

Changes to process for UK settlement visa applicants in Japan

UK Visas & Immigration is changing the way UK settlement visa applicants in Japan submit their supporting documents.

From 20 March 2017, all supporting documents should be sent to the UK address below by the sponsor or applicant.

Settlement Applications, International Operations and Visas

PO Box 5852

Sheffield

United Kingdom

S11 0FX

Applicants can also choose a new [service](#) where their documents will be scanned and submitted by our commercial partner, VFS Global, for an additional fee.

We aim to make a decision on a settlement visa in 60 working days. If you have opted for our Settlement Priority Visa Service, your application will be put at the front of the queue and the decision expedited.

Preparing your application for submission

Supporting documents should be sent as soon as possible to the UK **after** the online application form has been completed, and should include your unique GWF number. The documents may be sent **before** your application and biometrics are submitted. The guidelines below will help you as you prepare your application.

- Where required, **original documents** should be provided. If photocopies are also submitted, they must be clear and legible. We also recommend you provide photocopies of all the original documents you submit to help us process your application quickly.
- Where possible all documents should be **A4 size**. Any documents which are smaller or larger than A4 size should, where possible, be photocopied onto A4 sized paper. This includes the pages of any previous passports. All documents should be free from paper clips, pins or staples before they are submitted.
- Please attach any Premium or Priority Service **receipts** to the front of the bundle, to alert the team it is a priority application.
- Please also include a photocopy of biometric page of the **applicant's passport** at the front of the bundle.
- Ensure that the **GWF reference number** (generated when the application is completed online), and the **location of the centre** where the application was lodged, are both marked clearly on the outside of the envelope and at the top right hand corner of the first page of the enclosed documents.
- Torn, crumpled or heavily creased documents cannot be scanned and therefore should be photocopied onto A4 sized paper before they are submitted.
- Documents should not be laminated.

Once you have prepared your documents, please submit them along with a suitably sized pre-paid, self-addressed envelope for return, either to an address in the UK or in Japan.

Failure to follow these instructions may result in a delay to the assessment of the application, even if you have paid for the priority service. Please note that supporting documents may be returned before you receive a decision on the application. This is a normal part of the process and there is no need to contact us.

What will happen to my passport?

Your passport will not be sent to the UK but will remain with UK Visas & Immigration throughout the process.

What does my sponsor need to do?

For any applications made on or after 20 March 2017, all the supporting documents for your application should be sent directly to Sheffield at the address above.

What will happen to my documents?

Supporting documents will be returned directly from the Sheffield decision making centre to the address you provide on the enclosed return envelope.

My sponsor sent my documents to UKVI in Manila, will I get refused?

We accept that there may be a small number of errors initially. For a transition period of one month, supporting documents sent in error to Manila will be forwarded to Sheffield. After that period, documents will be returned to the sender for re-submission to Sheffield.

Will it take longer for my visa to be processed?

No, we will continue to process visa applications in line with our global customer service standard, which is 60 working days for a standard settlement application. A Settlement Priority Visa Service is also available to eligible customers, which guarantees the application will be processed at the front of the queue. This expedited service will begin when both the application and supporting documents are received by UKVI rather than when they are submitted. Where we are unable to resolve an application within our service standards, we will continue to write to applicants to explain why.