



Home Office

Electronic Travel Authorisation

Version 4.0

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About this guidance

The guidance tells you about applications for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

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 ETA Policy.

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 **4.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **4 April 2024**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Changes since the last version of this guidance include:

- updates to previous breach of immigration laws suitability, to define an overstay
- updates to ETA: staged rollout, to update rollout details

Related content

[Contents](#)

Purpose of guidance

This guidance is for decision makers who are responsible for considering applications for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) where either the applicant's identity cannot be satisfactorily established automatically or where potentially adverse information regarding a customer's suitability for an ETA is identified.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Relevant legislation and legal framework

Nationality and Borders Act 2022

Section 75 of the [Nationality and Borders Act 2022](#) provides the legal basis for the Secretary of State to require individuals of a description specified in the Immigration Rules (including those who do not need a visa, entry clearance or other specified immigration status) to obtain permission to travel, in the form of an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), in advance of their journey to the UK.

Immigration Rules

The detailed provisions relating to the processing of ETA applications are set out under Appendix: Electronic Travel Authorisation of the [Immigration Rules](#).

Related content

[Contents](#)

Introduction

This page tells you what is meant by the term Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

What is an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)?

An ETA is an advance travel permission required by specified non-visa nationals when coming to the UK as a visitor or transiting the UK, or as a Creative Worker seeking entry to the UK pursuant to paragraph [Appendix Temporary Work - Creative Worker at CRV 3.2](#).

Each traveller must get their own ETA, including children and babies.

An ETA provides an individual with permission to travel to the UK. It is not permission to enter the UK and the holder of an ETA will need to obtain permission to enter on arrival in the UK.

The requirement is applicable to all routes and modes of entry into the UK, including those coming through the juxtaposed controls or travelling via the Common Travel Area (CTA).

Who does not need an ETA

An ETA is not required for individuals who are one of the following:

- British citizens
- Irish citizens (except those that require permission to come to the UK as they are subject to a deportation order, exclusion order decision, or an international travel ban)
- a British Overseas Territory Citizen (BOTC) travelling on a BOTC passport
- a person with entry clearance or permission to enter or stay in the UK, including those who are settled
- a person who is exempt from immigration control

Third country non-visa nationals lawfully resident in Ireland and travelling to the UK to visit from elsewhere in the CTA also do not require an ETA.

For more information see:

- [Exemptions for visa applications](#)
- Electronic Travel Authorisation – Irish resident exemption

ETA: staged rollout

The ETA scheme will be implemented in a phased manner on the basis of nationality.

An ETA is required by specified non-visa nationals in advance of travel to the UK.

The application process opened on 25 October 2023 for Qatari nationals, who intend to travel to the UK on or after 15 November 2023.

The ETA application process then opened on 1 February 2024, for nationals of Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia only, who intend to travel to the UK on or after 22 February 2024.

The ETA requirement will be rolled out to other non-visa nationalities by their addition to the [Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation](#), and will continue throughout 2024.

ETA application process

The processing of an ETA application is designed to be automated insofar as possible, and most applicants will have their ETA granted within three working days of submitting their application.

Applicants must complete a short application where they need to provide biographic and biometric data (in the form of a facial image), as well as provide answers to a short series of suitability questions.

As a decision maker you will only need to consider applications where either:

- an applicant's identity cannot be satisfactorily established automatically
- potentially adverse information has been identified
- an applicant has self-declared criminality, involvement in war crimes, terrorism or extremism

Where an application is referred to a decision maker for consideration on identity grounds, you will need to determine whether the application meets the identity requirements for an ETA, before a decision is made to accept or reject the application.

An application rejected at the identity verification stage will not be assessed against the suitability requirements for an ETA and the applicant is able to make a new application.

Where an application is referred to a decision maker for consideration due to potentially adverse information identified through Home Office records; or through self-declared criminality and self-declared involvement in war crimes, terrorism or extremism you will need to determine whether the application meets the suitability requirements for an ETA, before a decision is made to grant or refuse the application.

ETA application: withdrawals, variations and amendments

Once an ETA application has been submitted by the applicant, it will not be possible to withdraw, vary or amend this as part of the automated process.

In the exceptions where an application is referred to a decision maker on identity or suitability grounds, this should still be considered, and a decision issued using the information available, regardless of a request to withdraw or amend an application.

Any request made to the Home Office to withdraw or amend an ETA application should be refused.

ETA decision: review and appeals

There is no right to administrative review or appeal against a decision made on an ETA application.

[Article 22\(3\) of the Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) provides applicants with the right to human intervention to review a decision that has been made through a fully automated process. This provision is supplemented by [section 14 of the Data Protection Act 2018](#).

Applicants who have been granted an ETA via a solely automated process will have one calendar month from the date of a grant decision to request a review of this decision by a decision maker. If the Home Office confirm the grant was issued by a fully automated process the decision will be reviewed.

A decision to reject or refuse an application will not be automated. The right to review under Article 22(3) therefore does not apply to any applicants that have been rejected or refused as such decisions will always be made by a human decision maker.

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Validity requirements for Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

This section tells you the validity requirements for an ETA that an applicant must meet.

Where an application meets the validity requirements outlined in ETA 1.1. – 1.2. of the [Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation](#), it is considered valid and will be automatically granted provided there are no suitability concerns.

See: [Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation](#).

Validity: providing biometrics and proving identity

As part of the ETA application process, applicants are required to provide a facial biometric image. An application cannot normally be valid if the applicant has not provided the required biometric information. The powers to require the provision of biometrics as a condition of an ETA application are derived from the Immigration (Provision of Physical Data) Regulations 2006.

See: [The Immigration \(Provision of Physical Data\) Regulations 2006](#).

Related content

Biometric enrolment: policy guidance

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Get a passport photo: Digital photos](#)

[Biometric enrolment: policy guidance](#)

[Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Temporary Work – Creative Worker](#)

Identity exceptions casework

This section tells you about the situations where an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) application will be referred for consideration by a decision maker on identity grounds.

Identity

An applicant must comply with both of the following requirements:

- the applicant must provide, in accordance with the application process, a passport which satisfactorily establishes their identity and nationality
- the applicant must provide a facial image in accordance with the application process and which complies with the rules for digital photos

See: Get a passport photo: Digital photos.

This information will be used to verify the identity of the applicant. Identity referrals will be assigned to a decision maker for review where it has not been possible to automatically verify identity. You must then conduct the relevant identity checks before a decision is made to accept or reject the application.

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Suitability casework

This section tells you how to consider whether an application meets the suitability requirements for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

Assessing suitability

Decisions on an ETA application referred to a decision maker on suitability grounds are identified through information contained in Home Office records; or through self-declared criminality and self-declared involvement in war crimes, terrorism or extremism by an applicant.

Where adverse information is traced or declared, the application will be automatically referred for your consideration. Adverse information must be investigated and then, considered against the suitability requirements to determine whether the policy threshold for refusal has been met before a decision is made to grant or refuse the application.

Related content

[Suitability requirements for an ETA](#)

[Suitability: self-declared details](#)

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Related external links

[Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation](#)

Suitability requirements for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

This section tells you the suitability grounds which an application for an ETA must be assessed against for refusal.

This section provides relevant links to suitability guidance used by decision makers for applications considered under part 9 of the Immigration Rules. Part 9 is separate from the [Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation](#) and does not apply to ETA.

Only the sections of the linked suitability guidance set out in this guidance should be used to support decisions made under the ETA suitability requirements. You **must not** refer to any other section of guidance.

You **must not** apply discretion to any decisions on an ETA application and you **must** make your decision using the information available to you. For the purpose of ETA, refusal is mandatory where the suitability requirements are not met.

See: [Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation](#).

Exclusion or deportation order grounds

An application for an ETA must be refused where either:

- the Secretary of State has personally directed that the applicant be excluded from the UK
- the applicant is the subject of an exclusion order
- the applicant is the subject of a deportation order, or a decision to make a deportation order

See: Suitability- Deportation and Exclusion at the following sections only Introduction and Deportation orders. All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

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Criminality grounds

An application for an ETA must be refused where the applicant either:

- has been convicted of a criminal offence in the UK or overseas for which they have received a custodial sentence of 12 months or more
- has been convicted of a criminal offence in the UK or overseas unless more than 12 months have passed since the date of conviction

Where criminality has been self-declared in the application, you must refer to [self-declared suitability details](#).

See: Grounds for refusal - Criminality at the following sections only Custodial sentences and Non-custodial sentences and out of court disposals. All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

Non-conductive grounds

An application for an ETA must be refused where the applicant's presence in the UK is not conducive to the public good because of their conduct, character, associations or other reasons (including convictions which do not fall within the criminality grounds).

To ensure that decisions made on non-conductive grounds are compliant, you must read the relevant guidance below which outlines what is considered non-conductive.

See: Non conducive at the following section only When is a person's presence in the UK not conducive to the public good? All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

War Crimes, terrorism and extremism

Where an applicant has failed to disclose their involvement in alleged war crimes, terrorism or extremism on an application for ETA, whereby Home Office records contain or indicate information to the contrary, you must refuse the application on non-conductive grounds, rather than on grounds of false representation or failure to disclose relevant facts.

See: Non conducive at the following section only When is a person's presence in the UK not conducive to the public good? All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

Previous breach of immigration laws grounds

An application for an ETA must be refused if, when they were aged 18 or over, the applicant either:

- overstayed their permission unless:
 - the Home Office holds a record that permission was subsequently granted with knowledge of the overstaying
 - the person left the UK voluntarily, not at the expense (directly or indirectly) of the Secretary of State

- the person overstayed for 90 days or less, where the overstaying began before 6 April 2017
- the person overstayed for 30 days or less, where the overstaying began on or after 6 April 2017
- paragraph 39E applies to the period of overstaying
- breached a condition attached to their permission, unless entry clearance or further permission was subsequently granted with knowledge of the breach
- were (or still are) an illegal entrant
- used deception in relation to an immigration application (whether or not successfully)

See: Suitability: previous breach of immigration laws at the What is a breach of immigration laws? section only. All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

False representations, etc grounds

An application for an ETA must be refused where in relation to the current or a previous ETA application either:

- false representations were made, or false documents or false information was submitted (whether or not relevant to the application, and whether or not to the applicant's knowledge)
- relevant facts were not disclosed

See: Suitability: false representations, deception, false documents, non-disclosure of relevant facts at the following sections only Mistakes and Meanings of terms used in this guidance. All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

Unpaid litigation costs grounds

An application for an ETA must be refused where the applicant has failed to pay litigation costs awarded to the Home Office.

See: Suitability unpaid litigation costs at the following sections only What is litigation debt? and How to check if a person owes a litigation debt. All other sections of this guidance must not be used for the purpose of ETA applications.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Conductive Deportation](#)

[Suitability: Deportation and Exclusion](#)

[Grounds for refusal - Criminality](#)

[Suitability: non-conductive grounds for refusal](#)

[Suitability: previous breach of UK immigration laws](#)

[Suitability guidance: false representations, deception, false documents, non-disclosure of relevant facts](#)
[Suitability unpaid litigation costs](#)

Self-declared suitability details

This section tells you how to consider whether an application meets the suitability requirements for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) where an applicant self-declares criminality or involvement in war crime, terrorism or extremism.

Self-declared criminality

As part of the ETA application process, applicants are required to disclose any criminal convictions. This is mandatory and an application cannot proceed without the applicant completing a self-declaration and providing the following information, if applicable:

- nature of conviction
- date of conviction
- country of conviction
- type of sentence, (custodial / suspended)
- length of sentence

For convictions overseas which meet the criteria set out in the Criminality grounds under rule ETA 2.2.(a) and (b) of the Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation and have a direct equivalent in UK criminal law, you must refuse the application. This applies regardless of age.

See: [Criminality grounds](#).

The nature of an overseas conviction must be taken into consideration, rather than the title of the conviction alone, when assessing if a conviction is a direct equivalent in UK criminal law.

This application of the rules is distinct from overseas convictions which are not recognised as an offence in the UK.

Overseas convictions and offences not recognised in the UK

Where an applicant declares a conviction for an offence that is not recognised in the UK, you should not refuse the application solely on the basis of that conviction.

This may include an overseas conviction for homosexuality, or membership of a trade union. These convictions are intended for indicative purposes only. There are a number of activities which may be considered a criminal offence elsewhere, but which are not in the UK.

Any self-declared convictions that are not comparable to a domestic equivalent will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the specific nature of the 'offence or offences' for which penalties have been imposed by foreign judiciaries as to whether you consider it appropriate to disregard as part of the decision-making process to grant or refuse an ETA application.

For the purposes of decision-making, parking offences or parking misdemeanours are not considered grounds for refusal and therefore you must **not** refuse an application solely on this basis.

If you are unsure if a conviction abroad is recognised as an offence in the UK, you should consult your supervisor.

Self-declared involvement in War Crimes, terrorism, or extremism

As part of the ETA application process, applicants are required to disclose involvement or suspected involvement with any of the following:

- war crimes
- terrorism
- extremist organisations

This is mandatory and an application cannot proceed without the applicant providing this information.

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Related content

Suitability: non-conductive grounds for refusal

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Related external links

[Suitability: non-conductive grounds for refusal](#)

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Stolen or lost documents

A stolen or lost travel document (SLTD), which has been reported should be cancelled by the relevant authority and is therefore not a valid travel document.

Where it is identified that an application for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) has been made using a passport or identity document that has been reported stolen or lost by the holder then the application must be rejected. The applicant may reapply for an ETA using a valid document.

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