

Verification of citizenship applicant's place and country of birth

Introduction Documents provided by an applicant are used to: verify the applicant's place and country of birth determine the place and country of birth that will appear on a successful applicant's citizenship certificate.

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Place and country of birth

General Citizenship policy is to record an applicant's place and country of birth.

Acceptance of place and country names Citizenship preferences for acceptable places and countries of birth.

Acceptable	Unacceptable	Prefer not to use
The following places of birth are generally accepted if recorded on an applicant's birth certificate: village town city.	Citizenship will generally not accept the following places of birth: building street number street name province state.	Unless the applicant's documents only record one of the following as their place of birth, Citizenship generally prefers not to use: ward suburb barrio metropolitan borough sub-district district county. If there is more than one of the above recorded, regard should be given to the applicant's preference.

Birth certificate Place and country of birth should be taken, in the first instance, from the details provided on the applicant's birth certificate.

Citizenship generally considers that an applicant's birth certificate records their correct and official place of birth.

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Place and country of birth, Continued

Acknowledgment of passports names

Citizenship acknowledges that an applicant's passport is a key identity document, and a passport may record a place of birth that is accurate but not entirely consistent with the applicant's birth certificate, e.g. the applicant's birth certificate may record a suburb, and their passport may record the city in which the suburb is located.

Flexibility to use passport

The applicant's passport may be used if the place of birth recorded on a birth certificate is one that Citizenship prefers not to use, or is generally considered unacceptable; and the passport records a place of birth that is not entirely consistent with the birth certificate, but is accurate, and is an acceptable place of birth.

If the applicant's passport is not accurate, for example the place of birth recorded in the passport is entirely different to the place of birth recorded on the birth certificate, the passport should not be used.

If all of the documents an applicant has provided record an unacceptable place of birth, e.g. a province or state, the applicant should be asked to complete a statutory declaration that provides an acceptable place of birth, or if necessary, a place of birth that Citizenship normally prefers not to use.

For determinations applications, ask the applicant for a letter from the issuing authority, confirming that the information on the certificate is all that can be supplied. Consult team leader if more information required.

No place of birth recorded on documents

If an applicant's personal documents do not record their place of birth, the details should be taken from the details provided on the application form, if the applicant has exhausted all other possible documentary avenues to evidence their place of birth.

For determinations applications, obtain a statutory declaration (the application form is not a statutory declaration).

Preferences

General

An applicant may prefer the current name of their place or country of birth. Previously, Citizenship policy was to record an applicant's place and country of birth on a strictly historical basis.

Current policy applies to applications received after 1 August 2001. Citizenship will not alter details on citizenship certificates issued prior to the introduction of this policy, unless the office has made an error.

Use of alternative names

An applicant may choose an alternative name to denote their place or country of birth, if the preference is consistent with the documents the applicant has provided and is:
a name in use at the time of their birth (or any time subsequently) (if a place) located in their country of birth
clearly identified using the Times Atlas.

For example, if an applicant produces documents which state that they were born in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe), but the applicant prefers Harare as the place of birth, it is acceptable to enter Harare on the applicant's record and citizenship certificate.

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Preferences, Continued

No documentary evidence

Grants applications

If an applicant is unable to provide documentary evidence to support their preference to have an alternative place or country of birth entered on their record, a written explanation should be obtained from the applicant stating their reasons for being unable to provide documentary evidence.

The decision to allow the preferred place or country of birth to be recorded will depend on whether it can be determined that: the name was in use at the time of their birth (or any time subsequently)
an acceptable written explanation was provided by the applicant
any other supporting documents can verify the preference
the preferred name can be clearly identified using the Times Atlas.

Determinations applications

Consult your team leader. Approval is never granted without evidence of place and country of birth.

Matching

When checking current and historical names of places and countries:
current town names should be matched with current country names, and
historical town names matched with historical country names.

For example:

Saigon with South Vietnam / Ho Chi Min City with Vietnam
Salisbury with Southern Rhodesia / Harare with Zimbabwe.

Discrepancies

If there is a discrepancy in the way the applicant's details are recorded, ask the applicant for a written explanation.

Discretion

The Citizenship Office may decline to enter the applicant's preferred place name, or country name, if it is not satisfied the preference is supported by the applicant's documents or other evidence.

Spelling of place names

The spelling of a place name is determined using the following principles:

1	<p>Citizenship has compiled a list of preferred spellings for countries that have more than one spelling when translated into English.</p> <p>The preferred spelling should be entered on the applicant's record and recorded on their citizenship certificate.</p>
2	<p>All other place names are spelt according to the main spelling used in the Times Atlas or, in the case of Britain, from the Bartholomew Gazetteer, unless noted as an exception in the following principles.</p> <p>If an applicant wishes to use a former place name to denote their place of birth, it should be spelt according to the spelling used in the Times Atlas index.</p>
3	<p>All European place names are given their standard English spelling, e.g. Rome not Roma. In most cases the standard English spelling in the Times Atlas follows the main spelling and is shown in brackets.</p> <p>Many documents record the place name in the language of the country and in French. The first and second principles apply in these instances.</p>
4	<p>If a place name cannot be found in the Times Atlas or the Bartholomew Gazetteer, the spelling of the location should be (in order of preference) the spelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">in the applicant's birth certificatein the applicant's passportused by the applicant. <p>If the original birth certificate is not in English, the spelling adopted is the spelling in the translated English version.</p> <p>If the applicant does not agree with the translated spelling it is their responsibility to have the translation changed or redone.</p>
5	<p>All place names are recorded without accents other than hyphens and apostrophes. This is in line with the policy in the Passport Office.</p>

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Citizenship certificates

Certificates fields

There are only two place of birth fields on the citizenship certificate, therefore only two place of birth names can be recorded on an applicant's certificate. For example, an applicant born in 'Paris, Texas, USA' must be recorded as 'Paris, USA' regardless of the fact there may be more than one Paris in the USA.

Recording place and country of birth

The following are examples of the place of birth to be recorded on the citizenship certificate:

Document	Place of birth	Place of birth on citizenship certificate
Birth certificate	Surrey Hills, Sydney	Sydney
Birth certificate	Sydney	Sydney
Birth certificate Passport	Surrey Hills Sydney	Sydney
Birth certificate Passport	Surrey Hills Surrey Hills	Surrey Hills
Birth certificate Passport	Surrey Hills New South Wales	Surrey Hills
Birth certificate Passport	Surrey Hills Melbourne	Surrey Hills
Birth certificate Passport Statutory declaration	AMP Building New South Wales Sydney	Sydney

Naming conventions

Some cities commonly use the term 'city' as an integral part of the recognised name, for example Ho Chi Minh City, Mexico City and Quezon City.

If the term 'city' is an integral part of the recognised name, it should be entered on the applicant's record. Refer to the Times Atlas.

Samoan

Place of birth Western Samoa officially changed its name to Samoa, effective on 04 July 1997.

The first place name given on a Samoan birth certificate should be recorded for citizenship purposes, e.g. if the place of birth is listed on the birth certificate as X Y, the place of birth should be recorded as X.

Motootua Hospital and Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital should simply be recorded as Motootua, or Apia. Ignore the apostrophe that is sometimes included on older birth certificates.

Medcen Hospital is in Vailima.

Fusi Hospital is in Fusi.

Foaluga Hospital is in Foaluga.

Malietoa Tanumafili II Hospital is in Tuasivi.

If there is a discrepancy between documents regarding the applicant's place of birth, the discrepancy needs to be queried.
