



Urgent government business or compassionate reasons: processing the application

Version 7.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to process passport applications for customers who urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons

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About, Urgent government business or compassionate reasons: processing the application

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to process applications for:

- urgent government business
- compassionate reasons

If a customer urgently needs a passport for other reasons (for example, they have booked a last minute holiday), they may be able to:

- apply using the Premium Service or the Fast Track service (if they have not already applied for a passport)
- have a standard upgrade (if they have already applied for a passport and we are currently offering these services)

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 Guidance 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 team.

Publication

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

- version **7.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **4 February 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to remove reference to the Expedited service as this is no longer available.

Related content

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How to examine an urgent government business or compassionate application

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to process applications submitted by a customer who meets the urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) criteria.

When the customer's urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) application is identified by the Digital Application Processing (DAP) system, DAP will:

- run initial checks on the application
- hold the application until the customer attends their counter appointment
 - a customer must attend the counter appointment if they have already applied, or have no documents to bring in because they must collect the passport when it is printed

DAP can identify the application if:

- the customer has applied using a magic link; or,
- the Customer Service Management team (CSMT) have selected on DAP the option, **needs passport urgently – changed application to urgent and compassionate**

DAP will set a 4 hour due date for the passport to be issued after the customer attends the counter appointment.

The customer must go to the counter receptionist, to collect a ticket, when they arrive at the Customer Service Centre (CSC) for their appointment. This is because the appointment is arranged over the phone and an application has already been submitted.

When the customer has been checked in, the counter examiner dealing with the appointment must:

1. Call the customer to the counter window (using Qmatic).
2. Access DAP and use the application search screen to find the customer's application.

DAP will provide the counter examiner with a list of tasks outstanding on the customer's application, including:

- a **Review the application and record attendance** task
- a **Check passport number and add documents** task
- any examination tasks, specific to the application

You must complete each of these tasks in line with the relevant guidance.

U&C: Third party attending the counter appointment

A third party may attend the counter appointment for an application, for example, the child's parents have already travelled, and the child is with a grandparent or other guardian. In these circumstances, a letter of authorisation is required, and you must follow, if the passport is for:

- an adult, the Counter collections guidance
- a child, the Urgent government business or compassionate child applications

Duplicate applications

When the customer attends their counter appointment, if you identify they have more than 1 application (a duplicate), you must follow the Duplicate applications guidance.

You must check DAP for duplicate applications before dealing with the customer's application.

You must tell the customer we cannot start the application until the duplicate application is withdrawn.

Damaged passports

If you are dealing with an application to replace a damaged passport, you must follow the Damaged passports guidance.

If the damaged passports guidance tells you to send the customer's passport to confidential waste, you must:

1. Ignore the instruction on DAP to clip and return the passport at the end of the application process.
2. Send the damaged passport to confidential waste in line with the guidance.
3. Add a case note to confirm you are sending the damaged passport to confidential waste.

DAP will display the instruction to clip and return the previous passport on all applications, as it is unable to identify whether the passport can be returned to the customer or if it needs to be sent to confidential waste (for example, due to the type of damage).

Faulty passports

If the customer tells you their passport is faulty, you must follow the faulty passports guidance.

Lost or stolen passports

If the customer is replacing a lost or stolen passport, you must ask the customer if they have reported their passport as lost or stolen using [GOV.UK](#). If the customer has not already done this, you must tell the customer to complete the online report themselves during the appointment using [GOV.UK](#). If it is a third party attending the appointment, you must tell them to contact the customer to complete the online report because their application cannot continue until this happens.

If the customer cannot be contacted, the appointment must be rearranged.

You must:

- follow the LSR: replacing lost, stolen and recovered passports guidance if you are examining a replacement application for a lost or stolen passport
- deal with as much of the application as you can during the counter appointment booking slot and send any recovered passports internally to the LSR team in Peterborough

Additional passport

If the customer is applying for their first additional passport or renew or replacing their existing additional passport, you must:

1. Check they meet the criteria to still hold an additional passport.
2. Ask the customer if they have brought acceptable evidence for an additional passport (for example, a letter from their employer).

You must continue with the appointment if the customer has brought acceptable evidence for an additional passport.

If the customer has not brought acceptable evidence for an additional passport, you must tell the customer:

- you cannot continue with their appointment, and you will need to rebook it so they can provide the evidence
- they need to bring us:
 - acceptable, original evidence for an additional passport (for example, a letter from their employer)
 - all current British passports they hold (the customer must bring a colour copy of their passports including all visa pages to the appointment, if the passport is unavailable)

Additional passports: customer does not meet the criteria for U&C

Where the customer does not meet the criteria for a U&C application (for example, because they applied for their first additional passport), you must:

1. Tell the customer:
 - the U&C service is not available and why (for example, because they have applied for their first additional passport or because they are unable to provide evidence of the need for an additional passport)
 - we can no longer offer a 1 day service level agreement (SLA), their application will now continue under a 1 week SLA, with their new passport printed centrally and posted to them
2. Check the customer has provided documentation to confirm:
 - identity
 - nationality
 - parental responsibility (if required)
3. Add a case note to tell the national queue examiner:
 - what type of application the customer is applying for (for example, a first time additional passport application)
 - why you are sending the application to the national queue
 - what tasks you have completed
 - which documents have been sent to DHU
4. Select the **I cannot complete this appointment** option, on DAP.
5. Select the reason **I need to send this priority application to the Exceptions Handling Team to print the passport locally.**
6. Add a case note to show all actions taken and decisions made.
7. [Retain the customer's documents.](#)
8. End the appointment.

The application will be sent to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) to be processed.

You must not deal with any other examination tasks on the application as these will be processed by an EHT examiner.

Customer is overseas

The U&C service can only be used if the customer:

- is in the UK at the time their application is made
- provides a UK address
- will remain in the UK until the passport is issued (and delivered)

The U&C service is not available to overseas customers.

We will accept applications from customers usually resident in the UK, who have applied for an additional passport and they inform us they will not be in the UK for the duration of their application. For example, if the customer has asked a third party to attend the counter appointment on their behalf, because they are travelling overseas for work purposes.

If the customer lives overseas but they will be in the UK for the duration of their U&C application, we can continue to deal with their application using the U&C service. The customer must be present in the UK from the application being submitted to the new passport being issued to be eligible to use the U&C service.

We will withdraw the customer's application if we discover during processing, the customer has not applied for an additional passport and:

- was not in the UK when they applied for the passport
- will not be in the UK when the passport is issued

If the customer is overseas and they have not applied for an additional passport, you must:

1. Tell the customer:
 - you are unable to continue with their application as a U&C application
 - their current application must be withdrawn
 - the customer will need to make a standard overseas application when their application has been withdrawn
2. Select the **I cannot complete this appointment option**, on DAP.
3. Select the reason **I need to send this priority application to the Exceptions Handling Team to print the passport locally**.
4. Add a case note to show all actions taken and decisions made.
5. Retain the customer's documents.
6. End the appointment.

The application will be sent to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT), where the application will be withdrawn and the customer can reapply.

Braille stickers

Where the customer has completed a U&C application and they have asked for a braille sticker to be added to their new passport after the application has been submitted, you must deal with the application in line with the Braille stickers guidance.

If the customer requested the braille sticker at the time of their application, you can continue with the customer's counter appointment and examine the application in line with guidance. DAP will:

- not create a braille sticker task
- automatically identify the applications where the customer has confirmed they need a braille sticker and send these to Local Print when the application has been approved

Overlap passports

Where a customer needs to regularly travel across international borders to work, they will be required to keep their current passport during the renewal process. For example, the customer may need to travel as part of their job.

The customer may not be eligible for an additional passport; however, we can consider issuing a second passport to overlap with their current passport. These are

referred to as overlap passports and are usually issued with a maximum validity period of 3 months.

In line with the guidance for overlap passports, the customer would only be eligible for an overlap passport if they did not meet the criteria for our priority services (Fast Track, Premium service or U&C).

If the customer has applied for an overlap passport using the U&C service, the application must be transferred to the EHT to be processed (because they are able to process the application without cancelling the old passport).

You must:

1. Tell the customer their:
 - application will no longer be dealt with in line with the U&C service level agreement (1 day)
 - new passport will be printed centrally and posted to them using secure delivery
2. Take a photocopy of every page of the customer's current valid British passport, including all of the visa pages.
3. Return the current British passport to the customer.
4. Retain any evidence provided by the customer to prove they require an overlap passport and send it to the DHU along with the photocopy of the current passport.
5. [Transfer the application to the EHT](#).

Non-British citizen customers

If the customer has applied using the U&C service but you identify they are a non-British citizen (excluding customers who hold British National Overseas (BNO) nationality status), you must:

1. Follow the relevant nationality guidance to complete the **Change of British nationality** task on the application.
2. Continue to deal with the application in line with guidance.

Incorrect person has applied

If you, the counter examiner, identify that an incorrect person has made an application (for example a parent has applied on behalf of an adult over the age of 16), you must transfer the application to the EHT.

To do this, you must:

1. Tell the customer their application will no longer be dealt with in line with the U&C service level agreement (1 day).
2. Retain the documents provided by the customer.
3. [Transfer the application to the EHT](#).

Incorrect date of birth on application

The U&C service will only accept applications from adults applying to renew their passport.

If you, the counter examiner, identify that a customer has provided an incorrect date of birth and this changes the application type from an adult to child application, you must transfer the application to the EHT.

To do this, you must:

1. Tell the customer their application will no longer be dealt with in line with the U&C service level agreement (1 day).
2. Retain the documents provided by the customer.
3. [Transfer the application to the EHT](#).

Paper application: no photo provided

You may identify that a customer has not provided a photo on their application, if they:

- applied using a paper form (for a standard application); and,
- have since met the criteria for the U&C service

DAP does not have the functionality to ask the customer to provide a new photo, if they have applied using a paper application form.

If you need to ask the customer to provide a new photo because they have not provided one with their original application form, you must:

3. Tell the customer:
 - their current application must be withdrawn
 - the customer will need to reapply and provide a photo with their new application
4. Withdraw the customer's application at the counter.
5. Arrange for the customer to be refunded for their original application.

When the customer has submitted their new application containing a photo, this can be examined in line with guidance.

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U&C applications: examination tasks

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to deal with examination tasks on an urgent government business or compassionate application.

When you have completed the **Check passport number and add documents** task, the next task showing will be the **Examination** task.

The **Examination** task will contain a list of all tasks that require completion as you are dealing with the application. These can vary depending on the application.

To deal with the **Examination** task, you must:

1. Select the **Examination** task from the list of outstanding tasks.
2. Work through each examination task on the list, in line with the guidance for the specific task.
3. Return to the DAP to do list when you have dealt with the outstanding examination tasks.

When all outstanding examination tasks are complete, the **Examination** task will now show as completed on DAP.

You must record the progress and outcomes of each application on the urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) SharePoint tracker.

Urgent and compassionate task

If an application is identified as an urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) application, DAP will create an **Urgent and compassionate** task. To deal with this task, you must:

1. Check the application has the correct evidence to confirm the customer needs the passport for U&C reasons.
2. Decide if you can:
 - clear the task
 - ask for documents
 - ask for a referee
 - withdraw application
 - delay decision on this task
 - refer to investigation
3. Add a case note to show the actions and decisions you made (you must add a mandatory case note if you are [ready to issue a passport](#)).
4. Complete the task.

Child applications

If you are dealing with a child application, you can continue to deal with the application if:

- there is approval from a higher executive office (HEO) when the application has been with us for less than 5 working days; and,
- we have the correct consent evidence from the person with parental responsibility, confirming they are aware of the request for a passport for urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) reasons to the appointment; and,
- there is no fraud, safeguarding or vulnerability concerns with the application

Child born abroad DAP task

If you are dealing with a child's application at the counter and the application is showing a **Child born abroad** DAP task, you must add a case note to the application to confirm whether the child attended the appointment or not.

You must follow recording documents on the application, if the customer has provided the documents you need to deal with the **Child born abroad** task (for example, a British or foreign passport).

Review 5 day hold on child applications task

On all child applications, DAP will show the task **Review 5 day hold on child application**. To deal with this task, you must:

1. Look to see if customer needs their passport before the 5 day hold expires.
2. Check the application has:
 - the correct consent evidence from the person with parental responsibility to issue the passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons
 - no safeguarding or vulnerability concerns that must be resolved before a passport is issued
3. Decide if you can:
 - approve passport to be issued and printed when the safeguarding period ends (this will put the application on hold until day 5)
 - end 5 day hold on child application early and issue the passport to be granted and collected here
4. Add a case note to show the actions and decisions you made.
5. Complete the task.

The application will then go to a higher executive officer (HEO) to be approved and confirm there are no safeguarding or vulnerability concerns that must be resolved before a passport is issued.

Customer cannot meet usual application requirements

Some customers who urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons may not be able to meet our usual identity requirements (for example, they cannot attend an interview, but their identity, nationality and entitlement are otherwise confirmed).

In these cases, we will consider issuing a restricted validity passport, see Restricted (non-standard) validity passports guidance.

You must update the urgent and compassionate applications tracker to show you issued a restricted validity passport.

U&C applications: when you are ready to issue a passport

When you are ready to issue a passport to a customer who urgently needs it for urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) reasons, you must:

1. Make sure you added any observations you need to.
2. Consider if the customer must attend a passport interview as part of the application process. If the customer must attend an interview, see: [U&C applications: interview needed](#).
3. Make sure you use the correct validity (if you are issuing a restricted validity passport).
4. Record the progress and outcome of the application on urgent government business or compassionate applications tracker.
5. Scan and upload on to the system the:
 - evidence that shows why the customer urgently needs a passport; and,
 - urgent and compassionate exception form (in cases when a child urgently needed a passport and their application has not been on the system for at least 5 working days); and,
 - we have the correct consent evidence from the person with parental responsibility (or the evidence provided in scenarios where a person with parental responsibility cannot provide it), confirming they are aware of the request for a passport for U&C reasons to the appointment
6. Add a mandatory case note to record your actions and decisions, showing:

U&C application

Reason: [describe how the customer meets the U&C criteria]

Evidence submitted: [list evidence]

Evidence accepted [yes/no]

Request approved by: [HEO name]

Evidence scanned and uploaded [yes/no]

U&C tracker updated [yes/no]

U&C applications: interview needed

If the customer must attend a passport interview as part of the application process and the customer has been referred to the counters through the Customer Service Management team (CSMT), you must:

1. Call the customer and check:
 - the customer has a suitable phone to be able to do the interview and has Microsoft Teams (MS) teams downloaded
 - if they are available for an interview at 11:15am, if not check for a suitable time when the customer can do a virtual interview (interviews normally take around 30 minutes to complete)
2. Send an email to the CSO interview network mailbox with the customer's application number to tell them they need to attend an urgent passport interview and the times the customer can attend.
3. Consider issuing a restricted validity (RV) passport (see, [Customer cannot meet usual application requirements](#)), if an interview cannot be completed, for example, the interview network confirm they cannot facilitate an interview.
4. Book a booth or interview room for the customer to have a quiet space, if the interview network confirms an interview time.
5. Contact the customer to arrange the counter appointment to be 20 minutes before the interview will take place.

If the customer must attend a passport interview as part of the application process and the customer walked into the counter and applied, you must, before starting the DAP application:

1. Check the customer has a suitable phone to be able to do the interview and has MS teams downloaded.
2. Send an email to the CSO interview network mailbox with the customer's application number to tell them they need to attend an urgent passport interview.
3. Consider issuing a restricted validity (RV) passport (see, [Customer cannot meet usual application requirements](#)), if an interview cannot be completed, for example, the interview network confirm they cannot facilitate an interview.
4. See if a booth or interview room is available for the customer to have a quiet space if the interview network confirms an interview time.

If an interview cannot be arranged for the customer within the required time frame you must consider the application using the section [Customer cannot meet usual application requirements](#).

After an interview is booked, you can start the counter examination on the Digital Application Processing (DAP) system. You must check the interview task is automatically marked as interview booked.

After the interview is completed, the interview officer will ask the customer to go back to the reception, for the rest of the counter appointment to be completed. You, the examiner, must:

1. Re-open the application on DAP and complete the outstanding examination tasks.
2. Complete the collection slip, after all the tasks are completed, and tell the customer when to return to collect the passport.

U&C applications: review interview

After the customer has attended their interview, DAP will create a **Review interview** task.

1. Check the application to confirm there are no concerns raised by the interview officer.
2. Decide if you can:
 - clear the task
 - ask for documents
 - ask for a referee
 - withdraw application
 - delay decision on this task
 - refer to investigation
3. Add a case note to show the actions and decisions you made.
4. Complete the task.

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U&C applications that cannot be completed during the appointment

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) applications that cannot be completed during the customer's counter appointment.

There are a number of scenarios where you, the counter examiner, will not be able to complete a customer's urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) application. These applications will need to be transferred to the Digital Application Processing (DAP) national queue, to be processed by a national queue examiner.

Before an application is transferred to the DAP national queue, you must confirm your actions with an Operational team leader (OTL).

If you, the counter examiner, are dealing with an application that needs to be transferred to the DAP national queue, and the customer:

- has not attended a counter appointment, send an email to the Customer Service Liaison team (CSLT) confirming you need the urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) flag removed
- has attended a counter appointment, you must:
 1. Select the **I can't complete this application** link on the DAP task screen.
 2. Retain the customers documents, to be sent to the Document Handling Unit (DHU).

When the application has been transferred into the DAP national queue, it will:

- continue as a standard application because we cannot meet the U&C timescale
- go into the same state as it was before being transferred to the national queue, for example, if we do not have any documents with the application, it will go into an awaiting documents state and the customer will receive the automatic reminders to send in documents

If there is a possibility the application may not be completed in time for travel, you must add a case note to the application. This can be added to any examination task you are completing, for example, the **Documents received** task.

For example, this can happen if the customer's application is a complex application.

Documents sent to the DHU: customer arrives at appointment

A customer may apply for a passport and send their documents to a Document Handling Unit (DHU) before they contact us because they need to travel urgently.

We cannot book an appointment, until the documents are scanned and associated to the customer's application.

You must check Application Receive Domain (ARD) for the customer's documents if the customer tells you they have sent them to a DHU. If the documents are scanned and associated with the customer's application, you can:

- use the images of the documents to deal with the application
- continue with the counter appointment in line with this guidance

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U&C applications sent to the DAP national queue

This section tells HM Passport Office examination staff about how to deal with urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) applications transferred into the Digital Application Processing (DAP) national queue.

An urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) application may be transferred into the Digital Application Processing (DAP) national queue. When the application has been transferred into the DAP national queue, it will continue as a standard application, because we cannot meet the U&C timescale.

U&C applications in the national queue

Where you, the DAP examiner, find an application that was an urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) application in the national queue, you must continue to deal with the application in line with standard guidance.

If the counter examiner has already completed a photo or digital referee task on the application and you have no concerns, you do not need to reopen these tasks.

If you need to request further documents, you must contact the customer by phone and tell the customer to send these to a Document Handling Unit (DHU). You must not tell the customer to bring their additional documents to the counter.

Documents for applications in the DAP national queue

When a U&C DAP application has been transferred to the national queue, you, the examiner, will see duplicate documents in the documents tab on DAP. If the customer brought their documents to their appointment.

This is because the documents will be originally scanned as part of the customer's counter appointment, but when they have been sent to the DHU, they will be scanned again in line with the standard DHU process.

You may identify a difference between the document scanned at the counter, and the version scanned in the DHU. For example, if the customer has provided an original document at the appointment but the counter examiner has photocopied and returned this, the photocopy will be the image scanned by the DHU.

You must:

- consider all of these document records when dealing with the application in the national queue
- add any document handling instructions to the correct document record (the entry created by the DHU)

- review the timeline and counter case notes to identify whether further information has been provided (for example, if the document has failed validation)

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U&C applications sent to the Exceptions Handling team

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about U&C applications that must be transferred to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT).

There are a number of scenarios where you, the counter examiner, will need to transfer a customer's application to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) in line with guidance.

This is because EHT examiners have a different level of Digital Application Processing (DAP) access to a counter examiner, meaning that an EHT examiner can complete certain tasks that a counter examiner cannot. For example, an EHT examiner can issue a new passport without cancelling the customer's other passport (for an additional passport).

When a counter application must be transferred to the EHT

An Urgent government business or compassionate reasons (U&C) application must be transferred to the EHT in line with guidance, if you are dealing with an application:

- where the customer is overseas and they have not applied for an additional passport
- for a first time additional passport
- for an overlap passport
- where an incorrect person has applied
- where an incorrect date of birth has been provided by the customer

How to transfer a counter application to the EHT

If you are told to transfer an application to the EHT by guidance, you must:

1. Add a case note to tell the national queue examiner:
 - why you are transferring the application to the EHT
 - what tasks you have completed
 - which documents have been sent to DHU
2. Select the **I cannot complete this appointment** option, on DAP.
3. Select the reason **I need to send this priority application to the Exceptions Handling Team to print the passport locally.**
4. Add a case note to show all actions taken and decisions made.
5. [Retain the customer's documents.](#)
6. End the appointment.

The application will be sent to the EHT to be processed.

You must not deal with any other examination tasks on the application as these will be processed by an EHT examiner.

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When all outstanding tasks are complete on DAP

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to continue with an urgent government business or compassionate application when all Digital Application Processing tasks are complete.

When all the tasks are showing as complete on Digital Application Processing (DAP), you must select **Continue**.

DAP will show the customer's previous passport number again (if applicable). You must:

1. Clip the corners of the customer's previous British passport to cancel it.
2. Select the tick box to confirm you have clipped and cancelled the customer's previous passport.
3. Select **Finish appointment**.

You must return the customer's documents and any cancelled British passports, as the application processing is now complete.

The customer's new passport will be sent to local print and it will be ready for collection in 4 hours. You must:

1. Give the customer a collection receipt, to provide to the security and the counter reception when they return to collect their new passport.
2. Tell the customer to return to the office to collect their new passport after 4 hours.

When an application is transferred into the DAP national queue, it will continue as a standard application, because we cannot meet the U&C timescale. These customers must be told their passport will be sent to them by secure delivery.

Application selected for quality assurance check

DAP will randomly select an urgent government business or compassionate application for quality assurance checks, when you are examining applications on the counter. However, all applications for a child's passport will go to quality assurance checks by a higher executive officer (HEO).

DAP will transfer the application into the Operational Team Leaders (OTLs) review queue.

These quality assurance checks are in addition to the random assurance checks OTLs are required to complete, to make sure examiners have:

- added a case note to confirm all the documents with the application and the urgent and compassionate reasons
- deleted scanned images from their computer desktop and recycle bin folders once they have uploaded the images into DAP
- scanned all the additional evidence to the application as a permanent record
- updated the U&C tracker with the outcome of the application

All quality checks must be completed by the OTL as soon as possible.

Review 5 day hold on child applications task: HEO

All applications for a child's passport will go to quality assurance checks before a passport is issued. The QA must be completed by a higher executive officer (HEO), because they must agree to waiving the 5 days hold for child applications.

After an examiner completes the DAP task [Review 5 day hold on child application task](#), DAP will send the application to the OTL review workflow and a HEO must complete the checks.

Identifying an application selected for a quality check

When you, the counter examiner, complete all the outstanding tasks on DAP and select continue, DAP will run final background checks on the application.

At this point, DAP will show the application has been selected for a quality assurance check, instead of displaying the:

- customer's previous passport number
- instruction to clip the customer's previous passport
- option to finish appointment

You must check if your OTL is available to deal with the quality check straight away.

OTL available to complete check

If the OTL can deal with the quality check straight away, you must give the customer's documents to your OTL, for the quality check to be completed.

You, the OTL, must check the application, in line with the DAP: quality assurance checks guidance.

If the application has passed the quality check, you must return the customer's documents to the counter examiner, when you have completed the quality check.

When the OTL has completed the quality assurance check, you the counter examiner, must:

1. Clip the corners of the customer's previous British passport to cancel it.

2. Select the tick box to confirm you have clipped and cancelled the customer's previous passport.
3. Select **Finish appointment**.
4. Return the documents to the customer.

The customer's application will now be complete, and their new passport will be issued and available to collect 4 hours later.

If the application has failed the quality check, you must:

1. Tell the customer we need to retain their documents to complete the processing of their application.
2. Retain the documents and end the counter appointment.
3. Deal with the application in line with the DAP: quality assurance checks guidance.

When the application has been corrected and processing is complete, the documents can be returned to the customer when they collect their passport, unless the documents are in the Document Handling Unit (DHU). The DHU will return the customer's documents using secure delivery.

Related content

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Returning documents to the customer

This section tells HM Passport Office staff when to return the customer's documents at the end of an urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) appointment.

When the customer or a third party attends an urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) counter appointment and brings the required documents for their application (if applicable). The counter examiner will complete validation checks on these documents and scan them onto the application.

At the end of the counter appointment, the examiner will:

- return the documents to the customer or third party, if the application processing is complete (except for letters addressed to HM Passport office)
- send the documents to a Document Handling Unit (DHU), if the application has not been fully processed by the end of the appointment

You must retain all the documents and send them to the DHU, if:

- you have been unable to complete the application during the appointment time (for example, you have sent the customer's application to the Digital Application Processing (DAP) national queue to be continued as a standard application)
- the customer has sent a third party to the appointment on their behalf, and they have left the counter at any point during examination

Returning documents at the end of the appointment

Where the application has been fully processed during the counter appointment, you can give the documents back to the customer or third party at the end of the appointment. See Collecting a passport and supporting documents guidance to confirm what checks you must complete before handing over any supporting documents.

The scanned images of the documents will be held as a record on Digital Application Processing (DAP).

Sending documents to the Document Handling Unit

You, the examiner, may be required to send the customer's documents to a DHU, if you:

- are unable to process the application in the duration of the counter appointment (and the application will need to be processed from the DAP national queue)
- need to retain the application for investigation, for example, if you have any fraud concerns

If you need to send the customer's documents to a DHU, you must retain all the original documents (where provided). You must not photocopy these documents and return the original to the customer in these applications, unless the customer meets the criteria below for return, see: [Customer needs some documents returning at the counter](#).

If you need to send the documents to the DHU, you must:

1. Tell the customer or third party the documents will be returned by secure delivery when their application has been fully processed.
2. Select the **Print cover sheet** link on DAP, to print a copy of the document cover sheet containing a list of the documents the customer has provided.
3. Place the printed cover sheet in the wallet with the document set to be sent to the DHU.
4. Send the document wallet to the post room, with an instruction to send them to the DHU.

If the cover sheet has not printed correctly and you still have the DAP application open, you must select the **Reprint the document coversheet** link.

If you have closed the DAP system without printing the document cover sheet, you will not be able to view and print this again by searching for the customer's application.

You must complete a manual paper cover sheet listing all the documents you are sending to the DHU and include this in the document pack.

When the documents are sent to the DHU, they will be re-scanned, validated and stored in line with our standard DHU process.

Customer needs some documents returning at the counter

Where you need to retain and send the customer's documents to the DHU, the customer may advise you they need one or more of their documents returning at the end of the counter appointment.

This can happen if, for example, the customer provides a foreign passport, and they need it to travel whilst their British passport application is being processed.

You must only consider exceptionally returning some of the customer's documents at the end of the counter appointment if there are no:

- duplicate applications
- fraud concerns with the application

If you have no fraud concerns, there are no duplicate applications and the customer tells you they need some of their documents returning at the end of the appointment, you must:

1. Check the document has been scanned and recorded against the application.
2. Take a photocopy of the document.
3. Add the photocopied document to the document set to be sent to the DHU.
4. Update the cover sheet included with the document set, to show the original document has been returned and the photocopy is being sent to the DHU.
5. Return the original document to the customer.

If you are returning a foreign passport to the customer, you must photocopy:

- the personal details pages
- any stamped visa pages

Related content

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Urgent government business or compassionate application: collections

This section tells HM Passport Office staff, a customer must collect their new passport issues under urgent government business or compassionate reasons, from the counter.

When a customer applies because of an urgent government business or compassionate (U&C) reason, they must collect their passport from the office where their counter appointment took place.

When a customer or third party arrives at the counter to collect a new passport, you must follow the Counter collections guidance.

Customer has not returned to collect their new passport

If the customer has not returned to collect their new passport from the counter, you must follow Uncollected passports and documents from the counter.

We are unable to post out the passport.

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