

Immigration | insight

As an EU national can I apply for British citizenship?

Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) who have been resident in the UK for a period of six continuous years may be able to make an application for British citizenship. You must have held permanent residence status for at least 12 months prior to application.

EEA nationals used to be able to show that they had automatically acquired permanent residence in the UK as part of their application for citizenship. The new position is that you must now submit a valid permanent residence card or document certifying this status with your application.

TIP ALERT: If you have been in the UK in excess of five years and therefore already acquired your permanent residence status, you should look to submit supporting evidence to confirm this with your permanent residence application. UK Visas and Immigration ("UKVI") can then certify the exact date you received your permanent status in the UK. Subsequently, you may not need to wait a further 12 months once you receive your permanent residence card before applying for citizenship.

What are the requirements?

An EEA national applying for British citizenship will need to meet the following requirements. You must:

- Be 18 years old or above;
- Be of sound mind;
- Intend to continue residing in the UK;
- Meet the residence requirement:
 1. Continuous lawful residence for six years
 2. Last 12 months with permanent residence
 3. Absences from the UK do not exceed 450 days in the five years
 4. Absences do not exceed 90 days in the last 12 months
 5. Be present in the UK on the same day five years prior to the date of application
- Be of good character; and
- Satisfy the knowledge of life and language in the UK

Knowledge of Life and Language in the UK

You will need to complete the Life in the UK test and have a speaking and listening qualification in English at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference or higher. You can show that you have met this by:

- (i) Holding a degree that was taught in English and considered equivalent to a UK bachelor degree or higher, with accompanying letter from UK NARIC for certification; or
- (ii) Completing an approved English language test

Referees

Your British citizenship application will need to be certified by two referees. Both referees must have known you for at least three years. They must not be related to you or work for the UKVI. They must not have had any criminal convictions within the last ten years.

One referee must be a person of professional standing, for example a doctor, civil servant or member of a professional body. The other referee must hold a valid British passport and be either a professional person or aged at least 25 years old.

Each referee will need to certify that the information you have provided on your application form is correct.

How do I apply?

You need to complete the UKVI application form accompanied by the £1,236 fee appropriate and supporting documentation. This application can only be made by post and cannot be expedited.

You will need to submit your biometric details (photograph and fingerprint scan) as part of this application. The UKVI will contact you when they are ready to collect this data. You will be able to submit your biometrics at a local post office. There is also a joint citizenship and passport application service at [participating local councils](#). If your citizenship application is successful, your British passport is posted to you after you attend your citizenship ceremony.

Examples of Evidence

Full certified copies of your passports since entry to the UK;

- Two recent passport photographs
- Schedule of your travel for the last six months
- Permanent residence card or document certifying this status
- Original Life in the UK test certificate
- Original degree certificate, transcript and letter of certification from UK NARIC
- Evidence that you were a qualified person for the qualifying period
- Original bank statements to show you can financially support yourself in the UK
- Tenancy agreement/mortgage deed/land registry document

Citizenship Ceremony

It is mandatory for all successful applicants to attend a Citizenship Ceremony. You will be invited to book a place at a group ceremony once the application is approved. You may, if you prefer, book a private ceremony at additional cost.

At the ceremony you will swear an Oath of Allegiance to the Queen and the United Kingdom and also collect your Certificate of Naturalisation. This document will confirm your British status and will be required to support your first British passport application. You can make this application directly to the Passport Office.

There are a number of ways applicants can apply to become British. The above details refer to an adult applying on the basis of their continuous residence in the UK.

The list of documents provided above are not exhaustive and additional or alternative documentation may be required depending on the circumstances of your case. If you would like further advice or assistance with making an application for British citizenship, please contact **0300 123 1233**.