



Citizenship ceremonies

Introduction Applicants over the age of 14 years, who have been granted citizenship, are required to make an oath or affirmation of allegiance to New Zealand. In most cases this occurs at a public ceremony conducted by a local authority, during which the oath or affirmation is made, and the applicant receives their citizenship certificate.

Table of Contents

Citizenship ceremonies	1
Introduction.....	1
Policy and legislation requirements	2
Legislation	2
Regulations	3
Regulation 7 of the Citizenship Regulations states:	3
7. 'Taking Of Oath Of Allegiance	3
General.....	4
Exemptions.....	4
Private Ceremonies.....	4
Certificate requirements	4
Deceased applicants	4
Legislation links	5

Policy and legislation requirements

Legislation

Citizenship Act 1977 Section 11 Minister may require oath or affirmation of allegiance to be taken

Section 11 of the Citizenship Act 1977 states:

The Minister may, in such case or class of cases as the Minister thinks fit, make the grant of New Zealand citizenship conditional upon the applicant taking an oath of allegiance in the form specified in the First Schedule, or making an affirmation to similar effect.

Unless the Minister agrees otherwise, the oath or affirmation must be taken or made at a public citizenship ceremony.

The Oaths and Declarations Act 1957

The way that an oath or affirmation must be taken is set out in the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957. The Act specifically refers to the oath being taken on a Bible, New Testament or Old Testament.

The Act also states, however, that 'The oath may be administered and taken in any manner which the person taking it may declare to be binding on him.'

This provision of the Act may be interpreted to allow an applicant to swear their oath on any holy book they choose or, should they choose, on no book at all.

Continued on next page

Policy and legislation requirements, Continued

Regulations **Regulation 7 of the Citizenship Regulations states:**

7. 'Taking Of Oath Of Allegiance

1. The oath of allegiance set out in the Schedule 1 of the Act, or an affirmation to the same effect, may be taken—
 - a. in New Zealand, before a District Court Judge, a solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand, a Justice of the Peace, a member of Parliament, the mayor or deputy mayor of a territorial authority, the chairperson or deputy chairperson of a regional council, or the Secretary;
 - b. in any island of Tokelau, before the person elected as the Faipule for that island;
 - c. in any other country, before a New Zealand representative or such other British overseas representative as is authorised for the purpose by the Minister.
2. In any country in which there is no New Zealand or British overseas representative, the oath of allegiance or an affirmation to the same effect may be taken before—
 - a. any other Commonwealth representative; or
 - b. a Judge; or
 - c. a person who is authorised by the law of that country to administer oaths; or
 - d. a person who is authorised for that purpose by the Minister.
3. Where the Minister makes a grant of citizenship conditional on the applicant taking the oath of allegiance or making an affirmation to the same effect,—
 - a. the Secretary must advise the applicant in writing of the requirement; and
 - b. the oath must be taken or the affirmation made within 1 year of the date of that letter; and
 - c. if the oath is not taken or the affirmation is not made within that time or within any further time that the Minister may allow, the grant of citizenship lapses.'

Continued on next page

Policy and legislation requirements, Continued

General

Applicants are required to swear the Oath or make the Affirmation of Allegiance to the Queen, as New Zealand's Head of State, at a public ceremony held by their local authority.

Exemptions

Applicants are exempt, if they:

are under 14 years of age

have received a grant pursuant to section 10 of the Citizenship Act 1977 which provides that anyone who was born to a New Zealand mother shall be given a grant

are a New Zealand citizen by descent, who has applied for the grant of citizenship, or

is a British child migrant.

An applicant may be exempt, if they:

live overseas

cannot speak English

are so severely disabled that attendance is not practical

have a specific exemption provided by the Minister.

Private Ceremonies

Private ceremonies require the consent of the Minister, with the exception of people who qualify for a waiver of the English language requirement. Requests for private ceremonies must be included as part of a submission to the Minister unless the reason is one that has been considered acceptable by agreement with the Minister.

Certificate requirements

Applicants (except those specifically exempted) must attend a ceremony, and say the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance before receiving their citizenship certificate.

Deceased applicants

If a citizenship certificate is requested by a deceased applicant's family member(s), one can be issued if the applicant was exempt from attending a public ceremony to take the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance.

A citizenship certificate must not be issued if the deceased applicant:

4. was granted citizenship by the Minister, subject to their taking the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance, and
 5. did not attend a ceremony, or
 6. was not exempt from attending a ceremony.
-

Continued on next page

Policy and legislation requirements, Continued

Legislation links

[Citizenship Act 1977](#)

[Oaths and Declarations Act 1957](#)

Disclaimer: For any questions email citizenship@dia.govt.nz. We make every reasonable effort to maintain current and accurate information on this site, and it has been assembled in good faith. Printed versions of this document, are not guaranteed to be up-to-date. While use of the information in this document may assist you to apply for New Zealand citizenship, applications will be assessed by the Department of Internal Affairs according to the requirements of the Citizenship Act 1977.