

ENTRY CLEARANCE FLOWCHART – APPLICATION MADE OUTSIDE COUNTRY

(in country application for someone already in the UK with permission to work, e.g. for FLR(M), is similar and simpler!!)

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- please see <https://creativecommons.org/> to understand what this means.

This document was prepared for anyone who might benefit, inspired by the members and administrators of Reunite Families UK and I Love My Foreign Spouse. Please visit and support them!



Reunite Families UK

- <https://www.reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk/>

PRE-APPLICATION

1/ Undertake any required tests :

- TB (certain nationalities)
- English (unless exempt)

2/ Collect supporting documentation.



APPLY

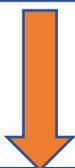
1/ Complete online application, select service level, pay fee

2/ Receive acknowledgement, reference number, document checklist

3/ Book appointment at partner website (VFS/TLS/Sopra), select location, add any optional services

4/ Download completed application form

5/ Upload supporting evidence online



ATTEND

1/ Attend VAC appointment, bringing id and other evidence (if not already uploaded)

2/ ID checked by staff

3/ Photo + fingerprints scan ('biometric enrolment')

4/ Documents scanned and returned to customer

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION AS A SPOUSE/FIANCE/PARTNER

FINANCIAL

Meeting the threshold through employment income, non-employment income, savings, pensions, self-employment income, or being exempt (adequate maintenance)

See questions 5 to 46 of the FAQ.

Category A and B: Employment income (UK sponsor only – unless non-UK partner is already in UK with permission to work!) at £18,600 or greater (higher if sponsoring a non-UK child) – see questions 24 onwards in the FAQ.

Category C: Non-employment income (either sponsor or applicant) such as rental or academic grants – see question 22 in the FAQ.

Category D: Savings (either sponsor or applicant) – see questions 29 onwards in the FAQ.

Category E: Pension (either sponsor or applicant) – see question 21 in the FAQ.

Categories F and G: Self-employment income (UK sponsor only) – see question 28 in the FAQ.

Exemption through certain benefits and adequate maintenance: see questions 11 and 12 in the FAQ.

Combining categories: See question 40 in the FAQ.

Also see question 99 in the FAQ for guidance on the 28 day rule for financial documents.

Common pitfalls:

Category A/B: Not enough bank statements/payslips, employment letter missing relevant details, cash payments not being paid into bank, breaking the 28 day rule for financial documents, nonsalaried employment as salaried, overseas job details but no offer of UK employment, not evidencing correct months for Special Leave.

Category C: (Rental) Tenancy agreement and bank statements only, evidence of 3rd party property ownership without considering shared income; (Grant) insufficient document of grant, attempt to use student loans.

Category D: Not holding liquid funds for 6 months, not showing ownership and value at start of 6 months for stocks/bonds, using *gross* proceeds from house sale, 6 months bank statements with only closing balance over threshold.

Category F/G: Using turnover not gross profit, partnership agreement not provided, trying to combine with savings; (Director) bank statements not corresponding to financial year

Exemption/benefits: Missing or partial documentation i.e. not including both entitlement and amount received, trying to use a benefit that does not qualify for exemption.

Home Office guidance on all Categories:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957305/appendix-fm-1-7-financial-requirement-v6.0-ext.pdf



RELATIONSHIP

Evidence of an ongoing, genuine and subsisting relationship, also showing the relevant divorce papers where applicable.

See questions 47 to 67 of the FAQ.

Good practice:

(Where possible and guidance only!) – Joint financial responsibilities, evidence of joint travel, evidence of having a family together, chat records showing ‘real’ conversations. Obviously other evidence may need to be shown where travel difficult or where they are only just starting family life, e.g. for a fiancé visa!

Common pitfalls:

Missing marriage or civil partner certificate, missing divorce certificate, insufficient evidence of them living together where applicable (obviously only applies where they *have* lived together!)

NOTE!:

The relationship requirement is not an exact science so e.g. some forms of evidence may be impossible for some especially where travel has been difficult or where they are at start of relationship e.g. fiancé visa. So don't panic but be prepared!

Here variety is the spice of life and it's probably best to show as many types of evidence of ongoing devotion as possible!



LANGUAGE

Meeting the English language threshold through passing a recognised test OR holding a suitable academic qualification OR coming from a recognised English-speaking country.

See questions 70 to 86 of the FAQ.

Common pitfalls: Not taking the right test or taking a test not from the right centre, a non-genuine or missing certificate, a degree certificate not at the right level i.e. below bachelor's.

Home Office guidance on meeting the language requirement: <https://www.gov.uk/english-language/approved-english-language-qualifications>

Approved language tests and centres: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt>



ACCOMMODATION

Demonstrating that the accommodation is suitable and not overcrowded as defined in the Housing Act.

See question 92 of the FAQ.



MEDICAL

People from certain countries need to pass a TB test.

See question 69 of the FAQ.

Home Office guidance on countries and test providers: <https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/countries-where-you-need-a-tb-test-to-enter-the-uk>

Pitfalls: Expired certificates, using certificates from non-approved medical practitioners (see link).



'SUITABILITY' AND ELIGIBILITY

'Good character' and criminality among other things.

Note that a criminal record check need *not* be provided and arguably *should* not be, at least where the applicant does not have a criminal record!

Where someone has a criminal record, this requirement is largely based on length of sentence where applicable.

See question 66 of the FAQ.

Relevant section of the Immigration Rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-fm-family-members> (Section S)

IMPORTANT NOTE!

Apart from the above, except when the Covid exemption is in place, the applicant must not be in the UK as a visitor! In country applications can only be made when the applicant is in the UK with permission to work, i.e. on a visa lasting more than 6 months (except for the fiancé visa, where the application to remain as a spouse is expected).



Success and lifelong happiness through good planning! 😊 (Hopefully). Good luck!!

REFERENCES

Please read this chart in conjunction with the 'Divided Families' FAQ as it constantly refers to the relevant questions and answers :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ReunitefamiliesUK/permalink/2819893021648939> June 2022 Divided Families FAQ with many questions and answers – (Reunite Families UK, Facebook)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/139807999382936/permalink/5429316930431990> (the same document on I Love My Foreign Spouse, Facebook)

On the RFUK website: https://www.reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ilmfs_faq_2022-converted.pdf

There are many checklists for successful applications are available in the Facebook Files sections of the Reunite Families UK and ILMFS groups. Some are examples of people's successful applications, some are more generic and built on years of experience. These make good reference points :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ReunitefamiliesUK/files> (Reunite Families UK)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/139807999382936/files> (I Love My Foreign Spouse)

Guidance on financial requirements :

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957305/appendix-fm-1-7-financial-requirement-v6.0-ext.pdf

Guidance on the language requirement :

<https://www.gov.uk/english-language/approved-english-language-qualifications>

Approved language tests :

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt>

Appendix FM, the part of the Immigration Rules which covers family migration :

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-fm-family-members>

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