



Home Office

UKVI Identity Standards

Version 2.0

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About this guidance

This guidance tells you about the identity requirements which must be met by a person during their immigration and citizenship journey.

This guidance is for:

- Immigration, nationality and asylum decision makers and caseworkers
- Entry Clearance Decision Makers (ECDM), also referred to as Entry Clearance Officers (ECO)
- any official making a decision on behalf of the Secretary of State

The identity requirements described in this guidance do not apply to British citizens or to other British nationals by descent.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you, or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Identity Security Team.

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

Publication

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

- version **2.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **20 December 2024**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Version 1 was published for a brief time on the 19 December 2024. Version 2 contains minor housekeeping changes.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Introduction

The Home Office is committed to maintain effective immigration control to ensure the UK border, and within the UK, remain secure. This means that, when the Home Office needs to be assured of a person's identity, it can be established to a satisfactory standard. This guidance helps you to evaluate the evidence of identity provided by people interacting with the migration and borders system by carrying out appropriate and effective checks on the evidence.

It is important to establish and fix the identity of people who seek to enter the UK, obtain an immigration status in the UK and may want to go on to become British citizens. It is essential that you can undertake accurate background suitability checks to understand whether the person may pose a threat to border and national security or is likely to breach our immigration and criminal laws.

This guidance will cover the steps required to establish an identity. It also covers the steps required to establish the identity of a person who has the legal authority to act on behalf of a person or who acts as the responsible adult for a child. It will cover what evidence is required to satisfy you of an asserted identity and explains where the requirements to present different evidence may occur. This guidance will also cover the steps you should take to ensure a document is genuine and what steps to take if there are issues with an identity.

Ordinarily, most people will be able to satisfy you about their identity when they present a valid passport or travel document and are checked against biometric information held either by the Home Office and / or against their passport / travel document.

Related content

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Identity and standard of proof

This section explains to you what an identity is and about the standards that need to be met before you can assure a person's identity.

What is an identity

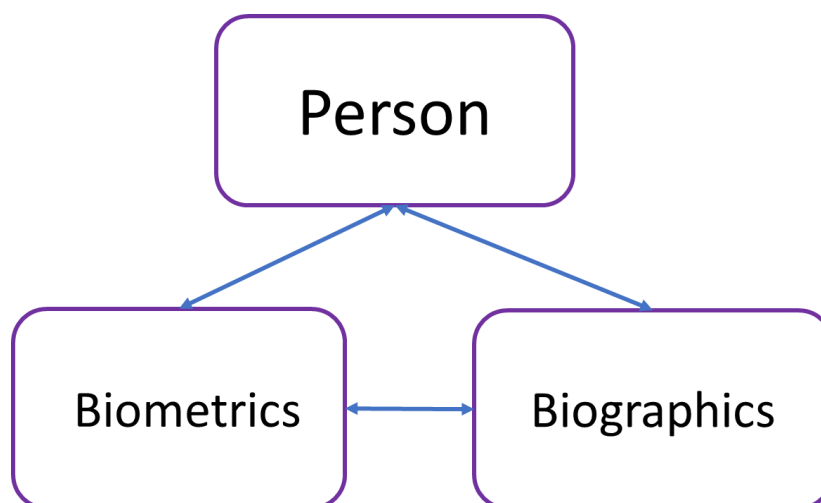
An identity is biographic and biometric information that, together, uniquely identifies a person. Biographic information relates to events of a person's life such as name, date of birth, place of birth, sex marker and nationality. Biometric information is about a person's external physical characteristics, such as their fingerprints and facial photograph. A person's biometric information which is relevant for the purpose of this guidance is facial photograph and photograph and fingerprints. The identity is established through fixing a person's biographic data to their biometric information. The identity is then used by the Home Office to match and verify the person each time they interact with the migration and borders system.

The identity of people who act on behalf of others during the immigration journey, such as responsible adults also need to be established. This is to enable us to complete accurate background checks and safeguard vulnerable people.

The standard required

It is the responsibility of the person to satisfy you about their identity. This is because we need accurate information about a person's identity to undertake accurate suitability checks to protect the border and national security and to consider whether the person is likely to commit crime or breach our immigration laws.

An identity should link a person to their biometrics and biographical details. All 3 elements are essential to be satisfied about a person's identity.



Essential requirements

Ordinarily, to satisfy you about their identity they need to demonstrate that:

- the identity exists and belongs to them
- they are a live person
- they can directly link their biographical information to them, for example by producing a valid passport that contains a facial photograph that resembles them.
- any documentary evidence they use to support their biographical information is validated against trusted sources

When considering whether the claimed identity is likely to be genuine, you must:

- complete all available and appropriate checks on the person and their documents accurately, including satisfying yourself that the tri-scan images of a passport or travel document show it to be genuine and that the document has not been reported lost or stolen
- in circumstances where you accept the person cannot provide a valid passport or a travel document, you must be satisfied the evidence provided is genuine, was properly issued, has not been reported as lost or stolen and can be directly linked to the person
- ensure there are no contra-indicators, such as conflicting dates of birth or different spelling of names that might undermine the claimed identity

The standard for predetermined applications

Where a person is requesting for their entry clearance application to be predetermined, they do not need to satisfy you about their identity to the same standard, unless they obtain a positive predetermination and decide to complete their application by attending a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to enrol their biometrics overseas. This is because the role of a predetermination is to enable a person to risk assess whether to make an unsafe journey to a VAC to enrol their biometrics.

For guidance on predetermining applications overseas see: Biometric enrolment guidance - unsafe journeys.

Related content

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Biometric information: enrolment

Application for entry clearance or immigration permission

Ordinarily, a person must produce a valid passport or travel document when making an application for entry clearance to enable them to establish their identity to a satisfactory standard. In most circumstances, where a person is making a non-protection type of application, they are expected to produce a valid passport or other travel document.

Alternative acceptable documents

Where the person has satisfactory reasons for being unable to produce a valid passport or travel document, they may produce a combination of one or more of the following documents:

- an expired passport or travel document, where the facial image resembles the person
- a biometric residence permit or card, including one that is within 18 months from the card's expiry date, so long as the facial image resembles the person
- a document issued by a national governmental organisation, such as a national identity card that contains the holder's facial photograph, name and date of birth
- other forms of national or local governmental issued identification documentation alongside a document that contains a recent facial photograph and matching biographical information, such as a photo driving licence
- DNA evidence obtained in accordance to the DNA Policy guidance that proves a direct familial link the person has to a person who is living in the UK who holds a UK passport, a valid eVisa or a biometric residence permit or card, which can be expired so long as the person in the UK resembles the photograph on the document

The list above is not exhaustive. Corroborative evidence may also be submitted, examples are:

- 2 different types of living documents, such as a recent utility bill, a doctor's letter or birth certificate which contain matching biographical details
- a document that contains a recent facial photograph and matching biographical information, such as a photo driving licence

Types of applications where a person may not have a valid passport or travel document

The circumstances where the person is more likely to have a reasonable explanation for not having a valid passport or travel document, is when they are making a protection related application. People making an application under the following circumstances are more likely to claim they are unable to produce a valid passport or travel document. These include:

- people applying under specialist ‘crisis’ routes, for example, Ukraine Schemes
- applying to come to the UK under a recognised resettlement route
- applying to come to the UK under the family reunion route or child of a non-parent relative
- applying to join family members in the UK on the basis of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- a person seeking permission to enter the UK outside the Immigration Rules
- a person seeking permission to enter the UK under special arrangements
- a person returning to the UK to comply with a court order
- a person using documents which have been accepted by the UK government as being valid beyond the expiry date.
- a person making emergency travel when their own governments are unable to provide a valid passport, which can include where a country has made formal extensions to their travel documents that the UK has not recognised
- Inadequately documented asylum seekers
- [EU Settlement Scheme](#)
- Family reunion – further leave
- Refugees extending their stay
- Citizenship / Nationality applications
- victims of trafficking
- domestic violence cases
- unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- vulnerable witnesses
- unable to obtain a new passport because the person’s consulate is unavailable in the UK or Ireland
- stateless person
- an application made by a child who is in care in the UK

The above list is not exhaustive, and the person will still need to provide a reasonable explanation for why they cannot produce a valid passport or travel document.

Reasonable explanation

A person may have a reasonable explanation for being unable to provide a valid passport or travel document. Typical scenarios include:

- the passport, national identity card, BRP or travel document is held by the Home Office at the date of application
- the passport, national identity card or travel document has been permanently lost or stolen and there is no functioning national government to issue a replacement
- the passport, national identity card or travel document has been permanently lost or stolen and they claim to be at risk of persecution from the national authorities and it is not reasonable for them to seek a replacement

- the passport, national identity card or travel document has been retained by an employer or other person and the person cannot reasonably retrieve it or obtain a replacement
- the BRP has been lost or stolen, and the person is unable to create a UKVI account or and has a reasonable explanation for not holding a valid passport or travel document
- the person has changed name or gender in line with the UK's policy and meets one of the exception criteria for not obtaining a new passport that reflects their new identity: Change of name guidance for official documents
- the person provides a good reason why they cannot provide proof of their identity and it is beyond their control for being unable to do so
- the person is returning to the UK to comply with a court order
- the passport, national identity card, BRP or travel document is held by another government department or agency such as DVLA
- the passport is being held by other countries, for example, delayed passport renewals
- the person is vulnerable through age or significant disability and has been in the UK for several years without leaving and applying for settlement and has reasonable explanation for not having a valid passport
- the person wants to make emergency travel arrangements and they have made reasonable efforts to obtain replacement documentation
- the person is seeking immigration permission under special arrangements and have a reasonable explanation for not holding a valid passport or travel document

You **must not** accept the explanation at face value, and you must undertake checks to confirm the person's explanation. Where a person claims their passport is with the Home Office or another Government Department or Agency, you **must** check with the part of the Home Office holding the document or the other Government Department or Agency and asked them to confirm whether they are satisfied that the document is authentic and belongs to the person.

Where a person claims they cannot obtain a valid passport or travel document, you **must** consult a range of data sources, which may include Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), open-source information, foreign government assessments and other government departments when considering the person's explanation. There may be other circumstances whereby a person will be issued with entry clearance without a passport or travel document per the approval of an Entry Clearance Manager or a Regional Operations Manager

You **must** confirm the person does not have a passport or travel document and the reasons for this before considering accepting any other documents. You must establish the alternative types of identification documents the person holds instead of a passport.

Where you intend to accept alternative documents, you must refer those cases to a Technical Specialist for approval.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Outside the Immigration Rules](#)

[Family reunion – further leave](#)

[Change of name guidance for official documents](#)

Document and biographic checks

Staff at the Visa Application Centre (VAC), UK Visa & Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) centre or the Service and Support Centre (SSC) will physically examine passports or travel documents when a person attends to enrol their biometrics. They will scan the document using the Tri-Scan system and will flag any concerns they have to you about the document. However, they will not stop the person from completing the biometric enrolment process.

You **must** still check:

- whether the person resembles the facial photograph on the document
- tri-scan images of the document recorded at the biometric enrolment event and satisfy yourself that the passport or travel document is genuine
- whether other evidence is genuine, has been properly issued and relates to the person
- whether the document has been reported lost or stolen

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Other identity evidence

You may use information obtained from an interview with a person, which can include information obtained during an asylum screening interview, to help determine whether you are satisfied about a claimed identity. You can check what the person stated against records UKVI already holds on the person or other sources of information about a country.

You may need to conduct an age assessment where a person has claimed an age or date of birth that you believe to be false, such as they:

- claim to be a child but are suspected to be an adult
- claim to be an adult but are suspected to be a child
- are suspected to be a child but a different age than claimed

For guidance on making a decision on age in these circumstances refer to the Age Assessment guidance.

Where a person provides other documentary evidence that you cannot validate, you must not disregard it but weigh it up when considering any other evidence provided.

Related content

[Contents](#)

NDFU forgery guides

Validation, variation and withdrawal of applications

Country policy and information

Impostor detection

Identity checks and biometrics

Assessing age

Enrolling biometrics

In most circumstances people making applications for immigration permission will need to enrol their biometrics as part of the process for checking and fixing their identity. Guidance on enrolling biometrics is found at [Biometric information: enrolment](#).

You must ensure people provide facial photographs of an acceptable standard as they can be used to support Bio-Reuse and quality facial matching on future applications as well as helping to safeguard children in the UK. For more detailed information on photo standards refer to the [photo standards guidance](#).

Where a child who is aged under 16 needs to enrol their biometrics, they must be accompanied by a responsible adult who must observe the enrolment. For safeguarding reasons, responsible adults must be nominated on the child's application and produce evidence of their identity (if the application is within the UK) when the child attends a biometric enrolment event. For details on the identity requirements for a responsible adult see: [Responsible adult](#)

Biometric checks are made against a range of databases, including international databases. The information obtained from partners may reveal identities and immigration histories which would not otherwise be known to the Home Office, which may be relevant to further interviews, enquiries and decisions. For further information see: [International biometric data-sharing](#).

You must consider the results of any biometric check to ensure the results match the claimed identity, and where it reveals different biographic details, consider any reasonable explanation provided for the difference in information, such as where a family name has changed following marriage.

Responsible adult

A responsible adult is someone aged over 18 who accompanies a child when they are enrolling their biometric data. A child's biometrics should not be enrolled without the presence of a responsible adult.

The responsible adult must bring photo ID with them. This must be either a:

- passport or travel document, including an expired document so long as the person resembles the facial image
- UK photo driving licence
- national identity card that contains the facial photograph of the holder, their name and date of birth
- Biometric Residence Permit or Card, including an expired card that is within 18 months from its date of expiry

If the responsible adult is not the parent or legal guardian (for example they are a member of staff from the child's school) they must also bring written proof of responsibility for the child from the child's parent or legal guardian.

Looked after children

An adult who acts as a responsible adult on behalf of a local authority's children's services should produce a photographic document issued by the local authority they represent.

Overseas child students

An adult who acts as a responsible adult on behalf of a school or college should produce a photographic document issued by the school or college.

Legal representative

In some circumstances, and only with the parents/legal guardian's permission, a child can attend a biometric enrolment appointment with a legal representative. The representative must agree and give consent to take on this additional role. You **must** record this in case working systems.

Related content

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Biometric information: enrolment

Photographing

Biometric data-sharing process (Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process)

Identity resolution

This section tells you what to do where you encounter conflicts with a claimed identity.

Multiple identities

You must check there is only one record for a person on the relevant case-management system and you must only record any checks against that record. You must link any previous applications to the current one.

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Fixed identities

People who are already known to the Home Office and have previously enrolled their biometrics following an earlier immigration application or as a result of a previous engagement with Border Force or Immigration Enforcement will have a fixed identity.

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Court or Tribunal confirmed identities

Where a UK Court or Tribunal has determined a person's identity, for example following a court ruling that assess the person's identity such as their age or date of birth, you must use it. Where subsequent new evidence is presented that clearly shows the Court's or Tribunal's decision was based on false information, you must reconsider the matter and where you suspect deception was used to obtain status you must consider referring the case to the Status Review Unit (SRU).

Related content

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Biometric Information: Introduction
Status Review Unit (SRU)