

How to Become a Permanent UK British Citizen or Resident

This document is for those applying for British Citizenship who already have 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' (ILR) or 'Settled Status'.

This is NOT an official document, just the culmination of almost two years helping a friend negotiate and understand the complex Home Office requirements for becoming a British Citizen

(NB: There are now new requirements, laid out in August 2020 regarding application for Indefinite Leave to Remain. Please refer to further information regarding this on page 12 & 13).

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Be prepared for the process of applying to become a British Citizen to be slow and quite costly. **There are no shortcuts.** If you can find help from a friend or volunteer whose first language is English, then the costs should not escalate. I will provide the basic cost of application as from July 2020 but be aware that the Home Office may increase costs. There are many 'add on' costs that you can hopefully avoid by having a first language English speaker friend to work through the process with you.

Documentation can be confusing with some referring to British Naturalisation & some to British Citizenship. THEY ARE THE SAME.

Even more confusing is the difference between 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' (ILR) and 'British Permanent Residence' (BPR). If you have ILR you can apply for a BPR any time you want. There is no set date (at time of going to print, July 2020) when you can do it as long as your ILR is valid (in date).

***My experience of a British Citizenship Application only required a valid ILR
KEEP RECORDS, COPIES, PHOTOS & DATES OF ALL EMAILS / TEXTS / CALLS.
ALL YOUR PERSONAL DOCUMENTAION WILL NEED TO BE ORIGINAL unless stated otherwise.***

I will use a **EXAMPLES** throughout this document having gone into this application process with **NO** prior experience. The whole process has taken around 20 months. This has included the months of Covid 19 Lockdown, so knocking off a 3-month delay and lack of prior knowledge, you hopefully should look to the whole application process (from studying for the 'Life in the UK Test' and the 'B1 Speaking and Listening Test', to the final stages of the 'British Citizen Award Ceremony' to applying for your new 'British Passport') hopefully taking about 12 months (as the system stands in July 2020).

*From your British Citizenship Application Form arriving at the HOME OFFICE to them informing you if you application has been successful, is 6 months. **If you haven't heard from them on the exact date your 6-month period is up, you need to get in touch with them.***

You will not need to wait 12 months to apply if you are married to a British Citizen (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-citizenship-spouse>).

The Process

1. If you are **NOT** married to a British Citizen:

- You will need to be over 18 yrs old
- You will need to have **ONE** of the following:
 - Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR Biometric Card)
 - Settled Status (also know as ILR under the EU Settlement Scheme)

- Indefinite Leave to Enter the UK (have permission to move to the UK permanently from abroad)

2. You must also:

- need proof that you have been in the UK exactly 5 yrs before the date the HOME OFFICE receives your application
- Have passed the **Life in the UK Test** (<https://www.gov.uk/life-in-the-uk-test>)
- Have passed your **B1 Speaking and Listening Test** (Trinity College) in English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic. (this is the same as ESOL Entry Level 3).
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests-to-continue-living-in-the-uk>)
- Be of good character - read the Naturalisation Guidance
(<https://gov.uk/government/publications/form-an-guidance>)

3. This *EXAMPLE* is one way to apply for British citizenship (Check if you are eligible another way (<https://www.gov.uk/british-citizen>), for example if you have permanent residence).

4. Residency requirements

You should have lived in the UK for at least 5 years before the date of your application.

You cannot include any time spent in the UK when you're exempt from immigration control as a:

- diplomat
- member of a diplomat's staff or household
- member of visiting armed forces

You should also **NOT HAVE:**

- spent more than 450 days outside the UK during those 5 years
- spent more than 90 days outside the UK in the last 12 months
- broken any UK immigration laws (for example living illegally in the UK).

5. How to Apply

There are 2 ways to apply for British citizenship by naturalisation. You can either:

- **Make an application yourself** (you will need a friend or volunteer whose first language is English to help you through this)
- **Use an agent or representative (COSTLY.** Some Citizen Advise Bureaus (CAB) have facilities/expertise to do this but even they charge £300:00 (2019 cost)). Using any alternative agent or representative is likely to cost you more.

Make an Application Yourself

Read the guidance to check if you can apply and what documents you need to provide.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-an-guidance>

From this link you will be able to download and print off the **AN Application Form Guidance**

It may take longer than the usual 6 months to get a decision because of coronavirus (COVID-19). You'll get extra time to provide your fingerprints, photo and additional information, and to book a citizenship ceremony. This will not affect the decision. (This was applicable from March 22nd 2020. There is no official end date to this as I am writing, in July 2020)

6. You then have the choice to:

- Fill in the form **online** (you will need your own email address) **or**
- Print off the form and **apply by post**

*Whichever option you choose, **PRINT OFF AN EXTRA APPLICATION FORM TO PRACTISE ON FIRST.***

If you don't have access to a printer then save the link on your phone and visit your local library who, for a small cost should be able to print it off for you.

REMEMBER: you will need to meet all the criteria in section 2 before you can complete the Application form. The ID you use for sitting your tests (for example, your Biometric ILR card), MUST be used throughout the whole process.

NB: there are several offers of help within the online application form which you can choose to pay for but if you have your helper friend, you should be able to proceed yourself without having to pay more.

7. A Brief Breakdown Of the Life in the UK Test

You will need your 'Life in the UK' for:

- **Indefinite Leave to Remain (to settle) & British Citizenship** (As from August 2020 you will require it for ILR. This will then cover you for any British Citizenship application. It has no expiry date)
- You will pay £50:00 in advance when booking the test
- All Answers are multiple choice tick boxes.
- You will be asked 24 questions. you need to get 18 or over (75%) correct to pass.
- The test lasts for 45 minutes.
- You can retake the test again and again if you do not pass but you will have to pay again each time.
- Once passed, your certificate will **NOT RUN OUT**. There is, at present (July 2020), no time limit on it.

The Test is based on 5 chapters in the book:

Chapter 1: **Values and Principles of the UK**

Chapter 2: **What is the UK?**

Chapter 3: **A Long and Illustrious History**

Early Britain

The Middle Ages

The Tudors and Stuarts

A Global Power

20th Century

Britain since 1945

Chapter 4: **A Modern, Thriving Society**

The UK today

Religion

Customs and Traditions

Sports

Arts & Culture

Leisure

Places of Interest

Chapter 5: **The UK Government, The Law and Your Role**

- The British Constitution
- The Government
- The UK and International Institutions
- Respecting the Law
- Fundamental Principles
- Your Role in the Community

You will need to buy or borrow the handbook to plough your way through these 5 chapters but extra help is at hand with over 40 mock tests for you to practise online.

(<https://lifeintheuktests.co.uk/life-in-the-uk-test/>)

You need to study it to prepare for the test. The handbook is available as a book, an eBook, an e-Learning subscription or in audio formats.

Life in the UK Test Helpline

Telephone: 0800 015 4245 (FREE Phone)

Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

8. A Brief Breakdown of the B1 Speaking and Listening Test

You can prove your knowledge of English by having a recognised English certificate from an approved test centre. Click on the link below to see the approved test centre and the examining body used by that centre, near where you live. For example, in Manchester they use Trinity College and the test centre details in central Manchester are on this link, together with all the other approved test centres.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>)

You must pass a Secure English Language Test (SELT) in at least CEFR **Level B1 in Speaking and Listening** for:

- **Indefinite Leave to Remain (to settle) &**
- **British Citizenship**
- Trinity's GESE Grade 5 exam = CEFR **Level B1 Speaking and Listening**
- *(As from August 2020 you will require it for ILR. This will then cover you for any British Citizenship application. It has an **expiry date of 2 years**)*

(<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/UKVI/B1-GESE-grade-5>)

Breakdown of **The Trinity College B1 SELT** (Secure English Language Tests):

>(There is another approved IELTS Life Skills Test. The cost is the same but it lasts twice as long and you take it in pairs with the examiner. I am only familiar with the Trinity Test)<

- You will pay £150:00 in advance when booking this test
- The whole test lasts for just 10 minutes (it will be just you and the examiner)
- There are 2 parts:

- **A Conversation:** You will have a short conversation with the examiner about two subject areas chosen by the examiner.
- **The Topic:** You choose a topic to prepare in advance of the test, for discussion with the examiner. You must complete a **TOPIC FORM** in advance and **take it with you to the exam.**

The link below is a **Study Help** for the test. If you buy into their own revision and practise offer when booking the test, it will **COST an extra £50:00**. The **link below is free.**

(<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/UKVI/B1-GESE-grade-5/prepare-GESE-grade-5/study-help>)

Download (FOR FREE) from the link above, the 'Guide and Preparation for Candidates' 'Preparation Activities'. 'Example of a completed Topic Form' (see p 5 below).

The Conversation

Try and use a friend or volunteer who first language is English to play the part of the examiner. Then have them practise a **two way conversation** with you about some of the subjects listed, such as: holidays / family / entertainment eg: TV, cinema / music / sport / festivals / means of transport / special occasions, eg: birthdays, weddings / recent personal experiences /

Remember that this is a **CONVERSATION** so they are expecting you to ask them at least 2/3 questions during the 5 minutes. For **EXAMPLE**, if they ask you: **Which film did you last see at the cinema?** you could answer: ***I visit the cinema a few times a year with my family. The last film I took them to see was Frozen 2.***

Do you enjoy going to the cinema? What have you seen recently? (change the details to suit your circumstances).

Practise with your friend many times over.

The Topic

Now get your friend to ask you questions about **your chosen Topic**.

(**Suggested TOPICs** could be: My Career / My Family & Friends / Likes and Dislikes / Home / Work and School).

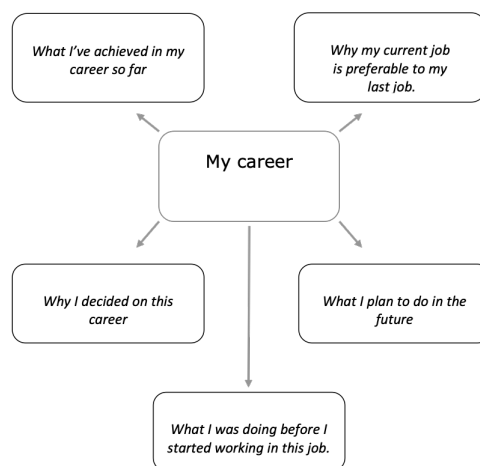
Practise with your friend many times over.

On the following page is a **sample of a completed Topic Form** about 'My Career' The examiner will ask you questions about the statements you have filled in on **your chosen Topic Form**. (Refer to other possible suggestions above).

**Graded Examinations in Spoken English
Elementary Topic form — Grade 5**

Candidate name:
Grade 5 Registration no:
Centre: Session:
Centre no: Examination date:

Title of topic: *My career*.....



Sample completed Topic form GESE grade 5

(Retrieved from: <https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/UKVI/B1-GESE-grade-5/prepare-GESE-grade-5/study-help> July 8th 2020 @ 11:25am)

Choose a Topic that you are really comfortable talking about and that makes you feel good as you will find this much easier as it is very familiar. Don't over complicate what you are saying and don't try out new words that you might well stumble over.

For **EXAMPLE**, If you were to choose **HOME** you may be asked questions like the following:

- What type of house do you live in?
- Do you live locally?
- Tell me about your house?
- How many people live in your house?
- What is your favourite room in your house and why?
- Where would be your perfect place to live?

This link below will take you to videos of actual applicants taking their B1 Speaking and Listening Tests.

(<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/UKVI/B1-GESE-grade-5/prepare-GESE-grade-5/what-is-the-exam-like>)

You will need to have the original certificate to prove you have the qualification, or be able to view your results online (the certificate should come by post within 7 days of taking your test).

You can only use 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) qualifications if they're on the **LIST** (see link in section 8). **You cannot use other qualifications**, for example GCSEs, A levels or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

You will need to apply for your British Citizenship **within 2 years of passing this B1 Speaking and Listening Test**.

(<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/UKVI/B1-GESE-grade-5>)

9. Ready to Apply?

With both of these tests **PASSED** you need to refer back to section 2 and if you meet all the criteria, you are ready to apply for your British Citizenship (see section 5).

Below is the link to the online Application Form. Go to the bottom of the page and click the green **APPLY NOW** button. Remember the you need to print off an AN application form for you to practise on before attempting the online form.

You do not have to complete it all in one go. you can **SAVE AND CONTINUE** or **SAVE** and then log out. All your information will be there for you to continue with when you log back in.

(https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/nationality-an?_ga=2.73977616.388541153.1593704207-1277712053.1593704207)

Supporting Documents (p 29 Of 31)

BY POST - You **MUST** provide a document for each section below **relevant to your application** and tick to indicate the type of evidence enclosed. You will need **ORIGINAL** documents and **NOT COPIES**. if you are concerned about posting off your original documents with your application form then you can use a National Checking Service or a solicitor. These will have to be regulated by the OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner). This will be at an **EXTRA COST**. The best way to **avoid having to send off your original documents or any extra cost** is to **make your application online**.

ONLINE - You may need to **upload your documents** and indicate the type of evidence enclosed. **You may** be able to keep your documents whilst your application is being processed - you'll be told when you apply. In both cases you will be required to take your original documents with you when you have to book a Service Point appointment (see section 11) for you biometric fingerprints and face recognition.

Using a good mobile phone camera is the easiest way to photograph each document and then upload them as their instructions tell you.

FOR OTHER ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTS CHECK YOUR AN GUIDE

Required Supporting Documents - read each section carefully

Section 1

- **Use the ID you used for your 2 tests** eg. your ILR Biometric Residence Permit or your in date valid passport etc. If uploading online remember to take photos of both sides of your ILR and if using a passport you will need p 2 with your photo and details on it plus a photo of the passport page showing the valid dates.

Section 2

Your evidence of knowledge of the English language of Life in the UK.

- Your stamped and signed **PASS CERTIFICATES** for your **B1 English Speaking and Listening Test** and for your **Life In The UK Test**.

You will have received these through the post about 7 days after taking your tests.

Section 3

Evidence of lawful residence during the 5 yrs before the date of application (3 years if you are married or in a civil partnership to a British citizen). this can be either:

- Your Passport **or**
- Letters from employers, educational establishments or other government departments indicating presence in the UK.

Section 4

Not applicable unless you are from Switzerland or European Economic Area. You will not need this anyway if you have **ILR**.

Section 5

Evidence of freedom from immigration time restrictions. This can be either:

- **Your passport** showing permission to remain permanently in the UK **or**
- **The Home Office letter** by which you were given permission to remain permanently in the UK

Section 6

Evidence of marriage for applications made on the basis of marriage or civil partnership to a British Citizenship. **BOTH:**

- Your spouse or civil partner's current passport or naturalisation/registration card. if applying by post you can send copies of **EVERY PAGE** of your passports, **including the BLANK pages. Plus**
- The Marriage or Civil Partnership Certificate

Section 7

Evidence of tax **for self-employed applicants only**

- Your most recent HM Revenue and Customs Self-Assessment Statement of Account.

Section 8 (only applicable if your work for Her Majesty's Government)

Evidence of **application based on your Crown Service** or **made on the basis of marriage or civil partnership** with a **British Citizen in Crown** or **designated service**

- **A letter from the relevant employer** confirming date and place of recruitment, position held and the extent to which it would be in the employers interest for the application to be granted.

Section 9

Joint Applications:

- Marriage or Civil Partnership Certificate

Section 10

If in employment - Evidence of National Insurance contributions covering the relevant period.

- **Payslips**
- **P60**
- **Letter** of confirmation from your employer confirming you have worked in their employment **including start and finish** dates.

Here is an **EXAMPLE** of **Required Supporting Documents** (uploaded) for an applicant who:

- has an ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain Biometric Card) (**both sides of the card uploaded**)
- Is both separated & estranged from their spouse or civil partner, who is a British Citizen
- Has a Syrian passport which expired in 2016 (**upload the relevant page showing the dates on the expired passport and the page showing your photo and details (as 2 separate documents)**)
- Passed the Life in the UK Test and has the stamped and signed certificate (**upload**).
- Passed the B1 Speaking and Listening Test and has the stamped and signed certificate (**upload**).
- 1st Referee Declaration (professional person who can be of any nationality) (**upload both sides of the declaration**).
- 2nd Referee Declaration (professional person or a person over the age of 25 yrs who holds a British Citizen Passport) (**upload both sides of the declaration**).
- Proof of living in the UK for 5yrs before the date of completing the application form (**upload**).

These are the documents uploaded onto the AN Application form in March 2020.

Section 11

Near the end of the application you'll be asked to make an appointment at a 'UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services' point (UKVCAS) (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvcas>) to provide your biometric information (your fingerprints and a photo) and to bring in all your original documents that you will have uploaded if you applied online.

This appointment **COSTS** between **£69:99** during working hours and **£135:00** outside of working hours. It costs an extra £1:99 for them to confirm your appointment by text and email (I recommend you pay for this).

(These costs were as of June 21st 2020 when the first interviews became available online following a phased ease-up on Covid-19 lockdown).

Service Point Locations and the Process of Booking an Appointment

- You can only attend a Service Point if you have an appointment.
- You must take with you the ID you have used for all other tests and appointments **plus** all the original documents you uploaded and that they will ask for in their text/email confirmation once you have booked.
- Ensure that once you have **RESERVED** an appointment at the end of your Application Form that you **BOOK IT** and **PAY**.
- You can book and pay separately after you have submitted your Application Form or if you have applied by post. Try to book it as soon as possible after submitting or posting you Application Form.
- They will be very good at keeping you informed once you have paid the extra £1:99 for text/ email to confirm your booking.

The following service points are currently open (July 2020):

- Belfast
- Birmingham
- Birmingham Premium Lounge

- Cardiff Bay
- Chelmsford
- Croydon
- Edinburgh
- Exeter
- Glasgow
- Leeds
- London Mark Lane Premium Lounge
- London Victoria
- Manchester Fountain Street Enhanced Service Point
- Manchester Premium Lounge
- Sheffield
- Southampton

Following this appointment, the Home Office will email you if they require any further documentation. They give you about 14 days to send this through by email **or your application will be REFUSED.**

- Be prompt in sending through what they ask for.
- Do not expect them to acknowledge receipt of further documentation
- If you have not heard from them by the stipulated date for your further documentation, then you must ring the Nationality Department on 0300 123 2253 (Option 1 then Option 1 or 2). **They will only be able to help you the DAY AFTER YOUR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION HAS BEEN WITH THE HOME OFFICE FOR 6 MONTHS.**

(The phone number was correct on July 14th 2020. Be aware that 0300 numbers can cost between 3p-40p per minute).

However, not having any confirmation of receipt of 'further documents' it would be worth sending through a further reply from the original email request sent through, stipulating your concern that you are fast approaching your deadline given by them and you have no idea as to whether they received the requested documents and if they are acceptable?

(this was the situation my friend found herself in, so we send through a final plea to the Home Office. Two days later, my friend heard that her British Citizenship been granted! Maybe our final plea was coincidental, we shall never know!).

- **Acceptance of British Citizenship** will arrive in the form of an attachment letter to a pleasant email under the SUBJECT: **Nationality Decision**, stating that your application has been successful and that you will need to attend a mandatory **British Citizenship Ceremony** where you will receive your official acceptance certificate. Below is a part of that attachment relating to the ceremony:

'...We will send out your invitation and you will then be able to book a ceremony with your local authority.

At your ceremony, you will be presented with your certificate of British citizenship.

Please note that an individual does not become a British citizen until they have completed a citizenship ceremony. Therefore, if your circumstances change in any material way prior to the ceremony being completed then your application may be subject to further review. This could occur for example where further evidence comes to light which indicates that you would no longer meet the good character requirement. Further guidance in relation to the good character requirement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-character-nationality-policy-guidance>."

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- OK, lets have a look at the basic costs (as of July 2020) so far **without EXTRA COSTS** requesting help from outside agencies:

-Life in the UK Test Handbook	£6.99
-B1 Speaking & Listening Test Book	£9.97
-Life in the UK Test	£50:00
-B1 Speaking & Listening Test	£150:00
-AN British Citizen Application	£1330.00
(+ hidden mandatory cost on application)	£49.20
-Service Point Appointment for checking your Documents & to provide your Biometric Information (This cost includes them texting /emailing confirmation etc to you).	£71.98
British Citizenship Ceremony	£80:00
<i>sub-total:</i>	<i>£1,748.14</i>

Keep a tab on any extra facilities you book as it will soon mount up. There are also the added costs of travelling to and from appointments, so build these in.

I hope that you find this helpful as starting from scratch, I found so many ‘helpful ‘ sites that just confused me more than ‘helped me’. You will still need to do some ground work yourself and hopefully with an English national helper / friend, but I do pray that you are successful in achieving your British Citizenship status.

If you find any **CHANGES** to the information given in this document or URL links that no longer exist, then please do **inform me via the website** so that I can update the details. I apologise in advance if there are any errors. They are not intentional so do again, let me know so I can amend them.

New Application Requirements for ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain).

Use the link below to check the requirements for ILR:

- Visa Categories
- ILR Qualification Criteria
- How long ILR is valid for?
- ILR and the pathway to British Citizenship
- Loss of ILR

<https://www.visallogic.net/uk/indefinite-leave-to-remain/4/50>

This link below has further (current at time of writing, September 2020) details, including

- Which form should you use?
- Costs
- Processing time
- Requirements in 2020
- Which tests do I need to pass?
- Exemptions for Life in the UK test
- English Language requirements for ILR 2020
- Required documents
- The 5 year Partner (husband / wife / civil partner)
 - Relationship requirements
 - Financial requirements
 - English Language requirements
 - Refusal reasons

- **Pathway to British Citizenship**

The eligibility criteria for British Naturalisation differ depending on the circumstances under which you apply.

If you are applying for British Naturalisation on the basis of being in the UK for 5 or more years you must:

- *Have lived legally in the UK for 5 years - you must not have been away from the UK for more than 450 days during that time, or 90 days during the last year*
- *Have **held Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK for at least 1 year at the time you make the application***
- *Be 18 years of age or over*
- *Be of good character*
- *Be of sound mind*
- *Satisfy the English language requirements (or Welsh or Scottish Gaelic)*
- *Pass the Life in the UK test*
- *Intend to have the UK as your main home*

If you are applying for British Naturalisation on the basis of being the spouse of a British citizen you must:

- *Have lived legally in the UK for three years - you must not have been away from the UK for more than 270 days during that time, or 90 days during the last year*

- *Have Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (permanent residence) at the time you make the application*
- *Be 18 years of age or over*
- *Be of good character*
- *Be of sound mind*
- *Satisfy the English language requirement (or Welsh or Scottish Gaelic).*
- *Pass the Life in the UK test*

(retrieved 15/09/20 @ 10:30am: <https://www.visalogsic.net/uk/british-naturalisation/4/12>)

<https://www.indefiniteleavetoremain.online/indefinite-leave-to-remain-ilr-2019/#indefinite-leave-to-remain-requirements-2020>

From studying these requirements, be prepared that in many cases you will need to pass both your 'Life in the UK' test **and** your 'English Speaking and Listening' test when applying for ILR.

The process for achieving these will be as laid out in the **British Citizenship Document on pages 3 - 7 (Section 7 & 8)**