



Home Office

Coronavirus (COVID-19): EU Settlement Scheme

Version 1.0

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About this guidance

This guidance supplements the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance and tells you how to consider applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) from EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens, and their family members, whose continuous qualifying period of residence in the UK has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In particular, this guidance explains how to consider cases where those EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens, and their family members, have exceeded the maximum period of absence from the UK currently permitted under Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules and on that basis broken their continuous qualifying period of residence. More information can be found within the 'qualifying residence' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

This guidance also explains how to consider cases where, because of COVID-19, the applicant is seeking to rely on alternative evidence of identity and nationality or of entitlement to apply from outside the UK.

EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens will be collectively referred to as 'EEA citizens' throughout this guidance. Wherever this guidance refers to 'EEA citizens', it also means their family members of any nationality who were also resident in the UK before the end of the transition period.

Where this guidance refers to the 'end of the transition period', this means, 11:00pm Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) on 31 December 2020.

Where this guidance refers to 'the Islands', this means the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey or the Isle of Man.

Background

COVID-19 guidance for EUSS applicants was published on 15 December 2020. This confirmed that the EUSS absence policy – permitting a single absence of up to 12 months for an 'important reason' during the continuous qualifying period of 5 years generally required for settled status – covered where an EEA citizen could not return to the UK for a reason directly related to COVID-19.

Now that the transition period has ended, EEA citizens can no longer obtain EUSS status in their own right by starting a new continuous qualifying period of residence where the continuity of a previous such period has been broken. Further revisions to the EUSS absence policy are therefore made by this guidance to provide some additional flexibility where continuous residence in the UK has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Making an application

The process for making an application to the EUSS which falls to be considered under this guidance remains the same and more information can be found within the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

At the point in the online application process that the applicant is prompted, where necessary, to upload additional evidence of their UK residence in support of their application (whether for settled status, where they claim to qualify for that, or for pre-settled status), they should upload evidence (as explained within this guidance) of how COVID-19 affected their ability to return to the UK within the absence otherwise permitted under the EUSS. An applicant applying on a paper application form should submit such evidence together with their application.

For a non-exhaustive list of examples of relevant evidence, see [additional evidence required](#).

As generally under the EUSS, you can exercise discretion in favour of the applicant where appropriate, to minimise administrative burdens, and you must refer to your senior caseworker if you require further advice. Where you consider the information or evidence provided by the applicant is insufficient to allow you to decide the application, you must follow the usual process for contacting the applicant so they can provide further information or evidence.

Information on how to contact an applicant where further information or evidence is required to prove their eligibility under the EUSS is within the 'Consideration of applications: eligibility' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

An application under the EUSS must be made by the required date, as set out in Appendix EU: see the section on 'Making an application: deadline' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance, including the scope for an application to be made after the relevant deadline where there are reasonable grounds why the applicant failed to apply by then.

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 you can email the EEA Citizens' Rights & Hong Kong Unit.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance, then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms Team.

Publication

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

- version **1.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **10 June 2021**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This is new guidance.

Related content

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[EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members
Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents](#)

Continuous qualifying period of residence

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the current policy on continuous residence in, and permitted absences from, the UK under the EUSS, contained in the definition of 'continuous qualifying period' of residence in Annex 1 to Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules, reflects EU law under the Free Movement Directive. More information can be found within the 'qualifying residence' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

This generally requires that an applicant to the EUSS must have been resident in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) before 23:00 GMT on 31 December 2020 (except in the case of a joining family member of a relevant sponsor or of certain family members of a qualifying British citizen) and must not have been absent from the UK and Islands (or, where applicable, the UK) for more than 6 months in total (in a single period of absence or more than one) in any 12-month period, throughout the period of residence relied upon by the applicant.

An exception to this is where the applicant has a single period of absence of more than 6 months but which does not exceed 12 months. Such an absence is permitted where this is for an 'important reason', such as pregnancy, childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training or an overseas posting.

An EEA citizen who has been absent from the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for a single period of up to 12 months because of COVID-19 is also permitted, under this guidance, to rely on that absence as being for an 'important reason' under the definition of 'continuous qualifying period'.

Where this section says "because of COVID-19", it includes where an EEA citizen has been:

- ill with COVID-19
- in quarantine, self-isolating or shielding in accordance with local public health guidance on COVID-19
- caring for a family member affected by COVID-19
- prevented from returning earlier to the UK due to travel disruption caused by COVID-19
- advised by their university that, due to COVID-19, their course was moved to remote learning and they were advised or allowed to return to their home country to study remotely
- advised by their university or employer not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from their home country
- absent from the UK for another reason relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. they left or remained outside the UK because there were fewer COVID-19 restrictions elsewhere; they preferred to work or run a business from

home overseas; or they would have been unemployed in the UK and preferred to rely on support from family or friends overseas

This means that the applicant can rely on any COVID-19 related reason (including where they chose to leave or remain outside the UK because of the pandemic) as being an 'important reason' permitting an absence of up to 12 months.

This is a non-exhaustive list of such reasons and each case must be considered on an individual basis in light of the information and evidence provided by the applicant.

For a non-exhaustive list of examples of relevant evidence, see [additional evidence required](#).

There are a number of other exceptions to the continuous residence requirements, covered within the 'Qualifying residence' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance, but they are not generally relevant to this guidance.

The COVID-19 pandemic may also have resulted in some EEA citizens exceeding the permitted absences outlined above. Where an applicant is seeking to rely on a continuous qualifying period, these absences would break the required continuity of residence, making them ineligible for status under the EUSS where they did not return to the UK before the end of the transition period.

However, where, in line with this guidance, an applicant has been prevented from complying with the continuous qualifying period requirements of Appendix EU due to COVID-19, they will remain eligible for status under the EUSS.

Some of those EEA citizens returning to the UK after exceeding the absence permitted under Appendix EU due to COVID-19 may hold pre-settled status (if the absence has been for no more than 2 consecutive years). This means that they can continue to reside in the UK until this status expires, and they may be eligible for settled status under the EUSS on the basis set out in this guidance (or where they meet the criteria for this which do not require a continuous qualifying period of 5 years).

Where their pre-settled status has lapsed following an absence from the UK of more than 2 consecutive years due to COVID-19, an EEA citizen covered by this guidance can rely on it in applying directly to the EUSS from overseas. This will allow them to be granted status while abroad and then resume their residence in the UK.

Some EEA citizens affected may not yet have applied to the EUSS and this guidance will mean that they will not have broken their continuous qualifying period of residence and will be able to apply by the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications by those who were resident in the UK before the end of the transition period, or after it where there are reasonable grounds why they missed that deadline.

Under Appendix EU applicants are able to seek to rely on alternative evidence of identity and nationality, or of their entitlement to apply from outside the UK, where they are unable to obtain or produce the required document due to circumstances

beyond their control or to compelling practical or compassionate reasons. This applies also where COVID-19 has impacted on their ability to obtain the required document. For more information on how to assess these cases, see [additional evidence required](#).

Delivery of the new policy in relation to continuous qualifying period of residence

In order to remain in the UK after 30 June 2021, EEA citizens who were resident in the UK before the end of the transition period must secure their rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements through a grant of settled status or pre-settled status under Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules. The relevant permitted absences are set out in the definition of 'continuous qualifying period' in Annex 1 to Appendix EU.

As noted above, an EEA citizen who has been absent from the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for a single period of up to 12 months because of COVID-19 is permitted, under this guidance, to rely on that absence as being for an 'important reason' under that definition.

However, Appendix EU does not allow for discretion beyond the definition of 'continuous qualifying period'. The UK Government is therefore producing this guidance, as a concession outside Appendix EU. In accordance with Article 38 of the Withdrawal Agreement (and its equivalent under the other Citizens' Rights Agreements), it replaces the relevant provisions of Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules, and of the associated guidance (see the 'qualifying residence' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance), with the more favourable national provisions set out in this guidance where applicants within the scope of the concession are concerned.

This guidance is intended to be an interim measure until Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules can be amended by a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules to reflect the approach set out here.

Scope of the concession outside Appendix EU

There are three specific instances where an EEA citizen resident in the UK before the end of the transition period may, as a result of COVID-19, be absent from the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for longer than Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules currently permits, and thereby be unable to maintain the continuous qualifying period of residence required to qualify for settled status or pre-settled status. These instances are:

- [EEA citizens who intended to be absent for no more than 6 months, and so would not be required to justify their absence, but who exceed this, and are absent for up to 12 months, because of COVID-19](#)
- [EEA citizens who have been absent for an important reason and whose absence exceeds 12 months because COVID-19 meant that they were](#)

[prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier](#)

- [EEA citizens who have already been absent for up to 12 months for an important reason and now need to be so for a second time, and one of those absences is because of COVID-19](#)

An applicant who falls into one of the above categories will not be subject to the relevant parts of the definition of ‘continuous qualifying period’ in Annex 1 to Appendix EU, which will be disapplied, and instead the specific provisions explained in the relevant section of this guidance will be applied. How you must consider such applications is also set out in the relevant section below.

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[EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules](#)

Absence intended not to exceed 6 months and which did not exceed 12 months

As explained in the previous section, an EEA citizen who has been absent from the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for a single period of up to 12 months because of COVID-19 is permitted, under this guidance, to rely on that absence as being for an 'important reason' under the definition of 'continuous qualifying period' of residence in Annex 1 to Appendix EU.

This section tells you how to consider an application to the EUSS from an EEA citizen who intended to be absent for no more than 6 months (which, under the definition of 'continuous qualifying period', is permitted for any reason), but exceeded this, and was absent for a single period of up to 12 months, because of COVID-19.

Example

An EEA citizen went on holiday for 5 months but was unable to return to the UK within the permitted 6 months due to travel disruption caused by COVID-19. A holiday would not normally be considered an important reason justifying an absence in excess of 6 months, but the absence was only in excess of 6 months because of COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 makes the absence for an important reason and does not break the applicant's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Considering an application

For the purposes of Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules, an absence (for any reason) which then exceeds 6 months because of COVID-19 must be treated as being for an important reason, allowing a single period of absence of up to 12 months before the applicant's continuous qualifying period is broken.

Where this section says "because of COVID-19", it includes, as in the previous section, where an EEA citizen has been:

- ill with COVID-19
- in quarantine, self-isolating or shielding in accordance with local public health guidance on COVID-19
- caring for a family member affected by COVID-19
- prevented from returning earlier to the UK due to travel disruption caused by COVID-19
- advised by their university that, due to COVID-19, their course was moved to remote learning and they were advised or allowed to return to their home country to study remotely
- advised by their university or employer not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from their home country, due to COVID-19

- absent from the UK for another reason relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. they left or remained outside the UK because there were fewer COVID-19 restrictions elsewhere; they preferred to work or run a business from home overseas; or they would have been unemployed in the UK and preferred to rely on support from family or friends overseas

This means that the applicant can rely on any COVID-19 related reason (including where they chose to remain outside the UK because of the pandemic) as being an 'important reason' permitting an absence of up to 12 months.

This is a non-exhaustive list of such reasons and each case must be considered on an individual basis in light of the information and evidence provided by the applicant.

For a non-exhaustive list of examples of relevant evidence, see [additional evidence required](#).

Where you are satisfied that, in line with this guidance, the applicant's continuous qualifying period has not been broken, you must consider the rest of the application in line with the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

Refusing an application

Where you are satisfied that, in line with this guidance, the applicant's continuous qualifying period has been broken, and they are not eligible for the EUSS on an alternative basis, the application must be refused in line with the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

For information on the administrative review and appeal process see [Administrative review and appeal process](#).

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Absence exceeding 12 months

This section tells you how to consider an application to the EUSS from an EEA citizen who has been absent for an 'important reason' but has exceeded the 12-month maximum for a single period of such absence permitted by Appendix EU because COVID-19 meant that they were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier.

The definition of 'important reason' in this context remains the same as explained in the EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members guidance and includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy and childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training or an overseas posting. It also includes where, as set out above, an EEA citizen has been absent because of COVID-19.

Example 1

An EEA citizen was studying in the UK before the end of the transition period, but had not yet applied to the EUSS. They left the UK to return to their home country to study remotely in line with the advice of their university and intended to return to the UK within 12 months. The student is, however, in a group of people identified as being at an increased risk as a result of COVID-19 and, following public health advice, remained overseas while shielding. Their absence therefore exceeded 12 months because COVID-19 prevented their return to the UK earlier. This excess absence does not break the applicant's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Example 2

An EEA citizen, with pre-settled status based on residence in the UK before the end of the transition period, was posted overseas by their company, but was unable to return to the UK within 12 months as originally planned because they were caring for a family member who was ill with COVID-19. Their absence therefore exceeded 12 months because COVID-19 prevented their return to the UK earlier. This excess absence does not break the person's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Example 3

An EEA citizen, resident in the UK before the end of the transition period, had completed 3 years of a continuous qualifying period in the UK, but had not yet applied to the EUSS. She left the UK to give birth to her child in her country of nationality, but she was prevented from returning to the UK within 12 months as originally planned because of travel bans imposed by the country in which she was staying. Her absence therefore exceeded 12 months because COVID-19 prevented her return to the UK earlier. This excess absence does not break the applicant's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Considering an application

The definition of ‘continuous qualifying period’ in Annex 1 to Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules currently permits absence in excess of 12 months during that period where, in particular, the EEA citizen was:

- on compulsory military service
- on a posting on Crown service, or accompanying a person on such a posting
- working in the UK marine area

Any other absence in excess of 12 months would, under that definition, cause the EEA citizen to break their continuous qualifying period of residence.

This provision is disapplied under this guidance where an EEA citizen who has been absent for an ‘important reason’ – whether because of COVID-19, as set out above, or for another important reason – has exceeded the 12-month maximum for a single period of such absence permitted by Appendix EU because COVID-19 meant that they were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier.

This means that an EEA citizen who has been absent for an ‘important reason’ is now able to exceed a single period of absence of up to 12 months and not break their continuous qualifying period of residence where COVID-19 meant that they were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier.

This excess absence will be justified where COVID-19 meant that the person was prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK within 12 months and for a period thereafter, such as where the person was:

- ill with COVID-19
- in quarantine, self-isolating or shielding in accordance with local public health guidance on COVID-19
- caring for a family member affected by COVID-19
- prevented from returning earlier to the UK due to travel disruption caused by COVID-19
- advised by their university or employer not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from their home country, due to COVID-19

This is a non-exhaustive list of such reasons and each case must be considered on an individual basis in light of the information and evidence provided by the applicant.

For a non-exhaustive list of examples of relevant evidence, see [additional evidence required](#).

Where you are satisfied that, in line with this guidance, the applicant’s continuous qualifying period has not been broken, you must consider the rest of the application in line with the ‘EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members’ guidance.

Where an EEA citizen who has been absent for an ‘important reason’ has exceeded the 12-month maximum for a single period of such absence permitted by Appendix EU because COVID-19 meant that they were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier, the period exceeding 12 months will not break the person’s continuous qualifying period of residence. It will not, however, be counted as residence in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for the purposes of the EUSS. Instead, the excess absence will have the effect of pausing the person’s continuous qualifying period of residence from the point their absence reached 12 months, with their continuous qualifying period then resuming from the point they return to the UK.

Further grant of pre-settled status

Where an applicant who holds pre-settled status is absent for a period in excess of 12 months as set out above, that excess absence will not be considered to be residence in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for the purposes of the EUSS, as explained above.

As a result, it may be the case that the EEA citizen needs to apply for another period of pre-settled status (5 years’ limited leave to enter or remain in the UK) before they can complete the continuous qualifying period required for them to be eligible to apply for settled status.

The application process for this further period of pre-settled status will remain as outlined within the [making an application](#) section of this guidance. Appendix EU will be amended by a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules to reflect the approach set out here.

Refusing an application

Where you are satisfied that, in line with this guidance, the applicant’s continuous qualifying period has been broken, and they are not eligible for the EUSS on an alternative basis, the application must be refused in line with the ‘EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members’ guidance.

For information on the administrative review and appeal process see [Administrative review and appeal process](#).

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Second absence of up to 12 months for an important reason

This section tells you how to consider an application to the EUSS from an EEA citizen who has already been absent for a period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and now needs to be absent for a second period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and one of those absences is because of COVID-19.

The definition of 'important reason' in this context remains the same as explained in the EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members guidance and includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy and childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training or an overseas posting. It also includes where, as set out above, an EEA citizen has been absent because of COVID-19.

Either period of absence may exceed the 12-month maximum for a period of absence for an 'important reason' permitted by Appendix EU because COVID-19 meant that they were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier, as set out above. Where this is so, that excess absence will not be counted as residence in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for the purposes of the EUSS, as explained above.

Example 1

An EEA citizen, who was studying in the UK before the end of the transition period, was permitted by their university to return to their country of nationality to continue their studies remotely as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions introduced in the UK. They returned to the UK within 12 months to continue their studies here but, as part of those studies, they are required to undertake a study placement overseas, requiring them to be absent from the UK for a second period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason'. As one of the periods of absence is because of COVID-19, this does not break the person's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Example 2

An EEA citizen, who was resident in the UK before the end of the transition period but had not yet applied to the EUSS, was previously absent for a period of 10 months working on a construction project for his company. After returning to the UK his elderly mother living in another country contracted COVID-19 and required urgent daily care, resulting in the EEA citizen requiring a second period of absence of up to 12 months for an 'important reason' to care for his mother. As one of the periods of absence is because of COVID-19, this does not break the person's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Considering an application

The definition of 'continuous qualifying period' in Annex 1 to Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules currently permits a single period of absence of up to 12 months

for an 'important reason' during that continuous qualifying period. A further such period of absence would, under that definition, cause the EEA citizen to break their continuous qualifying period of residence.

This provision is disapplied under this guidance where an EEA citizen who has already been absent for a period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason' now needs to be absent for a second period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and one of those absences is because of COVID-19.

This means that an EEA citizen who has already been absent for a period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason' can be absent for a second period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason' where one of those absences is because of COVID-19, and this will not break their continuous qualifying period of residence.

Where this section says "because of COVID-19", it includes where an EEA citizen has been:

- ill with COVID-19
- in quarantine, self-isolating or shielding in accordance with local public health guidance on COVID-19
- caring for a family member affected by COVID-19
- prevented from returning earlier to the UK due to travel disruption caused by COVID-19
- advised by their university that, due to COVID-19, their course was moved to remote learning and they were advised or allowed to return to their home country to study remotely
- advised by their university or employer not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from their home country, due to COVID-19
- absent from the UK for another reason relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. they left or remained outside the UK because there were fewer COVID-19 restrictions elsewhere; they preferred to work or run a business from home overseas; or they would have been unemployed in the UK and preferred to rely on support from family or friends overseas

This is a non-exhaustive list of such reasons and each case must be considered on an individual basis in light of the information and evidence provided by the applicant.

For a non-exhaustive list of examples of relevant evidence, see [additional evidence required](#).

Where you are satisfied that, in line with this guidance, the applicant's continuous qualifying period has not been broken, you must consider the rest of the application in line with the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

Calculating the continuous qualifying period after a second period of absence for an important reason

Where an EEA citizen has already been absent for a period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and now needs to be absent for a second period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and one of those absences is because of COVID-19, the second period of absence will not break the person's continuous qualifying period of residence.

Up to the first 6 months of the second period of absence will be counted as residence in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for the purposes of the EUSS, where the period counted does not mean that the person has been absent for more than 6 months in any 12-month period.

The absence beyond that will not be counted as residence in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for the purposes of the EUSS. The person's continuous qualifying period of residence will be paused from the point the second period of absence for an 'important reason' reached 6 months (or the point at which they had been absent for more than 6 months in any 12-month period), with their continuous qualifying period then resuming from the point they return to the UK.

Further grant of pre-settled status

Where an applicant who holds pre-settled status has already been absent for a period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and now needs to be absent for a second period of up to 12 months for an 'important reason', and one of those absences is because of COVID-19, their absence in that second period beyond a maximum of the first 6 months will not be counted as residence in the UK and Islands (or, where applicable under Appendix EU, the UK) for the purposes of the EUSS, as explained above.

As a result, it may be the case that the EEA citizen needs to apply for another period of pre-settled status (5 years' limited leave to enter or remain in the UK) before they can complete the continuous qualifying period required for them to be eligible to apply for settled status.

The application process for this further period of pre-settled status will remain as outlined within the [making an application](#) section of this guidance. Appendix EU will be amended by a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules to reflect the approach set out here.

Refusing an application

Where you are satisfied that, in line with this guidance, the applicant's continuous qualifying period has been broken, and they are not eligible for the EUSS on an alternative basis, the application must be refused in line with the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

For information on the administrative review and appeal process see [Administrative review and appeal process](#).

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Additional evidence required

In addition to the evidence otherwise required to apply to the EUSS, the applicant will also be required to provide evidence of the length of, and reason for, any absence relating to COVID-19 on which they rely under this guidance.

Examples of acceptable evidence include:

- used travel tickets confirming the dates the applicant left the UK and returned
- confirmation of flight cancellations detailing the dates and times
- doctor's letter confirming the applicant contracted COVID-19
- doctor's letter confirming the applicant was identified as vulnerable and advised to shield
- email or letter confirming the applicant, or a person they were living with, received a positive COVID-19 test result
- official letter confirming the applicant was in COVID-19 quarantine
- doctor's letter confirming the applicant's family member, for whom they have been caring, contracted COVID-19 or was identified as vulnerable and advised to shield
- email or letter confirming the applicant's family member, for whom they have been caring, received a positive COVID-19 test result
- letter from a university advising that, due to COVID-19, their course was moved to remote learning and they were advised or allowed to return to their home country to study remotely
- letter from a university or employer advising the applicant not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from their home country, due to COVID-19
- letter or other evidence from the applicant accounting for their absence for another reason relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. they left or remained outside the UK because there were fewer COVID-19 restrictions elsewhere; they preferred to work or run a business from home overseas; or they would have been unemployed in the UK and preferred to rely on support from family or friends overseas

This list is non-exhaustive, and each case must be considered on a case by case basis. You can exercise discretion in favour of the applicant where appropriate, to minimise administrative burdens, and you must refer to your senior caseworker if you require further advice.

Where you consider the information or evidence provided by the applicant is insufficient to allow you to decide the application, you must follow the usual process for contacting the applicant so they can provide further information or evidence before you decide the application: see the 'Consideration of applications: eligibility' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

You can require that an applicant submit the original document(s) where you have reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of the copy submitted.

For information on the other evidence of residence required to complete the application process, see the 'Evidence of residence' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

If the applicant needs to provide alternative evidence of identity and nationality or of entitlement to apply from outside the UK

In line with Appendix EU, an applicant is able to seek to rely on alternative evidence of identity and nationality, or (if they are applying from outside the UK) of entitlement to apply from outside the UK, if they are unable to obtain or produce a passport or national identity card due to circumstances beyond their control, or to compelling practical or compassionate reasons, arising, in either case, from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, the closure of, or inability to travel to, an embassy or high commission may have prevented an applicant from renewing their passport or national identity card, or may have meant they could not finalise an application for a new document. These may be acceptable reasons to provide alternative evidence of identity and nationality or of entitlement to apply from outside the UK.

Each case must be considered on an individual basis.

The applicant will also need to provide alternative evidence of their identity and nationality or of their entitlement to apply from outside the UK. This can include:

- a document previously issued by the Home Office
- an expired passport or national identity card
- an official document issued by the authorities of the applicant's country of origin or of the UK which confirms their identity and nationality

A paper application form is available if they need to provide alternative evidence of their identity and nationality or of their entitlement to apply from outside the UK.

The applicant can request a paper application form by contacting the EU Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC). They will be asked to explain why they need one when they contact the SRC and can discuss other elements of their case, including any scenarios outlined within this guidance, at the same time.

Further details are in the 'Alternative evidence of identity and nationality or of entitlement to apply from outside the UK' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance.

Related content

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[Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules](#)

Administrative review and appeal process

Anyone who makes a valid application under Appendix EU which is refused or is granted pre-settled status (limited leave to enter or remain), will be able to challenge the decision by administrative review and/or (depending on the date of application) by appeal.

Please see the 'Administrative review and Appeals' section of the 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' guidance for more information.

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