



Home Office

## Guide B3

# Registration as British a citizen: Irish citizens

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## About this guidance

This guidance aims to help you decide if you would be able to make a successful application for British citizenship, through registration under section 4AA of the British Nationality Act 1981. For your application to succeed you will need to show that you satisfy the requirements of that section, which are set out in British nationality law. This guidance is not a complete statement of the law or policy but should answer routine questions you may have on the requirements and our processes.

Becoming a British citizen is a significant life event. Apart from allowing you to apply for a British citizen passport, British citizenship gives you the opportunity to participate more fully in the life of your local community.

Your right to registration is a matter of law as set out in the [British Nationality Act 1981](#). The Home Secretary may only register you if you satisfy a number of statutory requirements. This guide helps you to understand them.

### Before applying

Ireland allows dual nationality, however you may hold other nationalities as well as Irish nationality. Before proceeding with your application, you should be aware that the nationality laws of some countries do not allow dual or multiple citizenship and you may therefore lose, or have to give up, an existing nationality in order to become a British citizen. If you have any questions about this, you should seek advice from the other country of which you are a citizen before making your application. If the country of which you are currently a citizen continues to recognise you as one of its citizens, you may continue to be subject to the duties of citizens of that country when you are in its territory.

### IAA and Immigration Advice

You may, if you wish, use the services of an agent such as a solicitor or other competent adviser to help you with your application.

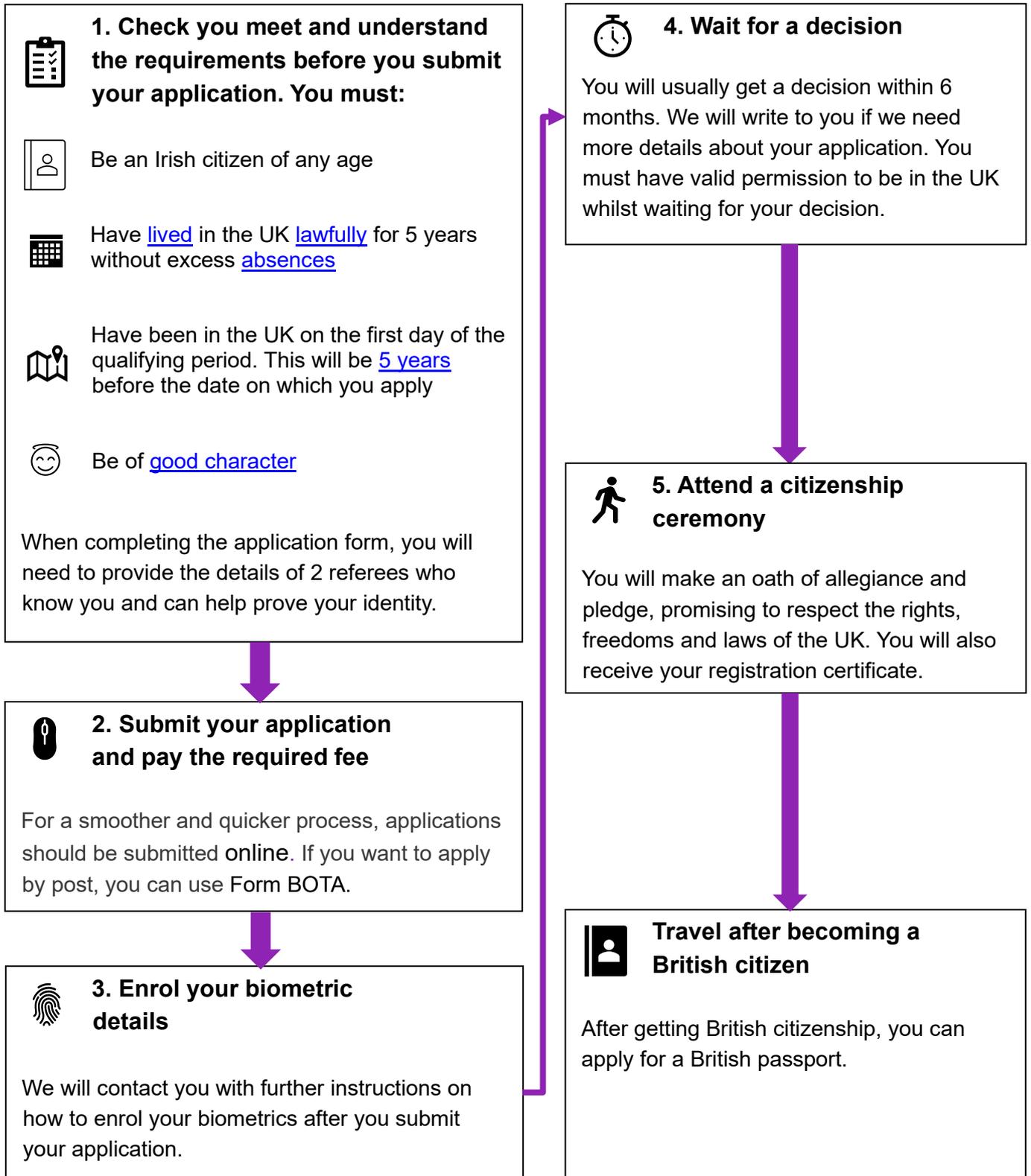
Immigration or nationality advisers acting in the course of business (whether paid or unpaid) are regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA), an independent body.

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Nationality advice should only be provided by a person who works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the IAA or who is authorised to practise (like solicitors and barristers) by a designated professional body. Certain categories (for example public health bodies) are exempted from the regulatory scheme by Ministerial Order. It is a criminal offence to provide advice or services in contravention of the regulatory scheme. Further information about the [regulatory scheme and a full list of IAA regulated advisers](#) are available on GOV.UK.

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# Step by step guide for an Irish citizen to register as a British citizen



# Requirements you have to meet, and the citizenship you will acquire if your application is successful

## The requirements

The law covering registration is contained in the British Nationality Act 1981. This guide is intended to help you to apply, though it is not a complete statement of the law or policy.

Section 4AA was introduced to create a route to British citizenship route for Irish citizens who have been resident in the UK for 5 years.

The registration provision was introduced under the British Nationality (Irish Citizens) Act 2024.

The legal requirements you should meet before you apply are that you:

- are an Irish citizen of any age
- were in the UK at the beginning of a five year period ending with the date you make your application
- were not absent from the UK for:
  - more than 450 days in that five year period
  - more than 90 days in the 12 month period before you make your application
- were not in the UK in breach of immigration laws at any time in the five year period ending with the date of an application

In special circumstances, your application may be granted if you do not meet the above requirements. You should explain any special circumstances when you apply based upon [guidance](#) on how they might be considered.

In considering whether to grant an application under this section, the Secretary of State will take into account whether you are of [good character](#).

A person who is registered under this provision will become a British citizen otherwise than by descent. British citizens otherwise than by descent are able to pass on British citizenship to any children born outside British territory.

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**The remainder of this guidance sets out in more detail out each of the requirements, how you may satisfy them, and answers some questions you may have about the process.**

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## Checking that you are an Irish citizen

This route is available to all Irish citizens, irrespective of how they have acquired their Irish nationality. Whilst you must be an Irish citizen by the time you make your application, you may have had lawful residence in the UK when you held a different nationality. This lawful residence will still count towards your 5 year residency period for the purposes of this route.

To establish your Irish citizenship, we must see evidence of this in the form of:

- an Irish passport
- an Irish passport card
- Irish certificate of naturalisation
- Irish Foreign Birth Register (FBR) certificate

Attempting to evidence your entitlement to Irish citizenship by other means could result in your application taking longer to process, and customers are encouraged to produce documentation issued by the Irish government.

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## Requirement to have been in the UK on the first day of the qualifying period

You must have been in the UK **exactly 5 years** before your application was received. For example, if your application is received on 31 July 2025, you must have been legally in the UK on 1 August 2020.

If you cannot meet this requirement, your application is likely to be refused. If you believe there were exceptional circumstances which prevented you from being in the UK on the first day of the qualifying period, please provide details when you apply.

We recognise that occasionally someone might apply without realising that they were not in the UK at the start of the qualifying period. If you did not meet the requirement when you applied, we may see if there is another, later date we can use to allow you to meet the requirement and will consider your application on, or after, that date.

However, this does not guarantee that the application will be successful if an alternative date cannot be found. It may also result in delays to your application until you can meet the statutory requirements. You must pay the full fee that is in force on any date we use.

**You are strongly recommended to make sure you meet the requirement before applying.**

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# Absences from the UK

## Overall absences in your 5 year qualifying period

You should not have been absent for more than 450 days.

When you submit your application, you will be asked to tell us all your absences during the relevant period. This will help you decide whether you meet the requirement.

There is discretion to disregard absences in excess of the limits in some circumstances. This discretion is outlined in the table below:

Discretion	Absences in the 5 year qualifying period
Normal permitted absences in qualifying period	450 days
Total number of absences normally disregarded	480 days
<p>Absences normally disregarded only if:</p> <p>you meet all other requirements</p> <p>and</p> <p>you have established your home, family and a substantial part of your estate here</p>	<p>900 days</p> <p>Please note: if your absences are up to 730 days we would expect you to have been resident in the UK for the last 7 years.</p> <p>For absences exceeding 730 days we would expect you to have been resident in the UK for the last 8 years unless the absences were a result of one of the reasons given below.</p>

For absences exceeding 730 days please explain if your absences were a result of:

- A posting abroad in Crown or designated service, for example, as a member of HM Forces, or as the husband, wife or civil partner of a British citizen serving abroad in Crown or designated service
- An unavoidable consequence of the nature of your work. For example, if you are a merchant seaman or someone working for a UK based business which requires frequent travel abroad
- Exceptional or compelling reasons of an occupational or compassionate nature such as having a firm job offer for which British citizenship is a genuine requirement
- The excess was because you were unable to return to the UK because of global pandemic

Only very rarely would we disregard absences exceeding 900 days. If your absences are more than this limit your application is likely to fail and your fee will not be fully refunded.

## **Absences in the 12 months prior to applying**

In addition to the overall number of absences, you should not have been absent for more than 90 days during the final 12 months of the qualifying period.

Absences from the UK during the last 12 months of your qualifying period will be considered in the following way:

<b>Discretion</b>	<b>Section 4AA 12 month qualifying period</b>
Normal permitted absences in final 12 months of your qualifying period	90 days
Total number of absences normally disregarded	100 days
Total number of absences normally disregarded only if all other requirements are met and  you have demonstrated links with the UK through presence of family, and established home and a substantial part of your estate.	101 – 179 days
Total number of absences that may be disregarded if you do not meet all the other requirements providing the following criteria are met:  you have demonstrated links with the UK through presence of family, and established home and a substantial part of your estate  and  the absence is justified by Crown service or by compelling occupational or compassionate reasons	101 – 179 days

Please note: Only in the most exceptional circumstances would total absences exceeding 180 days in the final 12 months of the qualifying period be disregarded if all other requirements were not met.

If you were in the UK armed forces and want us to overlook some of the residence requirements on that basis, you must provide confirmation from your employer of your dates of service.

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Examples of documents that can be used to show you have been in the UK for the required time period, can be found [here](#).

For more information on how absences, both total and in the last 12 months might be considered, please see our more [detailed caseworker guidance](#).

### **Demonstrating absences from the UK**

We understand that sometimes people may not remember the exact dates of travel outside the UK. Please do your best to provide the relevant information and we will try to use our own records to help confirm your presence in the UK.

If you have had so many trips outside the UK that you exceed the size limit on the application form, please provide any additional absences as a separate attachment or on loose paper enclosed with your application.

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# Lawful Residence

You should have been in the UK lawfully during the 5 years before making your application.

Irish citizens can enter and stay in the UK without requiring [permission](#). There are some limited exceptions to this, where the person is subject to a deportation order, exclusion decision or exclusion order, or travel ban. If you are an Irish citizen, you will usually have been in the UK lawfully throughout the qualifying period. Whilst you must be an Irish citizen by the time of your application, you may have had lawful residence in the UK in a different nationality. This will count towards your 5 year residence period for the purposes of this route.

For further information on deportation orders please see the [Good character requirement](#).

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## Good character

The British Nationality Act 1981 contains a statutory requirement that those seeking to register under certain routes as British must be of good character. This means you must observe UK laws and show respect for the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

Before you complete this section, you are advised to refer to the good character policy guidance which caseworkers use to decide your application. This is available on the GOV.UK [website](#).

Checks will be carried out to ensure that the information you provide is correct. This may include checks with other government departments such as HM Revenue and Customs. If you are not honest about the information you provide, and you are registered on the basis of incorrect or fraudulent information you will be liable to have your British citizenship taken away (deprivation) and you may be prosecuted. It is a criminal offence to make a false declaration knowing that it is untrue.

## Criminality

You must give details of all criminal convictions in the UK and overseas. This includes if you went to prison, or you received a non-custodial sentence such as a suspended sentence. You should also include any out-of-court disposal such as a fine, a caution, a warning or reprimand, a community sentence, a civil order, a civil penalty, a civil judgment, a hospital order or a restriction order. All fiscal fines must also be disclosed. If you are not sure, you should declare all penalties or orders.

Fixed penalty notices such as those issued under the coronavirus Regulations, or for traffic offences such as speeding or parking tickets must also be disclosed, although will not normally be taken into account unless you have failed to pay and there were criminal proceedings as a result, or you have received multiple fixed penalty notices in a short space of time.

Where a fixed penalty notice or fiscal fine in Scotland has been referred to a court due to non-payment, or the notice has been unsuccessfully challenged by the person in court, we will consider it as a conviction and assess it in line with the new sentence imposed.

Drink driving must also be declared. If you have any endorsements on your driving licence you must access the [DVLA website](#) to download and print a summary of your record and send it with your application, or provide the paper counterpart.

Criminal record checks will be carried out in all cases. If you have been charged with a criminal offence and are awaiting trial or sentencing, you are advised not to make any application for registration until the outcome is known.

You must give details of all civil judgments which have resulted in a court order being made against you, as well as any civil penalties under the UK Immigration Acts. For customers from Scotland any recent civil penalties must also be declared. If you have been declared bankrupt at any time you should give details of the bankruptcy proceedings. (Your application is unlikely to succeed if you are an undischarged bankrupt).

You do not need to give details of family law proceedings such as divorce decrees, dissolved civil partnerships, guardianship orders, and parental responsibility orders.

You must also tell us if you have any children who have been convicted of an offence or who have received a court order.

You must say if your details have been recorded by the police as a result of certain sexual offences, or if you are subject to one of the following orders: notification order, sexual offences prevention order, foreign travel order, risk of sexual harm order (or equivalent order made in a British overseas territory or any other country).

You must say if there is any offence for which you may go to court, or which is awaiting hearing in court. This includes having been arrested for an offence and waiting to hear if you will be formally charged. If you have been arrested and not told that charges have been dropped, or that you will not have to appear in court, you may wish to confirm the position with the police. You must tell us if you are arrested or charged with an offence after you make your application and while the application is under consideration. You risk prosecution under section 46 of the British Nationality Act 1981 if you do not do so.

## Terrorism and International Crimes

You must say whether you have had any involvement in terrorism or whether you have been involved in any crimes in the course of armed conflict, including crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide, or if you are the subject of an international travel ban. If you are in any doubt as to whether something should be mentioned, you should mention it.

This guidance is not exhaustive. Before you answer these questions, you should consider the full definitions of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide which can be found in Schedule 8 of the [International Criminal Court Act 2001](#).

Alternatively, copies can be purchased from: [The Stationery Office \(TSO\)](#).

It is your responsibility to satisfy yourself that you are familiar with the definitions and can answer the questions accurately.

**Genocide** - acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

**Crimes against humanity** - acts committed at any time (not just during armed conflict) as part of a widespread or systematic attack, directed against any civilian population with knowledge of the attack. This would include offences such as murder, torture, rape, severe deprivation of liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law and enforced disappearance of persons.

**War Crimes** - grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions committed during an armed conflict. This includes an internal armed conflict and an international armed conflict. The types of acts that may constitute a war crime include wilful killing, torture, extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity, unlawful deportation, the intentional targeting of civilians and the taking of hostages.

**Travel bans** - travel bans restrict the movement of individuals associated with regimes or groups whose behaviour is considered unacceptable by the international community.

**Terrorist Activities** - any act committed, or the threat of action, designed to influence a government or intimidate the public and made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause and which involves serious violence against a person or which may endanger another person's life; creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public; involves serious damage to property; is designed to seriously disrupt or interfere with an electronic system.

**Organisations concerned with terrorism** - an organisation is concerned with terrorism if it:

- commits or participates in acts of terrorism,
- prepares for terrorism,
- promotes or encourages terrorism (including the unlawful glorification of terrorism),  
or
- is otherwise concerned with terrorism.

## Financial soundness

You must tell us if you have ever been declared bankrupt, found to have unreasonably failed to pay your council tax, engaged in fraud in relation to public funds (including claiming public funds to which you were not entitled or were prohibited from accessing, or failing to declare your full circumstances), or have an unpaid NHS debt of £500 or more.

## Deception

You must tell us if you have practised deception in your dealings with the Home Office or other government departments (for example, by providing false information or fraudulent documents).

## What if you haven't been convicted but your character may be in doubt?

You must say if there is any offence for which you may go to court, or which is awaiting hearing in court. This includes having been arrested for an offence and waiting to hear if you will be formally charged. If you have been arrested and not told that charges have been dropped, or that you will not have to appear in court, you may wish to confirm the position with the police. You must tell us if you are arrested or charged with an offence after you make your application and while the application is under consideration. You risk prosecution under section 46 of the British Nationality Act 1981 if you do not do so

You must say whether you have been involved in anything which might indicate that you are not of good character. You must give information about any of these activities no matter how long ago it was. Checks will be made in all cases and your application may fail and your fee will not be refunded if you make an untruthful declaration. If you are in any doubt about whether you have done something, or it has been alleged that you have done something, which might lead us to think that you are not of good character, you should say so.

## What if you consider that you have mitigating factors?

You can also tell us about any genuine, meaningful attempts to change your behaviour and comply with the law. For example, any voluntary or charity work you participate in, or where you have engaged with programmes or activities aimed at addressing the cause of your offending such as treatments aimed at reduction of alcohol consumption, drug dependency

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or anger management courses. You can also tell us about any exceptional or compelling circumstances you may have, for example, evidence that indicates that you were not in control of your own arrival if you entered the UK illegally, for example a positive decision received through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). These examples are not exhaustive

You can tell us about this in the 'further information not covered in other sections' box on your application.

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# Referees

Your application must be endorsed by 2 referees.

One referee can be of any nationality but must be a [professional person](#). A professional person could include:

- a minister of religion
- civil servant
- a member of a professional body such as an accountant or a solicitor (but not one who is representing you with this application).

The other referee must be the holder of a British citizen passport and either a [professional person](#) or over the age of 25.

Each referee must have known you for at least 3 years.

Each referee must not be:

- related to you
- related to the other referee
- your solicitor or agent representing you with this application
- employed by the Home Office

We will not usually accept a referee who has been convicted of an imprisonable offence during the last 10 years.

Checks may be carried out to ensure that the referees do not have unspent convictions and are qualified to act for you and that their signatures are genuine. It is a criminal offence to provide false information knowingly or recklessly, punishable with up to 3 months imprisonment or by a fine not exceeding £5,000 or both under section 46(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

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# Biometric enrolment

Once your application has been submitted and you have paid the required [application fee](#) you will be required to enrol biometric details.

You will be provided with instructions explaining where and how you need to enrol your biometric information after you have submitted your application. We may be able to re-use biometrics previously provided with earlier immigration applications. You will not be able to book a biometrics appointment, even if you know you will need one, until we have contacted you.

Your application may be rejected as invalid if you do not enrol your biometrics when requested. There is no longer a fee for enrolling biometrics in the UK.

For more information about enrolling biometrics, please visit the following section of our website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biometric-information>.

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# Understanding the process

## Before you apply

Please ensure you have the correct documents before you apply. If you do not submit your application with supporting documents and pay the correct [fee](#), then the application will be returned to you unprocessed. You should indicate in the space provided what documents you have supplied and why.

## Dual nationality

Dual nationality (sometimes called [dual citizenship](#)) is when someone holds British nationality and the nationality of at least one other country at the same time.

The UK recognises dual nationality and allows British nationals who have dual nationality to hold a British passport. Ireland also recognises dual nationality, however you may hold more than Irish citizenship.

You should be aware that not all countries allow dual citizenship or multiple citizenships and you may therefore lose, or have to give up, one of your existing nationalities in order to become a British citizen. If you have any questions about this, you should seek advice from the country of which you are already a citizen before making your application.

## Evidence of identity

Please use the following documents to confirm your identity:

- Your passport or
- National identity card or
- Your birth certificate or
- Your photo driving licence or
- A bank, building society or credit card statement issued to you within the last 6 months

You will need to confirm your Irish citizenship. To do so, you could provide evidence of the below:

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- Your Irish passport
- Your Irish passport card
- Your Irish certificate of naturalisation
- Your Irish Foreign Birth Register certificate

Attempting to evidence your entitlement to Irish citizenship by other means could result in your application taking longer to process.

If you have changed name and/or gender and do not have, or cannot obtain, any of these documents in your acquired identity you are also required to provide evidence of that change. This can include:

- a [Gender Recognition Certificate](#) or
- a letter from your doctor or medical consultant confirming that your change of gender is likely to be permanent
- change of name deed poll
- marriage certificate
- a civil partnership certificate

## Residence Requirements

### Absences

You should supply the following documents to show you have been mainly in the UK during the 5 years before making your application:

- Your passports
- If you are unable to provide your passports, please explain why. You may be asked to supply letters from employers (including start and finish dates), payslips, P60s, educational establishments or other government departments indicating your presence in the United Kingdom during the relevant period. Please do not supply these documents unless asked.

Irish passports are not routinely stamped upon entry to the UK, however they may be stamped when entering other countries.

Examples of documents that can be used to show you have been in the UK for the required time period, can be found [here](#).

Although we do not normally accept doctors' letters on their own as proof of presence, these may be accepted if nothing else is available and the doctors can confirm that they have seen you on a regular basis during the period concerned.

The Home Office will make use of digital entry and exit information alongside checking HMRC records to verify your residence in the UK.

## **Demonstrating absences from the UK**

We understand that sometimes people may not remember the exact dates of travel outside the UK. Please do your best to provide the relevant information and we will try to use our own records to help confirm your presence in the UK.

If you have had so many trips outside the UK that you exceed the size limit on the application form, please provide any additional absences as a separate attachment.

## **Biometric Enrolment**

All customers applying to register will need to enrol their biometric details to verify their identity as part of the application process. You will usually need to complete this step of the application process within 45 days of submitting your application and failure to do so would invalidate your application.

You will be provided with instructions explaining where and how you need to enrol your biometric information after you have submitted your application. We may be able to re-use biometrics previously provided with earlier immigration applications.

## **Enrolling biometrics for children**

Most citizenship applications require biometric enrolment. If you made a registration application for your child under the age of 18 under this route, your child will need to enrol their biometric details as part of their application.

Children under the age of 5 do not need to provide fingerprints but must have a digital photograph taken of their face. Up to the age of 5 the Home Office only requires a digitised image of the child's face, although the regulation does not prevent fingerprints being recorded from children aged less than 5 years. There is no upper age limit for biometric

information to be taken. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at their biometric enrolment appointment.

## Application Processing Times

You will usually get a decision on your application within 6 months – but some applications may take longer. If we expect that it will take longer than 6 months to decide your application, we will contact you to advise of this.

## Travel after submitting an application

After submitting your application, you are free to travel whilst you are waiting for a decision using your valid passport. You do not need to tell us about your travel plans.

Please be aware, however, that you will usually be required to [enrol your biometric information](#) within 45 days of submitting your application. This may involve attending an appointment at a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) Centre (operated by Sopra Steria) in person and failure to do so would invalidate an application. You will receive instructions on how to provide your biometric details once you have submitted your application.

In addition, please note that should we grant an application, there is a 90-day period where you will need to arrange attendance at a [citizenship ceremony](#).

But, outside of these timeframes, there is nothing in the citizenship process that would prevent you from travelling while your application is being considered.

Please bear in mind that you will need to demonstrate your entitlement to re-enter the UK at the UK border.

You should ensure that we are able to contact you quickly if we have any queries about your application.

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# Citizenship Ceremonies

## Arranging a citizenship ceremony

If your application is successful, you will be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony if you are 18 or over. You will receive an invitation from the Home Office, and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony.

Your ceremony invitation may be sent to you via email if you have applied online and we recommend checking your email's spam or junk folder for any correspondence about your application.

We normally expect you to arrange to attend a ceremony within 3 months of receiving your invitation otherwise it will expire, and you will have to re-apply for registration and pay a further processing fee.

If you are outside the UK, arrangements will be made for you to make the oath/affirmation and pledge at the British Embassy, High Commission, Consulate, Governor's Office or Lieutenant Governor's Office.

You must make immediate contact with the local authority once you have been informed that your application is successful, as you only have 90 days in which to attend the ceremony. The date by which you must attend your ceremony will be given in your Home Office citizenship ceremony invitation. If you do not attend the ceremony within 90 days without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused and you will need to re-apply.

## At the ceremony

You will be asked to affirm or swear an Oath of Allegiance to the Monarch and to pledge your loyalty to the UK. This is a legal requirement for adults and is the point at which you will become a British citizen.

Following this you will be presented with your certificate of registration as a British citizen.

If you have special needs or concerns about saying the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge in English, you should bring these to the attention of the local authority once you have received your invitation.

## Next steps

### What to do if there is an error on your citizenship certificate

If you notice a mistake on your citizenship certificate, you will need to download and complete an [application for a correction of a registration or naturalisation certificate](#). You will then need to send the form and your original certificate to the following address:

Department 201  
UKVI  
The Capital  
New Hall Place  
Liverpool  
L3 9PP

You may need to pay to change the details on your certificate, depending on if the mistake is your fault (for example, if you provided incorrect details when you applied). UKVI will send you a letter telling you if you need to pay.

### Travelling to and from the UK after registration

Once you become a British citizen, you will not be able to enter the UK using a BRP or digital status, or by presenting your citizenship certificate at the UK border.

For travel purposes, you can [apply for a British passport](#) or for a [certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#).

Please refer to GOV.UK for information on [how long it may take to get a British passport](#) or [how long it may take to get a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#). You may wish to consider this before applying for citizenship (for example, if you have plans to travel outside of the UK).

### Citizenship-related queries

If, having read the information set out in this guidance, you have questions about applying for British citizenship, you can email the Citizenship and Nationality Enquiries team at [nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk).

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You should also contact them to let them know if you have made an application and your circumstances change (for example, you move house, get married or are arrested).

If you've not had a response, we recommend checking your email's spam or junk folder before contacting the Citizenship and Nationality Enquiries team again.

Alternatively, you can get in touch via telephone on 0300 790 6268. You can get in touch Monday to Thursday from 9am to 4:45pm, or Friday, 9am to 4:30pm. Information about call charges can be found [here](#).

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