish)

An appointment can continue to take place, if a customer:

- can travel to another testing site without risking their safety or security.
- is already in the region.
- willing to travel and accept all associated costs, including the costs of the individuals that witness the collection of DNA samples.
- the DNA testing site is still open.

If the DNA testing site has closed, you must tell the customer to contact the testing company or supplier to arrange testing at an alternative site.

If the customer cannot or does not wish to travel to any of the available sites, you must follow the same process as if a customer chooses not to have a DNA test.

If an overseas customer submits a new application

If the customer was unable to attend their DNA testing appointment for their original application and we refused it (based on insufficient evidence available during the application) you may consider a new application (free of charge) if we receive it within 12 months of the original application.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Getting DNA test results from our suppliers

This section tells passport examiners dealing with applications sent through our overseas channel the process they must follow after a customer has completed a voluntary DNA test to confirm a biological relationship with a British citizen parent.

You, the examiner, will receive the DNA test results from the testing company no later than 11 weeks after the first referral to the third party and no longer than 3 weeks after the samples have been taken. The results will be sent directly (by the DNA company) to HM Passport Office through email, at the same time the results are sent to the customer.

You must update the case management tracker (CMT) when you receive the results and move the case status to 'closed'. DNA sampling supervised by other government departments provides more information.

The testing company will hold the results for a period of 28 days (although some may keep these longer). Any questions must be made within the 28 day period.

Overseas examiner: checking a DNA test for

You can only consider DNA testing in support of an application, if a customer follows the examining DNA test results standards. You must then process the application, in line with examination guidance.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Recording and keeping DNA results

This section tells passport examiners how to record DNA test results.

You must make sure that you keep DNA test results with the application, until a final decision is made to:

- issue the customer a passport
- withdraw an application (for example, we don't have enough evidence)
- refuse an application (for example, we have doubt that a child is related, as claimed)

Recording DNA results as a case note

Within 2 weeks of receiving any DNA test results, you must case note the following information on the system:

- that the customer volunteered DNA evidence to prove the necessary relationships.
- the names of the people tested and what the claimed relationship was.
- the company that conducted the test.
- what the ratio, or description is shown on the test.
- what probability of likelihood the DNA test showed on the claimed relationships.

Keeping DNA results as a permanent record

You must scan onto the system, to keep as a permanent record, the following information:

- pages and sections of the report that shows the probability ratios and any accreditation evidence for the claimed relationships
- personal details of those tested
- consent and ID forms provided to HM Passport Office and the testing company

You must not scan, any information on the DNA profile that is not essential to confirming the customer's biological relationship, as it contains sensitive, personal data. The following list is an example of information you must not keep. It is not a complete list:

- the DNA alleles, this is a set of numbers showing a genetic link to each parent (usually shown in a table), unless the results do not show a positive match (meaning that the claimed parent is not the parent)
- information that is not describing a family relationship
- any other information not relating to the biological relationship test

Any DNA test results sent directly to us (by the customer) must be returned to them with any other supporting documents, once you complete examination of their application.

If test results are supplied directly to us by the DNA testing company, you must destroy the physical copies along with the DNA profile sent from the testing company by putting them in confidential waste.

The case management tool will automatically delete copies after 28 days. You must delete any electronic copies immediately.

If DNA results confirm we have issued a passport incorrectly

If DNA test results show we have incorrectly issued the customer with a previous passport, you must refer the application to the through Guidance & Quality, Operating through the Quality and Examination Support team (QuEST) so they may consider withdrawal of the passport under the withdrawing passport applications guidance.

If you have any doubts about the integrity of the sample collection or testing process, refer the application to the Counter Fraud team. They will investigate and consider if more action will be taken, against the:

- customer
- testing company
- sample taker

Related content

[Contents](#)

How to keep scans of supporting documents