

Verification of citizenship applicant's name

Introduction Before an applicant's eligibility for citizenship can be determined it is necessary to establish their identity and name. It is not possible to process a citizenship application for schedule purposes if the identity of the applicant cannot be established. When the applicant's identity has been established, the applicant's eligibility for citizenship can be assessed, and their name determined for citizenship purposes. An applicant is normally identified by the documents and photograph they provide in support of their application.

When considering an applicant's names, consider why the Department is collecting this information. For DIA purposes, citizenship will be granted in a particular name, and this name forms an important part of a citizen's identity in New Zealand. Equally important, the character checks undertaken by the Department must be comprehensive. To ensure the check is thorough it is important to capture all names an applicant has used or could use. This allows the police and other agencies to check all possible identities.

The applicant's passport is evidence of the current name. When determining a person's name, begin with the information in the passport, then take into account the information supplied in the application form, birth document, and other documents supplied in support of the application. An applicant's current name, as stated in their passport, should be able to be traced back to the birth document they supply. Where an applicant has changed their name between birth and obtaining their current passport, all changes should be able to be tracked, for instance by marriage or statutory declaration.

Flexibility should be used in all cases where an applicant states that the name in their passport is not, in fact, their current name. Discuss with a team leader or senior colleague if necessary.

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General

Determining the name of an applicant

The name of an applicant should be determined by examining all of the supporting documentation provided by the applicant.

This includes:

- birth certificate
- passport or other travel document.

It may also include:

- marriage certificate
 - civil union certificate
 - change of name by statutory declaration or deed poll
 - affidavit
 - other miscellaneous documents.
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Immigration New Zealand (INZ) records

Check the applicant's name and personal details as recorded on the INZ Applicant Management System (AMS) database. In some cases it may be necessary to contact INZ directly, to confirm the name and documents provided by the applicant when they applied to enter New Zealand.

Flexibility

Provided an applicant can be clearly identified:

- some flexibility can be exercised when determining what name or names will be recorded on the applicant's citizenship certificate.
 - Citizenship may have regard to known naming conventions that are an established cultural practice in the applicant's country of origin.
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Family name

Determining the family name of an applicant

An applicant's family name should, if possible, be determined from the applicant's birth certificate.

If a birth certificate clearly identifies an applicant's family name, e.g. by the use of the upper case, this is the name that should be recorded on the citizenship certificate, regardless of whether it is recorded as the last name on the birth certificate.

The applicant should be:

- given the opportunity to provide a written explanation of any discrepancy in the recording of their name
- advised of their ability to change their name by statutory declaration.

If the birth certificate does not clearly identify the applicant's family name, consider/review the other documents provided by the applicant.

Determining the family name of an applicant who has been married

The family name of an applicant who has been married may be recorded as:

- their maiden name, or
 - their spouse's family name (as recorded on the marriage certificate), or
 - a combination of their maiden family name and their spouse's family name. This may be in the form of a double-barrelled name, with or without a hyphen.
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Determining the family name of an applicant who has entered into a civil union

The family name of an applicant who has entered into a civil union may be recorded as:

- their family name prior to union, or
 - their partner's family name (as recorded on the civil union certificate), or
 - a combination of their family name prior to union and their partner's family name. This may be in the form of a double-barrelled name, with or without a hyphen.
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Family name, Continued

**Applicants
married or
entered into
civil union
more than
once**

Citizenship must be able to trace all changes of name from birth, including changes of name as a result of marriage, civil union or divorce.

An applicant who has been married or entered into a civil union more than once must provide documents to link all name changes, or possible name changes.

If clear links cannot be made with the supporting documents, the applicant is required to provide additional documents to confirm their identity.

The applicant should be:

- given the opportunity to provide a written explanation of any discrepancy in the recording of their name
 - advised of their ability to change their name by statutory declaration.
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Given name

Without limiting the flexibility provided for in the general section of this policy, the applicant's given name(s) will generally include all the applicant's given names recorded on their birth certificate, and may also include an additional name or names comprising:

- one or more of the parent's names, as they are recorded on the applicant's birth certificate.
 - If the applicant uses one or more of their parent's names, and the name is included in the applicant's passport, the citizenship certificate should record the given name(s) in the same order as they appear in their passport.
 - If the additional parent's name(s) are not recorded in the applicant's passport, ask the applicant for a written explanation.
 - The applicant should be asked to demonstrate that they use the name(s), by providing two additional documents as evidence of usage. The citizenship certificate should record the given name(s) in the same order as they appear in the additional documents.
- name(s) recorded in the biodata section of the applicant's passport.
 - The citizenship certificate should record the given name(s) in the same order as they appear in the passport.
- the applicant's family name prior to marriage or civil union.
 - The family name should be recorded as either the applicant's first or last given name. This applies to both male and female applicants.

One name

Applicants with one name

If an applicant has only one name, it may be recorded as either a given name or a family name.

When determining if the applicant's name should be recorded as a given or a family name, consider the application form and any other documents the applicant has provided (such as a passport).

The name should be searched under and added into Citizenship Operations System (COS) as both a given name and a family name.

Other names

Name changes

A person's name may change in a number of different ways including:

- marriage
 - change of name by statutory declaration.
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Name change by statutory declaration

An applicant may change their name by statutory declaration in order to have a name that is not recorded on their supporting documents recorded on their citizenship certificate.

If the statutory declaration is forwarded to Citizenship prior to the application being sent to the Minister i.e. if the applicant changes their name between approval and their ceremony, the application may be processed in the new name.

Passport records two names of equal standing

Some passports such as Chinese passports, may record that an applicant has two names that appear to be of equal standing. In these circumstances, the applicant may choose which of the two names is to be used.

Name changes

A person's name may change in a number of different ways including:

- marriage
 - change of name by statutory declaration.
-

Use of Jr, III etc

If an applicant's name is recorded on their documents with, for example 'Jr' or 'III', this should also be recorded on their citizenship certificate. The 'III' should be recorded on the citizenship certificate by use of the upper case 'I'.

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Other names, Continued

Apostrophes, hyphens, full stops, non-alphabetical symbols

If an applicant's documents record the applicant's names with an apostrophe, hyphen or full stop, this should be recorded on the citizenship certificate.

All other non-alphabetical symbols recorded on an applicant's documents, such as a number, a symbol (e.g. @), an umlaut, a grave or other accent mark cannot be recorded on the citizenship certificate because Citizenship Operations System does not allow foreign letters to be entered.

Citizenship can, however, rewrite a word to 'translate' the meaning of certain foreign punctuation, or pronunciation aids if the applicant requests this, e.g. Mr Muller can be written as Mr Muller or Mr Mueller. This meets International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Machine Readable Documents guidelines.

Minor spelling difference in given name

If there is a minor spelling difference between an applicant's name recorded on their birth certificate and passport, e.g. Ann/Anne, the citizenship certificate may be issued in the passport name, if this is what the applicant wants (and is not merely an error by the issuing authority) provided the name variation is confirmed by two supporting documents.

Supporting documents are commonly the passport and a marriage certificate.

Order of names on citizenship certificate

The family name should always be the last name recorded on the citizenship certificate, unless it is followed by, for example, 'Jr' or 'III'.

Recording name(s) on citizenship certificate

Given name(s) and family name(s) are differentiated from each other on citizenship certificates by the use of regular and bold typeface. Given names are always recorded first in regular typeface. Family names are always recorded in bold typeface. For example:

- Given Names: Mary Jane Karen
 - Family Name: **Brown.**
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Other names, Continued

Request to record part of a given name

An applicant may ask to have only part of their given name recorded on their citizenship certificate. This may be for cultural or religious reasons.

The citizenship certificate should record the applicant's full given name, including the part of the name the applicant does not wish to be recorded.

The applicant should be given the opportunity to provide a written explanation of any discrepancy in the recording of their name. The applicant should also be advised of their ability to change their name by statutory declaration.

Samoaan names

Matai Certificate

If an applicant is using a 'Matai' name as his last name, he must provide the Matai Certificate.

Order of names

Applicants cannot reverse the order of their birth certificate given names, unless they execute a change of name by statutory declaration.

Applicants known by more than one name

Enter in all of the applicant's AKAs (also known as) to make sure the citizenship database is complete.

Disclosure

Samoaan applicants are not required to answer the disclosure question on their application form, as this is not a requirement under the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982.

Cultural naming conventions

Provided an applicant can be clearly identified, Citizenship may acknowledge known naming conventions that are an established cultural practice in the applicant's country of origin, therefore some flexibility can be exercised when determining what name or names will be recorded on the applicant's citizenship certificate. If in doubt, speak to a team leader.

Legislation links

[Citizenship Act 1977](#)

[Citizenship \(Western Samoa\) Act 1982](#)
