



Home Office

## **Guide AN**

# Naturalisation booklet – The requirements and the process

July 2026

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# Introduction

This guide summarises the legal requirements to apply for naturalisation, some of which have changed under [The Nationality and Borders Act 2022](#). In particular, the requirements for lawful residence are now easier to demonstrate. The guide is intended to help you make an application to naturalise as a British citizen. It 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.

However, naturalisation is not an entitlement. It is a matter of law as set out in the British Nationality Act 1981. The Home Secretary may exercise discretion to naturalise you only if you satisfy a number of statutory requirements. This guide helps you to understand them. It may be possible to grant your application even if you are not able to meet all of the requirements, but this cannot be done in all cases. The way that discretion is exercised is described throughout this booklet. More information on how applications may still be granted even though you may not meet all the requirements can be found in the nationality casework guidance [here](#).

## Before applying

You should check whether your country of nationality allows dual citizenship. Some countries do not allow dual citizenship and you may therefore lose, or have to give up, your existing nationality 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 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. This may include obligations to undergo military service.

**Please note, a nationality application does not provide any immigration status while it is being considered. You must ensure you have valid permission to stay in the UK until you have had a decision on your application and attended your citizenship ceremony.**

## The Windrush Scheme

The Windrush Scheme is for people who arrived in the UK many years ago and do not have documentation confirming their immigration status.

If you are eligible under the Windrush Scheme:

- you should not use form AN. You should instead use the form available from GOV.UK, see [Windrush Scheme application form \(UK\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/forms/windrush-scheme-application-form)
- you should still refer to this guidance when completing a Windrush Scheme application

There is no charge for applications made under the Windrush Scheme.

## 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.

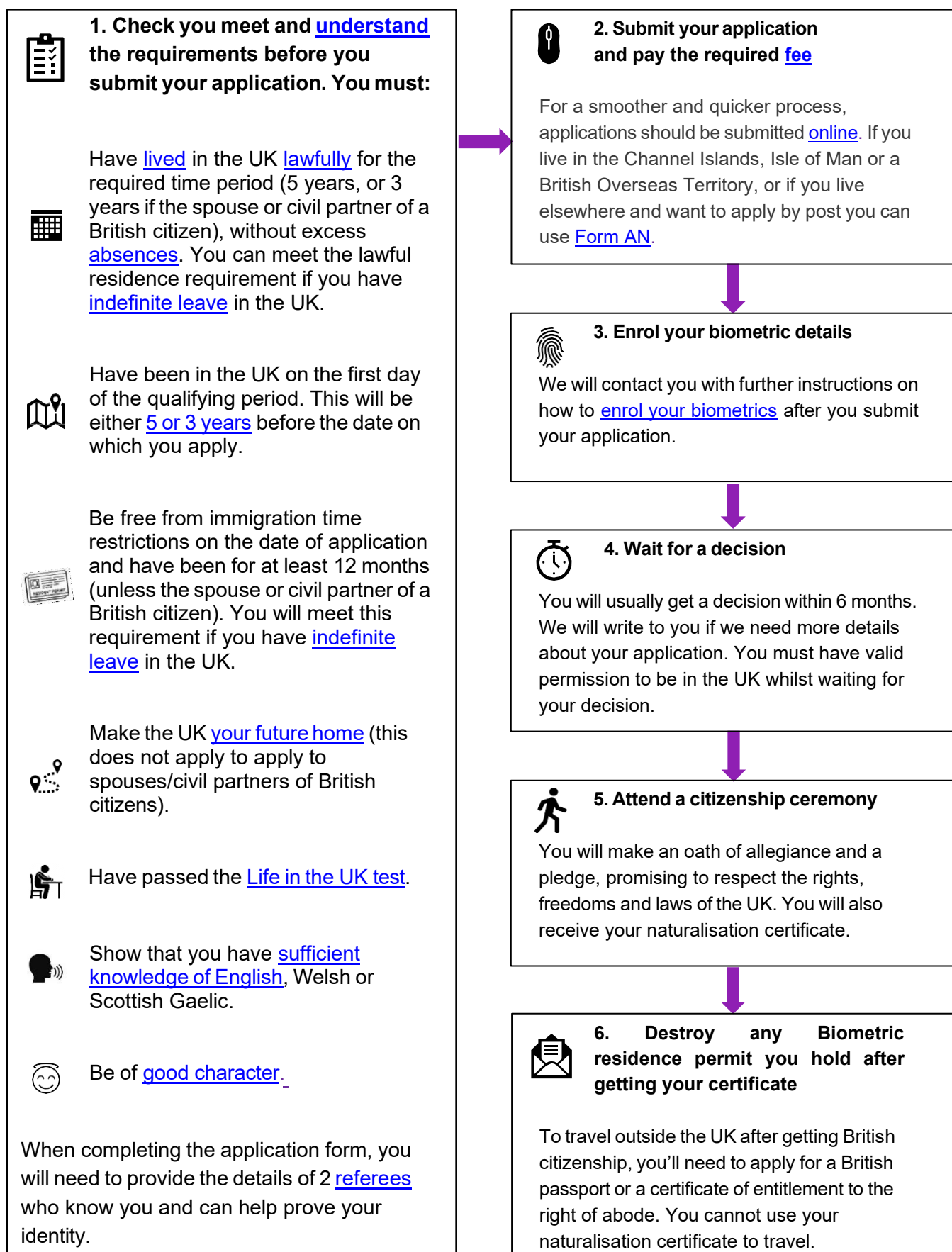
Immigration or nationality advisers acting in the course of business (whether paid or unpaid) are regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA), an independent body. Nationality advice should only be provided by a person who works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the IAA or 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 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-advice-authority>.

## Citizenship ban

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 introduced a citizenship ban for people who had illegally entered the UK, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, or an overseas territory, from 7 March 2023. Regulations that took effect on 23 July 2024 changed the law so that the ban has not taken effect. Applications will now be considered in the usual way, in line with the law and policy set out in this guide.

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# Step by step guide to naturalising as a British citizen



# Do you qualify?

You can only apply to naturalise as a British citizen if you are an adult (aged 18 or over). Children under the age of 18 may be [registered as a British citizen](#) if they meet the relevant criteria. Applications for children can be made at the same time as an adult seeks to naturalise.

You must also be of 'sound mind'. This is to ensure that you have the capacity to understand the implications of the decision to naturalise as a British citizen. There is discretion to overlook this requirement in certain circumstances, where it is in the applicant's best interests to do so. If you are applying on behalf of someone who is not of sound mind and for whom you are responsible, relevant details of that person's medical condition and of your role as their caregiver, can be provided when you apply.

The requirements for naturalisation as a British citizen differ slightly if you are applying on the basis of marriage to, or civil partnership with, a British citizen.

## If you are not married to, or the civil partner of, a British citizen (Section 6(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981)

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

- Are aged 18 or over when you apply
- Are of sound mind, so that you understand the step you are taking
- Have lived in the UK for a minimum of 5 years before you apply
- Must have been physically present in the UK (including the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands) [on the day 5 years before](#) the application is received by the Home Office
- Must not have been in [breach of the immigration laws](#) in the 5-year period before making your application. We may assume you meet this requirement without making further enquiries if you have been granted indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK
- Must be [free from immigration time restrictions](#) on the date of application and for the 12-month period before making the application

- Must not have had more than 450 days outside the UK in the 5-year period before making the application (but see the section on [Absences](#) from the UK)
- Must not have had more than 90 days outside the UK in the 12-month period before making the application (but see the section on [Absences](#) from the UK)
- Intend to [continue to live in the UK](#), or to continue in [Crown service](#), the service of an international organisation of which the UK is a member, or the service of a company or association established in the UK
- Have passed the [Life in the UK test](#)
- Can [communicate in English](#) (or Welsh or Scottish Gaelic) to an acceptable level
- Are of [good character](#)

In special circumstances, some discretion may be exercised over absences, presence in the UK on the first day of the qualifying period, and immigration time restrictions in the last 12 months. You should explain any special circumstances when you apply based upon [guidance](#) on how they might be considered.

The section on [Crown and Designated Service](#) shows alternative ways such people might qualify.

## **If you are married to, or the civil partner of, a British citizen (section 6(2) of the British Nationality Act 1981)**

If you are applying under section 6(2), you will need to provide your spouse's or civil partner's current passport or naturalisation/registration certificate showing that they are a British citizen, as well as the marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate.

The legal requirements you should meet before you apply under this provision are that you:

- Are aged 18 or over when you apply
- Are of sound mind, so that you understand the step you are taking
- Are married to or the civil partner of a British citizen on the date of application
- Have lived in the UK for a minimum of 3 years before you apply

- Must have been [physically present](#) in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands on the day 3 years before the application is received by the Home Office.
- Must be [free from immigration time restrictions](#) on the date of application
- Were not in [breach of the immigration laws](#) in the 3-year period before making your application. We may assume you meet this requirement without making further enquiries if you have been granted indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK
- Must not have had more than 270 days outside the UK in the 3-year period before making the application (but see the section on [Absences](#) from the UK)
- You must not have had more than 90 days outside the UK in the 12-month period before making the application (but see the section on [Absences](#) from the UK)
- Have passed the [Life in the UK test](#)
- Can [communicate in English](#) (or Welsh or Scottish Gaelic) to an acceptable level
- Are of good character

Some discretion may be exercised over excess absences and the requirement to have been in the UK on the first day of the qualifying period if there are special circumstances. If you do not meet these residence requirements but believe that there are special circumstances in your case, you should explain them when you apply, also taking into account the [caseworker guidance](#), which sets out how applications are considered.

If you are in Crown service or specially designated service or are married to or the civil partner of a British citizen in Crown or designated service, see the section on [Crown and Designated Service](#) for alternative ways that you might qualify.

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

If you are applying under section 6(1), you must have been in the UK **exactly 5 years** before your application was received. For example, if your application is received on 05/01/2022 you should have been physically present in the UK on 06/01/2017.

If you are applying under section 6(2), as the **spouse or civil partner of a British citizen**, you must have been in the UK **exactly 3 years** before your application was received. For example, if your application is received on 05/05/2021, you should have been physically present in the UK on 06/05/2018.

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, please be aware the requirements remain unchanged, and 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 qualifying period

If you are applying under the 5-year route (section 6(1)), you should not have been absent for more than 450 days.

If you are applying under the 3-year route (section 6(2)), you should not have been absent from the UK for more than 270 days.

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

We only count whole days' absences from the UK. We will not count the dates when you leave and enter the UK as absences. For example, if you left the UK on 22 September and returned on 23 September you will not be classed as having been absent from the UK.

There is discretion to disregard absences in excess of the limits in some circumstances. This discretion is outlined in the following tables.

Absences from the UK during your residential qualifying period will be considered in the following way:

	<b>6(1) application 5-year qualifying period</b>	<b>6(2) application 3-year qualifying period (applicants married to, in a civil partnership with, a British citizen)</b>
Normal permitted absences in qualifying period	450 days	270 days
Total number of absences normally disregarded.	480 days	300 days
Absences normally disregarded only if:	900 days  Please note: if your absences are up to 730	540 days  Please note: if your absences are up to 450

	<b>6(1) application 5-year qualifying period</b>	<b>6(2) application 3-year qualifying period (applicants married to, in a civil partnership with, a British citizen)</b>
you meet all other requirements  and  you have established your home, family and a substantial part of your estate here.	days we would expect you to have been resident in the UK for the last 7 years.  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	days we would expect you to have been resident in the UK for the last 4 years.  For absences exceeding 450 days we would expect you to have been resident in the UK for the last 5 years unless the absences were the result of one of the reasons given below.

For absences exceeding 730 days (or 450 days for the 3-year route), please explain if your absences were a result of either:

- A posting abroad in Crown or designated service (see the section on Crown and 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 absences were because you were unable to return to the UK because of global pandemic

Only very rarely would we disregard absences in excess of 900 days (540 days for section 6(2) applications). 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. This applies to applications both under the 5- and 3-year routes.

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

	<b>6(1) and 6(2) applications</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 taking account of the criteria listed on page 10	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.

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

**Please note, you do not need to submit documents that have been uploaded as part of previous immigration applications** – we will have a record of these and will consider them in support of your application.

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

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# Lawful Residence

You should have been in the UK lawfully during the 5 years (or 3 years, if applying as the spouse or civil partner of a British citizen), before making your application.

Under [The Nationality and Borders Act 2022](#), you will normally meet this requirement where you have been **granted** indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK. This means that, in most cases, you will only need to demonstrate that you hold valid indefinite leave in the UK in order to meet the lawful residence requirement. You will not normally need to provide evidence of your immigration status during the 5- or 3-year period.

If you are an EEA national, supplying evidence of your settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) will also normally meet this requirement. That also means you will not need to send evidence of what you were doing in the UK prior to being granted settled status.

This includes people who did not hold **comprehensive sickness insurance** under the EEA regulations whilst either a student or a self-sufficient person. You can now meet the lawful residence requirement simply by showing you have been granted settled status under the EUSS. You also no longer need to explain why you did not hold comprehensive sickness insurance.

Please note that if you are relying on an automatically acquired Withdrawal Agreement right to reside in the UK permanently, you will still need to provide evidence of your lawful residence throughout the qualifying period.

## Right of abode

Certain Commonwealth nationals have the [right of abode](#) in the UK. A person with the right of abode is not subject to immigration control and so will have also been in the UK lawfully during the qualifying period.

## Irish nationals

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 national, you will, therefore, have been in the UK lawfully during the qualifying period.

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# Immigration time restrictions

All applicants for naturalisation are required to show that, at the time of application, they are free from immigration time restrictions.

If you are **not** married to or the civil partner of a British citizen (the 5-year route), you should have been free from immigration time restrictions for 12 months before applying for citizenship. This means that you may need to wait until you have been in the UK for at least 6 years before you apply.

If you **are** married to or the civil partner of a British citizen, you will need to be free from immigration time restrictions on the date you make your application.

## Showing you are free from immigration time restrictions

People who are free from immigration time restrictions will usually hold a status such as indefinite leave to remain (ILR), including ILR issued under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), which is also known as settled status. You will also meet this condition if you have the right of abode in the UK. Irish citizens are considered settled from their date of arrival in the UK, meaning they are free from immigration time restrictions for naturalisation purposes without having to hold leave under the immigration rules.

When applying, you can provide us with one of the following to show you are free from immigration time restrictions:

- Your 16-digit unique application number (UAN) if you have been granted indefinite leave (also known as settled status) – this includes under the EUSS
- Your UAN or share code if you have an eVisa showing indefinite leave to remain in the UK
- Your biometric residence permit or any other documents confirming your right to remain permanently in the UK – you can use it for up to 24 months after the expiry date printed on the card (providing you still hold that status). You can only use an expired biometric residence permit until the end of 2026.
- Your passport showing permission to remain permanently in the UK
- The Home Office letter by which you were given permission to remain permanently in the UK
- Evidence of being freely landed, if you did not receive specific permission because you were freely landed as a Commonwealth citizen before 1971 or arrived as a child on your parent's passport
- Valid certificate of entitlement to the right of abode
- If you are an Irish national, you must provide your Irish passport

- Evidence you have acquired a Withdrawal Agreement right to reside in the UK permanently on the basis of [qualifying activity](#) for the relevant period. You must previously have been granted limited leave (also known as pre-settled status) under the EUSS

If you believe you are free from immigration time restrictions for another reason, please give details on the form and provide relevant evidence of this.

If you are not free from immigration time restrictions, you should apply for permission to stay permanently in the UK before you seek to naturalise and wait a further 12 months if applying under the 5-year route (section 6(1)).

If you are an EEA or Swiss national (or their family member), please be aware the deadline for a first application to the EUSS was 30 June 2021, but first [applications can be made later](#) in certain circumstances where there are reasonable grounds to do so. You can [get help online or over the phone](#) if you require assistance making an EUSS application. Our [detailed caseworker guidance](#) explains how late applications granted under the EUSS will be considered for naturalisation purposes.

**You can no longer apply for citizenship based on permanent residence status acquired under the EEA Regulations before 1 July 2021. You are advised to submit an EUSS application before submitting a naturalisation application.**

If you have already been granted limited leave (also known as pre-settled status) under the EUSS you may later acquire an automatic right to reside in the UK permanently under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement. You will usually need to have undertaken [qualifying activity](#) in the UK for 5 continuous years and will need to provide evidence of this.

A person who is outside the UK is, by definition, not subject to any restriction under the immigration laws on his or her maximum length of stay in the UK. However, the Home Secretary will normally refuse an application made outside the UK where it appears that the main reason for making the application in this way was to avoid the requirement about immigration restrictions. If you make your application overseas but would have had only a conditional right to remain in the UK on the date of application if you had remained here, your application is unlikely to succeed.

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# Future intentions

If you are applying under the 5-year route (section 6(1)), you will need to confirm that, should your naturalisation application be successful, you intend to continue living in the UK.

If you meet the absence requirements set out above, this will usually be sufficient to demonstrate that the UK will be your principal residence, as long as there is no information that casts doubt on your intention, such as:

- a partner who is living, or who intends to live, outside the UK
- a recent absent absence from the UK for a period of 6 months or more

This does not necessarily mean your application will be refused but you may need to provide additional information to support your application.

If, when you apply, you indicate you are abroad or intend to go abroad for a continuous period of more than 6 months, please note your application will usually be unsuccessful, unless:

- you are undertaking voluntary work such as with the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)
- you are undertaking studies, training, or employment abroad which is necessary to pursue a UK based profession, vocation or occupation
- the absence forms part of an established pattern, such as in relation to employment at sea, and you are primarily based in the UK

For more detailed information on the future intentions requirement, please refer to the [caseworker guidance](#).

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# Knowledge of language and life in the UK

Applying to become a citizen of the UK is an important decision and commitment.

You will be agreeing to accept the responsibilities which go with citizenship and to respect the laws, values and traditions of the UK. It is important that you are able to communicate with the wider community and are equipped to play a part in community life. Being [able to speak English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic](#) is a very important part of this and [learning about Life in the UK](#) will help you understand what it means to be a British citizen.

You must demonstrate both knowledge of language and life in the UK unless you are aged 65 and over or have a long-term physical or mental condition that prevents you from doing so.

If you have been granted indefinite leave to remain under the EUSS, you will not have had to meet the Knowledge of Language and Life in the UK requirements as part of your application for settlement. You will, therefore, need to ensure you meet the requirements (by taking the Life in the UK test and demonstrating your knowledge of language) before applying to naturalise, and will need to provide relevant evidence of this with your application.

**Please note, if you apply without having met the requirements and you are not exempt from having to demonstrate knowledge of language and life in the UK, your application may be refused, and you may lose your fee.**

## The Life in the UK test

You will satisfy the life in the UK requirement if you have passed the Life in the UK test. When completing the application form, you will be asked to provide the reference number on your pass certificate. You do not normally need to send the certificate to us.

If you took the Life in the UK test on 17 December 2019 or later, your reference number will be in the email sent to you with your results and will be in the format 'HOM/010114/123456/123456789'. If you took the Life in the UK test before 17 December 2019, your reference number will be at the top of your results letter and is 7 numbers long.

If you passed the test on or after 1 October 2019, you must fill in your test reference number on the application form. If you passed the test before 1 October 2019, you will have been given a letter to confirm this. You must provide this letter with your application.

Before you take the test, you should make sure you will meet all the other requirements for naturalisation. If you are not successful, you may book and take a further test. There is no limit on the number of times you may take the test but remember that you must pay an additional fee each time you take it. Since the questions set are drawn randomly from a large bank of questions any further test will be different from the earlier one that you took.

For more information on how to book your Life in the UK test, please refer to the section entitled [Understanding the Process](#) at the end of this guidance.

## Knowledge of Language requirement

You also need to have sufficient speaking and listening knowledge of English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic. This is a separate requirement to the Life in the UK requirement, and you must meet **both** requirements.

You can satisfy the knowledge of language requirement if you have any one of the following:

- a Home Office approved qualification in English at B1 CEFR or higher, from the [Secure English Language Test list](#). Only English language qualifications on this list will be accepted as evidence that you have met the requirement to hold a B1 level English qualification.

You must ensure that you state the test number in your application. For tests taken on or after 6 April 2015, you do not need to supply any physical evidence of the English language test. You must provide the unique reference number (URN) on your application form

The test must be taken at a Home Office approved test centre. Test results are only valid for **two years** from the date the test is taken. **Once the validity of your test expires after two years, the qualification cannot be relied upon to support your application to naturalise.**

If you successfully made an application for indefinite leave to remain (ILR) on the basis of a B1 level qualification you would meet the English language requirement for naturalisation and do not have to pass another test. This includes where you satisfied the requirement for ILR because you had already met the B1 level qualification for entry clearance or leave to remain.

- a UK degree certificate:

You will not be required to show a formal speaking and listening qualification if you have a UK academic qualification which is equivalent to a UK Bachelor's or

Master's degree or PHD, which was taught in English. If you have a UK degree you must provide your degree certificate.

- Please note that you still need to pass the Life in the UK test to demonstrate your knowledge of life in the UK.
- a degree certificate that was taught or researched in a majority English speaking country and:
  - an Academic Qualification Level Statement (AQUALS) from [Ecctis \(formerly UK NARIC\)](#) confirming the qualification is equivalent to a UK qualification
- A degree certificate that was taught or researched in a non-majority English speaking country and both of the following:
  - an Academic Qualification Level Statement (AQUALS) from [Ecctis \(formerly UK NARIC\)](#) confirming the qualification is equivalent to a UK qualification
  - an English Language Proficiency Statement (ELPS) from [Ecctis \(formerly UK NARIC\)](#) showing that your degree was taught in English
- A postgraduate diploma, or a graduate diploma from a UK university. Postgraduate diplomas are usually abbreviated as PGDip, PG Dip, PgD, PgDip. Examples would be:
  - postgraduate diploma in legal practice
  - graduate diploma in law
  - postgraduate diploma in education
  - postgraduate diploma in teaching

A postgraduate diploma, or graduate diploma from a university outside the UK, must have [Ecctis \(formerly UK NARIC\)](#) confirmation showing it is comparable to a UK degree, and was taught in English. Professional diplomas from either inside or outside the UK, which do not require an undergraduate degree as an entry requirement, (such as accountancy, marketing, hotel management, cosmetic science and food hygiene) cannot be accepted.

- Your passport showing that you are a national of a country on the majority English speaking country list:

If you are a national of a majority English speaking country, you will not be required to show a formal speaking and listening qualification. Nationals of majority English speaking countries are considered automatically to meet the English language component of the Knowledge of language and life in the UK requirement. You will still be required to pass the Life in the UK test to demonstrate your knowledge of life in the UK.

Nationals of the following countries are accepted as majority English speakers for naturalisation purposes:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- The British overseas territories
- Canada
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland (for citizenship only)
- Jamaica
- Malta
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- The United States of America

Further details on acceptable evidence can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/english-language>

## Exemption from the knowledge of language and life in the UK requirements

If you are aged 65 or over, you will be exempt from meeting the knowledge of language and life in the UK requirement. If you have a long term physical or mental condition that prevents you from meeting the knowledge of language and life in the UK requirements, you may also be exempt. You can indicate you think you should be exempt by providing details on your application.

Please note that physical or mental illness will not automatically exempt you from these requirements. If your illness responds to treatment, then we will expect you to prepare yourself to meet these requirements. Only if your condition prevents you permanently from meeting these requirements would we consider an exemption. Temporary illnesses, such as depression or stress, would not normally be grounds for exemption. You will need to provide evidence from your doctor or medical professional.

If you are requesting an exemption from either, or both, parts of these requirements you must also complete the [Waiver request form](#) published on Gov.UK. This form must be completed by a registered medical practitioner who has met with you as part of their assessment. You will not be exempted on grounds of illiteracy. Long residence is not a reason for exemption either. The requirement to demonstrate Knowledge of Language and of Life in the UK is specified in law and these are not grounds for exemption.

If you were exempted from the knowledge of language and life requirements when you applied for indefinite leave to remain, you must now meet the requirement before applying for naturalisation, unless you are exempted on grounds of age or physical or mental impairment.

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## Good character

The British Nationality Act 1981 contains a statutory requirement that those seeking to become 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 granted citizenship 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 citizenship 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 applicants 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

Among the duties and obligations which you are expected to fulfil is payment of income tax and National Insurance contributions. We may ask HM Revenue & Customs for

confirmation that your tax and National Insurance affairs are in order. When you sign the application form you will be giving your consent for us to approach them.

If you are liable for income tax but do not pay through PAYE, you must demonstrate that your obligations towards the HM Revenue & Customs have been discharged by attaching a Self-Assessment Statement of Account.

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).

## Immigration matters

We will look at your immigration history and whether you have been here unlawfully or “in breach” of the immigration laws. Further information is set out in the [good character policy guidance](#).

Your application for citizenship will normally be refused if:

- you entered the UK illegally, no matter how much time has passed since the illegal entry took place
- you previously arrived without a required valid entry clearance or electronic travel authorisation, having made a dangerous journey.

A dangerous journey includes, but is not limited to, travelling by small boat or concealed in a vehicle. It does not include, for example, arrival as a passenger with a commercial airline.

We will consider whether your illegal entry or arrival was outside your control, such as if you were a child, or trafficked into the UK or a victim of modern slavery at the time. Further information about what we will consider is in the [good character policy guidance](#).

## 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 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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## Crown and designated service

If you are applying for citizenship on the grounds of your Crown service rather than UK residence, you must show that you:

- Are serving overseas in Crown service on the date that your application is received
- Have been the holder of a responsible post overseas
- Have given outstanding service, normally over a substantial period. (There is no fixed period and naturalisation is not granted merely on completion of satisfactory service)
- Have some close connection with the UK

Crown service means working overseas directly for His Majesty's Government in the UK (or Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales). It is only an alternative to the requirements about residence in the UK: you must still satisfy the requirements about character, language skills, knowledge of life in the UK and future intentions.

Designated service means service of any description designated by the Home Secretary as being closely associated with activities abroad by His Majesty's Government in the UK. A list of the types of services that have been designated is given in Annex A to Chapter 4 of the Nationality guidance on the GOV.UK website.

If you are married to, or the civil partner of, a British citizen who is in Crown service or a similar service, there is a possible alternative to the 3-year residential qualifying period. To apply on this basis, you will need to show that:

- On the day you apply your husband, wife or civil partner is working outside the UK either in Crown or designated service
- Your husband, wife or civil partner should have been recruited in the UK to that service
- Your naturalisation on Crown or designated service grounds should be in the interests of your husband/wife or civil partner's employing organisation. The organisation should provide a letter to this effect
- If you are in the UK on the day you apply, you must not be subject to time restrictions on your stay
- You were not in the UK in breach of the immigration laws during the period of 3 years immediately before applying
- Your marriage/civil partnership should have lasted 3 years or more.

Marriage or civil partnership to a British citizen in Crown or designated service is only an alternative to some of the requirements about residence in the UK: you must still satisfy the requirements about character, language skills and knowledge of life in the UK and, if

you have been in the UK, you must comply with the above requirements about lawful residence and freedom from immigration time restrictions.

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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

As part of the application process, all applicants are required to enrol their biometric details for the purpose of identity verification. We may be able to re-use biometrics provided for previous immigration applications. We will contact you to provide further instructions on how to enrol your biometrics after you have submitted your application.

There is no upper age limit for biometric information to be taken.

An application may be rejected as invalid if the person does not enrol their biometrics when requested.

For more information about enrolling biometrics and the current fee, please visit GOV.UK: [www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits](http://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits).

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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.

Before applying, you should be aware that not all countries allow dual citizenship and you may therefore lose, or have to give up, your existing nationality 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

If you were issued with a Biometric Residence Permit, you must provide/use it in support of your application (even if it has expired), alongside:

- Your passport\* or
- National identity\* card or
- Home Office travel document\* or
- Home Office entitlement card\* or
- Home Office ARC letter\* 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

\* if you used one of these documents when you took the Knowledge of Life in the UK test you will be expected to use it again by providing it with your naturalisation application.

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 (or, if married to or in civil partnership to a British citizen, 3 years) before making your application:

- Your passports
- If you are unable to provide your passport, explain why and 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

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.

If your passport is not stamped when you come into the United Kingdom, you must still provide your passport, but also provide alternative evidence of presence as above.

**Please note, you do not need to submit documents that have been uploaded as part of previous immigration applications** – we will have a record of these and will consider them in support of your application. We will also check Home Office records for entry to and exit from the UK: you do **not** need to request this information from the Home Office before making an application.

## 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.

## Eligibility to apply under section 6(2) (the 3-year route)

You must be married to, or in a formal civil partnership with, a British citizen in order to apply under section 6(2). Being in a relationship is not sufficient to meet the statutory requirement.

## Lawful Residence and Comprehensive Sickness Insurance

We have the power, under the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, to not enquire further into the lawful residence of an applicant, where you have been granted indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK. This means that, in the vast majority of cases, you will only need to demonstrate that you hold valid indefinite leave in the UK in order to meet the lawful residence requirement.

If you are an EEA national, supplying evidence of your settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) will also normally meet this requirement. That also means you will not need to send evidence of what you were doing in the UK prior to being granted settled status.

This includes people who did not hold **comprehensive sickness insurance** under the EEA regulations whilst either a student or a self-sufficient person. You can now meet the lawful residence requirement simply by showing you have been granted settled status under the EUSS. You also no longer need to explain why you did not hold comprehensive sickness insurance.

## Knowledge of Language and Life in the UK (KoLL)

All applicants need to demonstrate knowledge of language and life in the UK unless they are over the age of 65 or have a medical condition that prevents them doing so. **This includes applicants who hold settled status under the EUSS.**

Length of residence in the UK is not grounds for exemption from these requirements.

If you apply without meeting **both** the language and the Life in the UK requirements, your application may be refused, and your fee retained.

## Life in the UK test

### The Life in the UK handbook

We recommend that before attempting the test, you should familiarise yourself with the official publication “Life in the UK: A Guide for New Residents”.

This is published on behalf of the Life in the UK Advisory Group by TSO (The Stationery Office).

The publication is available in a range of formats, both digital and printed, and is available through [www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)333 202 5070

Email: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk)

We also now offer online e-learning [here](#) to help prepare for the test. The e-learning module includes all the official study materials and revision questions. There are also mock tests and a dashboard to help you keep track of your progress.

The printed version of the handbook is also available from TSO shops or TSO accredited agents or from other booksellers (ISBN-978-0-11-341313-3).

**We do not recommend using unofficial study guides.**

### Life in the UK test centres

Further information that will help you to prepare yourself for the Life in the UK Test is available on the test website: [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk)

The Life in the UK Test website will give you all the help you need, including mouse and keyboard training to build your IT skills.

Once you feel confident that you have sufficient knowledge from the Life in the UK handbook, you may apply to take a test at a Life in the UK Test Centre.

There are over 30 test centres in the UK. You can choose where to take your test when you book.

To find your nearest test centre visit the website and click onto the link “Test Centres”. You must book a test in advance. There may be considerable demand, and you are advised to book early.

## Proving your identity before taking the test

If you have an eVisa then you should use the share code as evidence of identity to take the test. If you do not have an eVisa please visit [Online Immigration Status \(eVisa\)](#) for information including how to create an account. Or use one of the other following accepted identity documents:

- Your passport
- Your biometric residence permit/card - you can use it for up to 24 months after the expiry date printed on the card (providing you still hold that status). You can only use an expired biometric residence permit until the end of 2026.
- Home Office Travel Document
- European Union (EU) Identity Card

**You will not be allowed to take your test if you are not able to establish your identity satisfactorily.**

## The cost of the Life in the UK test

The current fee is £50 per test, payable directly in advance to the test centre. Please note that fees are subject to review; you should check current fees with the test centre.

## If you cannot find your test pass notification letter

If you have lost your letter, send a letter explaining that you have lost it with your citizenship application.

## Taking the test

The test will be taken on a computer. You will be given an opportunity to practise using the equipment and have an option to complete a short trial test before beginning the Life in the UK test. The test will last for up to 45 minutes and comprise 24 questions. You will not be asked questions about anything which is not in the official publication.

Staff at test centres will report any attempts at cheating or pressure to provide false results applied to them through bribery, physical threats or emotional blackmail. This may result in your prosecution. Any naturalisation application based on false results will fail.

You must score 75% or more to pass the test.

You'll get a 'unique reference number'. You'll need this number to complete your citizenship application. The Home Office will use it to check that you've passed.

## If you fail the test

You can rebook the test as many times as you need. You will have to pay each time.

## Cancellations and refunds

If you're unable to attend your test, you can rearrange it or cancel it.

You'll get a refund if you cancel your test at least 3 days (72 hours) before you're due to take the test. You will not get a refund if you cancel or rearrange within 3 days of your test.

To cancel your test:

1. Sign into your [Life in the UK account](#).
2. Select 'Confirmed tests'.
3. Select 'Cancel tests'.

If you're eligible for a refund due to cancellation, the £50 fee will be refunded to the card you used to book the test. You do not need to contact UK Visas and Immigration. You can then book a test on another date.

You can ask for a refund if the test centre cancels the test.

You cannot ask for a refund if you:

- brought the wrong ID
- were ill
- were late
- did not bring the right documents
- refused to have your photo taken

You must ask for a refund within 3 months of the test date.

Contact PSI to ask for a refund.

[support@lituk.psionline.com](mailto:support@lituk.psionline.com)

Telephone: 0800 015 4245  
 Monday to Friday, 4pm to 8pm  
[Find out about call charges](#)

Or write to PSI e-Assessments:

PSI e-Assessments  
 2nd Floor  
 Boardman House  
 64 Broadway  
 London  
 E15 1NT

## Accessibility support

Our test centres offer a range of support for people with limited reading and writing ability or who lack basic IT skills.

When booking the test there is the option of submitting an online request for assistance with your test. You can also request assistance by using a dedicated email address or calling the Life in the UK helpline between 8am – 8pm, Monday – Friday.

Examples of the types of conditions which are regularly encountered, and the adjustments that can be made are:

- **Dyslexia** - Extra time; Extra time with a closed session. You can change the screen colour where applicable, e.g. high contrast - yellow text on black. These options can be changed during the test so if you start the test with one colour scheme and don't find it helpful, you still have the option to change it for every question
- **Dyspraxia** - Extra time; Extra time with a closed session. You can change the screen colour where applicable, e.g. high contrast - yellow text on black. These options can be changed during the test so if you start the test with one colour scheme and don't find it helpful, you still have the option to change it for every question
- **Attention Deficit Disorder** – Extra time, extra time with a closed session
- **Visual impairment or eye conditions – partial/ severe** – extra time, closed session, reader and/ or scribe. You can increase the font size where applicable. There is also the option to have audio played for every question. There is an adjustable sound button where you can increase or decrease the volume when the Audio is played
- **Hearing impairment – partial/ severe** – extra time, closed session, BSL interpreter

- **Depression/anxiety/epilepsy** – extra time with a closed session
- **Stroke/Cerebral Palsy/ learning difficulties** – extra time, closed session, reader and scribe
- **Wheelchair users** – DDA compliant test centres, height adjustable desk

**However, when arranging your test, please advise the provider if you require adjustments for any special circumstances, not just those listed above.**

## Knowledge of Language Requirement

### Find an approved English language test

For your results to be accepted, your test must:

- be on the list of approved English language tests
- have been sat at an approved test location
- have been awarded in the two years before the date of your application

You should make sure the test that you book is [one approved for SELT](#).

It is for you to decide which test to take.

The list of approved tests gives the CEFR level and minimum grade requirements for each level.

### Approved test centres

The list of approved test centres has been assessed as meeting Home Office requirements under the secure English language testing arrangements.

Check the SELT provider's website to find out when tests are available and to make sure the test centre is open. If you have any questions, use the website. Do not contact the test centre directly.

### Book an English language test

To find test dates and book your test, go to the website of the provider offering the test you plan to take:

- [Pearson](#)
- [Trinity College London](#)
- [IELTS SELT Consortium](#)
- [LanguageCert](#)

You should be able to take a test within 28 days of booking, but it may not always be at the location nearest to you.

The details used to book your test must be the same as on your passport or other identity document. If your surname has changed, you will still need to book the test in the name on your passport or identity document. If you wish to book your test using your changed surname, you must change the name in your passport or identity document before booking your test.

## Prove your identity on the day of the test

You will need to provide evidence of your identity at the test location before you can take the test.

Your name must be on the document, and it must also:

- be current and valid
- be an original, not a photocopy
- include a photo of you
- match the information you gave when you booked the test

If your identity document has a signature, this will also be checked.

The details used to book your test must match the document you provide at the test location.

**If you are not able to prove your identity, you will not be allowed to take a test.**

Examples of documents that can be used to prove your identity can be found online [here](#). Emergency travel documents will not be accepted as proof of identity.

If you have a previous gender (including a different name) that you do not want the test centre staff to see or for it to show on your test result, email [sensitivebookings@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:sensitivebookings@homeoffice.gov.uk) before booking your test. They'll tell you what you need to do.

## After the test

After you pass the test, you will be given a SELT unique reference number which you must use when making your application. If you do not include your reference number, your application may be refused.

You will find your SELT unique reference number on your test result as:

- 'UER' for Trinity College London tests
- 'UKVI number' for IELTS SELT Consortium tests
- 'Candidate URN' for LanguageCert tests

- 'SELT URN' for Pearson tests

You do not need to submit any documents as part of the immigration or nationality application. Test results and scores are checked using the SELT online verification system provided by each approved SELT test provider using a SELT unique reference number.

**Test results are valid for 2 years from the date the test is awarded.**

## Reasonable adjustments

You can make special requests when you book your test if, for example, you have a disability and need extra equipment or help accessing the test location.

## Biometric Enrolment

All applicants applying to naturalise 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

All citizenship applications require biometric enrolment. If you made a registration application for your child under the age of 18 at the same time as you applied to naturalise, your child will also need to enrol their biometric details as part of their registration 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

We aim to conclude naturalisation applications within 6 months from the date on which we receive your application. Please do not contact us within this timeframe to request an update on your application – we will get in touch if we need any more information to help us make a decision.

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.

If you want a quicker decision you may wish to apply to the priority service [Get a faster decision on your visa or settlement application: Applying for a faster decision - GOV.UK](#). If you use the priority service, you'll usually get a decision within 30 working days, but may not do so if we need to make additional checks with other government departments about your application, or if it is particularly complex.

## Travel after submitting an application

After submitting your application, you are free to travel using your valid passport – and evidence of your valid immigration status – while you are waiting for a decision on your application.

You do not need to tell us about your travel plans, however, please note:

- You will usually be required to **enrol your biometric information within 45 days** of submitting your application. Failure to do so will invalidate your application.
  - You will receive instructions on how to provide your biometric details once you have submitted your application.
- If your application is successful, and you are aged 18 or over, you will need to **arrange and attend a [citizenship ceremony](#) within 90 days**.

Otherwise, there is nothing during the citizenship process that would prevent you from travelling while your application is being considered.

A citizenship application does not provide you with immigration permission in the UK, and you will need to demonstrate your entitlement to [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.

## Citizenship Ceremonies

## Arranging a citizenship ceremony

If your application is successful, and you are aged 18 or over, you will be invited to attend a [citizenship ceremony](#).

### **If you are in the UK**

You will receive an invitation from the Home Office, and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony.

You must ensure you have immigration permission to remain in the UK until you have completed your ceremony. A citizenship application does not provide you with immigration permission in the UK.

### **If you are outside of the UK**

Arrangements will be made for you to attend a ceremony at a British Embassy; High Commission; Consulate; Governor's Office or Lieutenant-Governor's Office.

Your ceremony invitation may be sent to you via email. If you have not received this, we recommend that you check your email's spam or junk folder before contacting us.

**You must arrange and attend your ceremony within 90 days of receiving your invitation.** The date by which you must attend your ceremony will be given in your invitation.

If you have special needs or concerns about attending your ceremony, please bring these to the attention of the local authority once you have received your invitation.

**If you do not attend your 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 citizenship as a British citizen.

## Exemptions

Successful applicants are rarely exempt from attending ceremonies. Exemptions may be granted where applicants are physically unable to attend or if their mental state would make it inappropriate for them to attend. If you wish to be exempt, you should say why and provide supporting evidence.

## 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 use [Form RR](#) to request an amendment to it.

Send your completed 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.

### Destroy your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you still hold a Home Office issued immigration document, such as a BRP (or a Biometric Residence Card (BRC)), you must destroy it after you have attended your citizenship ceremony.

You can do this by following these steps:

1. Cut your BRP/BRC into pieces.
2. Make sure you cut through:
  - Your personal details
  - The royal coat of arms
  - The gold biometric chip, if your card has one

## Will I get digital status showing I am a British citizen?

There are no current plans to provide digital evidence of British citizenship. If you wish to travel as a British citizen, you will normally need to get a British passport or certificate of entitlement to the right of abode.

## Travelling to and from the UK after naturalising

Once you have become a British citizen, you cannot use your BRP, eVisa or citizenship certificate to enter the UK as a British citizen. British citizens cannot get an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) or a new visa.

To travel, you must have either:

- a [British citizen passport](#)
- a [certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#)

You will need to carry this with you when travelling and be ready to show it. Without one of these, you may face serious delays when returning to the UK.

Some British citizens may also hold rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement, or equivalents with other EEA states or Switzerland. If this is the case, you **do not** need to travel to the UK using a British citizen passport or a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode, unless you choose to do so.

Instead, you may travel to, and enter, the UK using a valid foreign passport or, in the case of EEA and Swiss nationals only, a national identity card. You must ensure your travel document is linked to the UKVI account in which you received your EU Settlement Scheme status to avoid travel delays.

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).

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 UKVI again.

If you require anything else, please [contact UK Visas and Immigration for help](#).

## Applications submitted before 28 June 2022

Changes introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 came into force on 28 June 2022. If you submitted your application before that date, we will still use the new powers to decide your application where this would be of benefit to you. For example, we can use ILR for the lawful residence requirement without the need to examine further evidence.

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