

## KNOWLEDGE OF LIFE IN THE UK:

### NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR SETTLEMENT APPLICATIONS FROM 2 APRIL 2007

#### Background

The Government believes strongly that those who wish to settle in the UK should be encouraged to play a full part in their wider community. We have had tests of language and of UK life for citizenship applicants since November 2005 and we have now included those people who intend staying permanently in the UK in these arrangements. This will, we hope, encourage people to learn English and to find out about our structures, laws, democratic processes and traditions at the earliest opportunity, so that they can better realise their ambitions here and become full and active citizens earlier. Effective integration of those who wish to adopt the UK as their home – including embracing a common language and an understanding of life in the UK – is important to continued good race relations and community cohesion and is a central part of the Government's managed migration policy which benefits our society and economy.

Therefore all adults who now apply for settlement (indefinite leave to remain) 2 April 2007 will need to demonstrate knowledge of language and of "life in the UK" in addition to meeting the usual requirements for settlement.

#### 1. What is Knowledge of Life in the UK?

This is the need to demonstrate knowledge of life in the United Kingdom as well as language ability. There are two ways in which you can do this:

- If you are already at or above [ESOL \(English for Speakers of other languages\) Entry 3](#) standard of English you will be able to undertake a specially developed short test called "[Life in the UK Test](#)".

Or

- If you have not reached [ESOL Entry 3](#) you will need to gain an approved [English for Speakers of Other Languages \(ESOL\)](#) qualification through attending an ESOL course which includes citizenship materials at a local college.

Details of the two ways in which you can meet the language and knowledge requirements for the purposes of settlement, that is acquiring indefinite leave to remain in the UK, are set out below.

If you are not sure what your level of language ability is, you should work through the tutorial on the Life in the UK Test website [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk). If you are unable to fully understand the information then it is likely you will need to enrol on an [ESOL with citizenship](#) course.

## **Life in the UK Test**

You may take this test if your language ability is the equivalent of [ESOL Entry 3](#) or above. You will need to take the test on a computer at one of the 100 or so Life in the UK Test centres in the UK. The test is managed on behalf of the Home Office by Ufi Ltd, which is responsible for "learndirect" and "UK online centres". The test consists of 24 questions based on the information contained in the handbook "Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship". The handbook was originally published in December 2004 and a revised handbook was published on 26 March 2007. You need to make sure you read the correct edition of the handbook, which will vary depending on when you take your test. If you are taking the test now you should study the second edition of the handbook. However, applicants can still take the test based on the first edition of the handbook up until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Further information regarding the [handbook and test](#) is detailed in the Questions and Answers below.

The handbook is available from The Stationery Office and many bookshops and is priced at £9.99. The book can be ordered online from: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop). The test itself currently costs £34 (this is under review) and you will be told the result on the day.

Further details can be found in the [Question and Answers](#) below, and on the Life in the UK test website [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk). This website also contains a full list of centres where you can take the test. Or you can call the Life in the UK Test helpline on 0800 015 4245.

If you pass this test you will **not** need to produce additional proof of your knowledge of English. This is because to pass the test you will need to be competent in English.

## **ESOL with Citizenship Content Courses.**

If you are not yet at [ESOL Entry 3](#) you will be able to meet the new requirements by successfully completing a language course, involving learning materials which incorporate information about citizenship. These materials are intended to enable you to gain sufficient knowledge of the UK at the same time as developing your knowledge of the English language. In order to meet the requirements for settlement, you will need to show that you have progressed from one ESOL level to the next.

Courses are available at many Further Education, Adult and Community Colleges across the UK. You will need to make sure the college course that you enrol for includes the "language with citizenship" materials and that the college will give you a letter to this effect when you have successfully gained your qualification. ESOL certificates are issued by one of the approved

Awarding Bodies and not by Colleges themselves, so you will be gaining an externally verified qualification that might be useful to you in work or further study.

You can call the learndirect helpline on 0800 100 900 for details of ESOL providers. Further details on ESOL courses can be found in [Questions and Answers](#) below.

## **2. When was this introduced for settlement?**

The requirement was introduced for all applications for indefinite leave to remain posted to the Home Office on or after 2 April 2007.

## **3. Why has it been introduced for settlement?**

By introducing knowledge of life and language testing at settlement stage, we will ensure that migrants have an understanding of life in the UK and the requisite skills to allow them to fully integrate. Studying for and taking the test will give applicants the practical knowledge needed to live in this country and to take part in society.

## **4. Why was the requirement introduced for citizenship first?**

It was always envisaged that there would be a phased introduction of these new requirements. This was to enable us to develop robust systems and to develop capacity in a structured manner. Knowledge of one of the UK languages has been a requirement for citizenship for many years. The changes introduced in July 2004 simply formalised the requirement by specifying the level of competence required and bringing in a more objective assessment process. We then added to this the citizenship knowledge requirement and this, the final stage, is extending the requirement to settlement applicants. Because the settlement requirements are identical to the citizenship requirements, over time the need for citizenship testing will reduce.

## **5. Is anyone exempt?**

Applicants aged under 18 or 65 and over are exempt

Applicants who have significant physical and/ or mental health condition(s) or incapacity may be exempt if their condition would prevent them from studying for or taking the knowledge of life test, or from studying for an ESOL qualification. Exemption on these grounds will only be given in exceptional cases.

In addition people applying for indefinite leave to remain (settlement) in the following categories will not have to meet the knowledge of language and life requirement:

- Applicants who qualify for ILR under the domestic violence provisions of the rules.

- Foreign and commonwealth citizens on discharge from HM Forces (including Ghurkas where the qualifying period has been met)
- Spouses of foreign and commonwealth citizens on discharge from HM Forces (including Ghurkas)
- Bereaved Spouses/Bereaved Unmarried Partners/Bereaved Civil Partners
- Parents/Grandparents/Other Dependant Relatives - applications made under Paragraph 317 of the Immigration Rules.
- Retired Persons of Independent Means.
- Spouses/ Civil Partners/ unmarried / same sex Partners of British citizens or persons settled in the UK who are permanent members of HM Diplomatic Service; staff members of the British Council on a tour of duty abroad; and staff members of the Department for International Development
- European Nationals making an application under the FMOP provisions (not Immigration Rules based)
- Turkish ECAA nationals.

People in these additional categories will, however, have to meet the knowledge of English and UK life requirements if they apply for citizenship, unless they then qualify for exemption on age, physical or mental health or incapacity grounds.

## **6. What do I need to do if I think I am exempt?**

You will need to include in your application to Border and Immigration Agency detailed reasons for claiming exemption. You should contact the Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766 for further advice if you are unsure.

## **7. What evidence do I need to provide if I think I am exempt?**

You will need to supply documentary evidence of your age, for example by producing a passport or birth certificate, or evidence from an NHS qualified medical practitioner. The evidence should give details of any physical and/ or mental health condition(s) that prevent you from studying for or taking the test, or prevents you undertaking an ESOL language course. You should be aware that test centres can cater for applicants with a range of disabilities, for example limited mobility and visual impairment, and you should contact your nearest centre for advice on what they provide.

If you are claiming exemption because you are applying for settlement under one of the categories to which knowledge of language and life does not apply

you should ensure that you can meet the strict criteria applied in each of these categories and can supply the documentary evidence required to support this.

**8. Why does someone whose first language is English, or has lived and been educated here have to meet the requirement?**

The requirement is that applicants must have knowledge of both language **and** of life in the UK. The Life in the UK test allows those applicants who are already English speakers a simple way to demonstrate that they also meet the knowledge of life requirements.

**9. I have invested £XXX in the UK and employ XXX people, why should I have to prove I can speak English and have knowledge of life in the UK?**

Investors and employers still need to interact with other members of the community, even for basic functions such as shopping or going to the doctor. Embracing a common language and an understanding of life in the UK is important in achieving effective integration, good race relations and community cohesion. This applies equally to all migrants including those who make an economic contribution to the UK such as investors and employers.

**10. The Highly Skilled Migrant Programme has recently introduced a language requirement. Will people who have come to the UK by this route be exempt from the knowledge of life and language requirement at settlement stage?**

No. Migrants who entered the UK using the HSMP route will need to provide the same knowledge of life and language evidence as any other applicant.

While HSMP migrants may have already demonstrated that they meet the language requirements for settlement, they will not have previously had to demonstrate knowledge of life in the UK. The “life in the UK” test provides a simple way for those people already fluent in English (such as Highly Skilled Migrants) to demonstrate that they also meet the knowledge of life requirements.

**11. Will EEA nationals need to take the test?**

Not when applying for permanent residence as an EEA national. The provisions of the European Charter concerning free movement of labour mean that we cannot impose these requirements on nationals of the EEA. However, we would encourage EEA nationals to read the Life in the UK handbook, or to undertake language courses if they need to, so that they can lead full and active lives here. EEA nationals will however have to meet the knowledge of life and language requirements if they go on to apply for naturalisation as a British citizen.

**12. What about those living in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man – will they need to provide knowledge of life and language evidence?**

People applying for settlement in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man will have to either take the test or successfully complete an ESOL with citizenship

course by progressing from one level to the next. Tests on the Islands will be paper-based and will consist of 25 questions, with 6 questions being based on local information about the island where the test is taken.

### **13. Why aren't any other categories of applicants exempt?**

We believe that all migrants should have the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills they need to function effectively in UK society. We do not want any individual to feel isolated or alone here. Therefore we will generally only exempt those people who would find it extremely difficult to demonstrate knowledge of life and language.

### **14. Why is it becoming harder to get settlement?**

We simply want to ensure that those with a long-term future in the UK have the right skills to allow them to fully participate in their wider community. Most people already do so, and this new requirement will actively encourage everyone to do so.

### **15. Why wasn't this announced earlier to allow people time to meet the requirement?**

The intention to introduce knowledge of life and language testing to settlement applications was made public in the Border and Immigration Agency (formerly Immigration and Nationality Directorate) 5 year strategy (published in February 2005), and the Border and Immigration Agency review (published July 2006) confirmed that by April 2007 all migrants wishing to settle in the UK would have to have English language skills. We think this is enough time for people to have made the necessary arrangements, especially as we estimate that around 80% of people who have been in the UK long enough to qualify for settlement will already have developed their language skills to the required level.

### **16. Will qualifying periods be changed to allow me time to undertake the test?**

No. 4 months has elapsed between the date of formal announcement (December 2006) and implementation 2 April 2007.

### **17. How many times can I take the test?**

There is no limit to the number of times you can take the test. However, if you repeatedly fail the test it may mean that you should consider taking an [ESOL with citizenship](#) course instead or undertake some private tuition to prepare you for the test.

### **18. Will I be refused settlement (indefinite leave to remain) if I continue to fail the test or cannot progress one ESOL level?**

Yes. Unless you fall into one of the [exempted categories](#) you will only be granted settlement if you can provide evidence of knowledge of language and life evidence.

If you apply for settlement and meet all the requirements except the knowledge of life requirement (either because you do not provide any evidence of knowledge of life in the UK or the evidence submitted is not to the required standards) your application for indefinite leave to remain will automatically be considered as one for Further Leave to Remain. This will apply for a transitional period until 31 January 2008. If you have not provided evidence that you meet the requirements of the rules for Further Leave to Remain your application will be refused.

From 1 February 2008 if you submit an ILR application without the necessary knowledge of life and language evidence your application may be refused. You should note that we do not refund fees where applications are refused.

If your leave is due to expire before you can obtain the necessary “knowledge of life” evidence, you should apply to Border and Immigration Agency to extend your current leave to remain. Failure to do so will mean that you are in the UK illegally and may be subject to removal. To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**19. If I have paid the fee for settlement but I am only granted further leave to remain because I haven't provided evidence of Knowledge of Life in the UK will you refund part of the fee?**

Yes. The difference between the fee for further leave to remain and settlement will be refunded until 31 January 2008 where the applicant has not provided evidence of Knowledge of Life in the UK.

**20. Will I be removed from the UK if I am unable to obtain evidence of knowledge of language and life in the UK?**

There are no plans to remove people from the UK if they continue to meet the other requirements of the immigration rules, but have not been able to take or pass the Life in the UK or language requirements.

We will however be closely examining the cases of individuals who persistently fail to meet the new requirements to try to isolate the reasons for this and to provide appropriate advice. We will keep our policy on non-removal under review.

If you do not meet the requirements for settlement you must ensure that you apply for further leave to remain in the normal way. If you do not have valid leave to remain in the UK, or break the conditions of your leave to remain, you may be subject to removal.

**21. If I pass the ESOL course/test will there be a time limit or will the pass stand indefinitely?**

A pass in either the knowledge of life test or an ESOL with citizenship course is not time-limited and will remain valid indefinitely. You can also use the result to help you meet the requirements for citizenship if you wish to take this further step in the journey.

## **22. Will I have to pay for a Knowledge of life in the UK test**

Yes. The stand-alone Knowledge of Life in the UK test currently costs £34 (although this is under review as HM Revenue and Customs have ruled that the test is subject to VAT). The fee covers the cost of administration, which is in line with Government policy that the costs of providing services should be recovered from those people using them. None of the test fee goes to the Government as the service is fully contracted out.

## **23. Will I have to pay for an ESOL with citizenship course?**

The DfES has reinstated access to eligibility for further access for vulnerable learners, including spouses and low paid workers. Guidance is also being developed to encourage providers to work with Government agencies and to support learners. This will include seeking evidence of learners' financial circumstances. These DfES regulations governing fees will apply from the 2007-8 academic year. Refugees and other priority groups such as those on benefits will still qualify for free tuition. Further information can be found on the Skills for Life website at: [www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/planning](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/planning) and funding. Details of the ESOL funding guidance can be found on [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

## **24. Why should I have to pay for an ESOL course?**

Currently, most people benefit from free provision of ESOL courses but this is inconsistent with other areas of further education, where beneficiaries are normally expected to meet at least part of the cost unless they are in receipt of benefits. The changes proposed by DfES are intended to correct this anomaly, and to ensure that publicly-funded provision is targeted towards those in greatest need. It is important to emphasise that even when the funding changes take effect, learners will not be paying the full costs of courses; there will still be a substantial subsidy from State funds.

## **25. Has the fee for indefinite leave to remain (settlement) increased?**

The fee for indefinite leave to remain has changed, with the new fees being introduced on the 2 April 2007 – on the same date as knowledge of life and language testing was introduced.

## **26. Isn't this just a way of increasing the overall fee?**

We acknowledge that this has increased the overall cost of getting settlement. But with planning, people can spread the cost over a period of time by getting on to a course at an earlier stage, and the changes will allow us to put greater resources into helping those people with the greatest need.

## **27. Will there be new application forms?**

Yes. Revised application forms and guides for settlement have been produced and these should now be used for all applications for settlement. Old versions of the forms should not be used.

**28. Can I submit my application early?**

No. Applications for indefinite leave to remain cannot be submitted more than 28 days before applicants meet the residence requirements for settlement.

**29. Will I be refused if I submit my application more than 28 days before I meet the residence requirements for settlement?**

Yes. It is our policy to refuse applications that are submitted more than 28 days before applicants meet the residence requirements for settlement.

**30. Will my fee be refunded if I apply for settlement but I am not eligible?**

No. The fee is to cover the cost of processing an application, regardless of the outcome.

**31. What should I do if I can't pass a Life in the UK test or ESOL course before my leave expires?**

If your leave is due to expire before you can obtain the necessary evidence, you should apply to Border and Immigration Agency to extend your leave to remain. Failure to do so will mean that you are in the UK illegally and may be subject to removal. To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk) . It will be cheaper for you to apply for further leave to remain than for settlement if you do not have evidence that you can meet the language and knowledge of life in the UK requirements.

**32. If I need to extend my leave to remain how long will it be extended for?**

Your leave will be extended according to the provisions relevant to the category that you are in. Thus, if you came to the UK as a businessman and you continue to meet the criteria for that category, you can apply for and be granted leave to remain any number of times on that basis.

**33. How many times can I extend my leave to remain while I am trying to obtain knowledge of life and language evidence?**

There will be no limit on the number of times an applicant can extend their leave to remain in order to enable them to meet the knowledge of life and language requirement. The only thing affected by not taking or passing the test is the grant of settlement. Therefore, a person can still qualify to remain in the UK in their current category providing they continue to meet the criteria for that category and they make applications for further leave to remain when required.

**34. I am in the UK on a work permit, will I need to renew my work permit as well as my leave to remain?**

If your work permit (and leave to remain) is due expire before you are able to take or pass the Life in the UK test, you will need to apply to have your work

permit renewed **before** you apply for your leave to remain to be extended – just as you do now.

For further information on renewing your work permit you should contact the Border and Immigration Agency work permit contact centre on 0114 207 4074 or by e-mailing [wpcustomers@ind.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:wpcustomers@ind.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) .

For further information on extending your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**35. If I am granted further leave to remain and pass the test before that limited leave expires will I be able to apply for settlement straight away?**

You will be able to apply for settlement as soon as you pass the test, as long as you satisfy the rest of the criteria and have completed the qualifying period for the application you are making.

**36. Do I have to pay a fee each time I extend my leave?**

Yes.

**37. Why do I have to pay a fee each time until I meet the requirement?**

The fee paid covers the costs of processing applications, therefore, each time an application is made a fee is charged.

**38. What happens if I make an out of time application whilst trying to meet the requirement?**

If your leave has expired you should apply to extend your leave to remain in the UK or leave the country. Failure to do so will mean that you are in the UK illegally and may be subject to removal. To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**39. What will happen if I don't meet the requirement and my leave has expired?**

If your leave has expired you should either apply to extend your leave to remain in the UK or leave the country. Failure to do so will mean that you are in the UK illegally and may be subject to removal. To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact the Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**40. My ESOL course does not finish until after my leave to remain has expired, what do I do?**

You should apply for further leave to remain before your current period of leave expires. Alternatively, if your tutor thinks you may already have progressed from one level to the next, he or she might recommend that you take an ESOL Skills for Life examination before the end of the course.

To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

#### **41. Why do I have to pay to extend my stay when I can't get a place on an ESOL with citizenship course?**

We are aware that there are waiting lists for courses in some areas. Funding has tripled since 2001 but demand has been at an unsustainable rate. The DfES has addressed this to ensure that people with the greatest need get priority. Funding will be available to priority groups and details can be found at [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk). We would also encourage people whose language skills are not far short of ESOL Entry 3 to explore the possibility of taking a course at a private sector college to get them to the standard they will need to take the stand-alone test. This will, of course, have to be at their own expense, but they do not necessarily have to take an ESOL course (private sector colleges usually deliver TEFL courses), so long as the programme they take equips them to take the stand-alone test. For your own protection, you are advised to go to a private college that is accredited under the "English UK" scheme, which will guarantee you a high quality course at a fair price.

#### **42. What is English UK?**

English UK is the association for British Council accredited English language centres in the UK. It has a Website: [www.englishuk.com](http://www.englishuk.com) which contains details of privately owned schools, as well as state sector centres offering English courses in the UK. Your local further education college, library or Basic Skills provider will also be able to give you details of state sector courses.

#### **43. Will the provision of ESOL with citizenship courses be increased?**

Demand for these programmes has been low in some areas until now. However, the Learning and Skills Council is experiencing a growth in learners for which ESOL with citizenship programmes are relevant. Therefore the LSC are planning to review the level of provision in order to better meet demand.

#### **44. What should I do if I have tried to obtain knowledge of life and language evidence but keep failing the test/course?**

You should ensure that you have valid leave to remain in the UK (to find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)).

You should also continue to try and obtain the necessary knowledge of life evidence, either by studying for the [knowledge of life test](#) or your [ESOL with citizenship](#) course.

#### **45. I want to apply for settlement from overseas?**

Settlement is not normally granted by overseas posts because one of the requirements is residence in the UK.

#### **46. Will people still be able to be granted settlement on entry?**

Spouses and partners of persons who are already settled here are currently eligible to apply for settlement on entry to the UK in certain circumstances. This will no longer be possible, and they will be granted a period of leave as a spouse or partner and will have to take the test in order to obtain settlement.

#### **47. Will my dependants have to meet the requirements?**

If your dependants are aged between 18 and 65 they will also need to meet the requirement, unless they fall into one of the [exempt categories](#) (see question 7 above).

#### **48. What happens if my dependants don't meet the requirement but I do?**

Your dependants should apply for further leave to remain. The Life in the UK test is about qualifying for indefinite leave to remain, not about remaining in the UK. No-one will be asked to leave the UK just because they have not been able to pass this test.

Our experience in the citizenship context is that it is unusual for an applicant and a dependant partner not to qualify together.

#### **49. What happens if my dependants meet the requirement but I don't?**

A dependant partner over the age of 18 may take the Life in the UK test and pass, but they will not qualify for settlement as a dependant just because of that. The main applicant must also qualify for indefinite leave to remain, in order for them to be granted the same as a dependant.

#### **50. How many times will I/my dependants be allowed to extend my leave to remain until I/they meet the requirement?**

There will be no limit on the number of times an applicant can extend their leave to remain in order to enable them to meet the knowledge of life and language requirement. The only thing affected by not taking or passing the test is the grant of settlement. Thus a person can still qualify to remain in the UK in their current category providing they continue to meet the criteria for that category and they make applications for further leave to remain when required.

#### **51. What happens if my dependants continue to fail the test?**

The only thing affected by not taking or passing the test is the grant of settlement. Thus a person's dependants can still qualify to remain in the UK, providing they continue to meet the criteria set out for dependants, and they make applications for further leave to remain when required.

#### **52. If I already have settlement will I need to meet the Knowledge of Life requirement for citizenship?**

The requirement to demonstrate knowledge of life and language for citizenship applicants will remain. Applicants who have not demonstrated knowledge of life and language at settlement stage will have to do so before

they can be naturalised as a British citizen. For further details of the requirement at citizenship stage please see the following page of our website:

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/applying/nationality/knowledgeoflifeintheuk>

### **Life in the UK test Q&A**

#### **53. How can I find out if my English is good enough to take the test?**

If you are not sure what your level of language ability is, you should work through the tutorial on the life in the UK test website [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk) . If you do not fully understand the information then it is likely you will need to enrol on an ESOL with citizenship course.

#### **54. How can I find a test centre?**

The addresses and contact details of test centres can be found on the Life in the UK Test Website [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk) . Alternatively you can contact the Life in the UK Test helpline, telephone number 0800 015 4245.

#### **55. What happens if there is no test centre near me?**

There are about 110 centres throughout the UK including Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. You can choose the one most convenient for you.

#### **56. What if I want to apply from overseas?**

There are no facilities to take the knowledge of life in the UK test overseas - Ufi are the only test providers. Settlement is not normally granted by overseas posts because one of the requirements is residence in the UK.

Spouses and partners of persons who are already settled here are currently eligible to apply for settlement on entry to the UK in certain circumstances if they are entering at the same time as their spouse or partner. This will no longer be possible and they will be granted a period of leave as a spouse or partner and will have to take the test in order to obtain settlement.

#### **57. How do I book a test? When are the centres open?**

You can contact a test centre during opening hours by telephone or in person. Centres offer testing at different times. You can find these details on the Life in the UK test website [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk) or by contacting the Life in the UK Test helpline 0800 015 4245.

#### **58. Will I have to pay for the test?**

Yes everyone sitting the test will have to pay a fee. There will be no exemptions. The cost is currently £34 (however this is under review), payable before you take the test. The Life in the UK Test website ([www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk)) or the UK Test Helpline will give information on the methods of payment accepted by individual centres.

**59. Suppose I have to cancel or postpone my test?**

Tell the test centre as soon as possible. The test centre will try to offer an alternative date for you to sit the test.

**60. If I fail my test will I have to pay to re-sit the test?**

Yes. The normal fee (currently £34 but under review) will apply.

**61. How many times can I re-sit the tests?**

There is no limit; however candidates are advised to study the handbook further before trying again and feedback is given to unsuccessful candidates to help with this.

**62. What happens if I repeatedly fail the test?**

You will need to wait until your knowledge of life in the UK, as set out in the handbook, is at the required level before trying again. You may also want to check that your English is up to the required standard of ESOL Entry 3, as this could be a factor in your performance. You are strongly advised to visit the Knowledge of Life in the UK Test Website ([www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk)) which includes a short tutorial to help you prepare for the test and see if you are ready to sit the test. If you still cannot pass the test you may want to consider taking an [ESOL with citizenship](#) course or private tuition in preparation.

**63. What does the test consist of?**

The test can be taken on a computer at one of around **100** Life in the UK Test centres in the UK. The test consists of 24 questions based on the information contained in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the handbook "Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship". 45 minutes is allowed for the test, but most people will be able to complete it in less time. People taking a test on or after 2 April 2007 must study the revised edition of the Handbook and take the new, revised test. The new test will still consist of 24 questions, to be answered in 45 minutes, but the test will asked questions on chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 of the revised handbook.

**64. Are the same questions be used each time?**

No. Applicants have to answer 24 questions chosen randomly, but all based on the contents of the handbook. If you take the test in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man some of the questions will relate to that country/island.

**65. What about those living in the Channel Islands – will they need to pass the test?**

People applying for settlement in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man have to take the test (or successfully complete an ESOL with citizenship course). Tests on the Islands are paper-based and consist of 25 questions, with 6 questions being based on local information about the island where the test is taken.

## **66. Where can I get the Life in the United Kingdom Handbook?**

The handbook, price £9.99 available from all TSO bookshops (The Stationery Office) and other good bookshops. If it is not readily available it can be ordered from TSO by the following ways:

Online at [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

By telephone +44 (0)870 243 0123

by textphone +44 (0)870 240 3701 quoting ref: CTU

by fax +44 (0)870 243 0129

by post to:

Marketing,

TSO,

Freepost ANG4748,

Norwich,

NR3 1YX

## **67. Has the handbook been revised?**

Yes. The revised version of the handbook was published in March 2007.

## **68. Have the test questions been changed now the new book is published?**

Yes. There is a new test based on the new handbook. The new test has been used from 2 April 2007.

## **69. Why have the Life in the United Kingdom handbook and test been revised?**

Feedback on the previous edition of the handbook suggested that it was written in a way that might make study a little difficult for those with language skills at or around ESOL Entry 3 level. The purpose of rewriting was to make it more accessible to this group, update the information it contained and include some advice on key areas to concentrate on. We have also added a glossary to help people whose first language is not English understand it better. The test had to be revised as a consequence, as previous questions may no longer have been valid.

## **70. What chapters of the new handbook are used for the new test?**

For tests taken after 2 April 2007 the scope of test questions has been extended to include chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. However, because the handbook has been rewritten, the volume of material applicants will need to read remains roughly the same, with the inclusion of key learning areas to help.

### **71. What happens if I have revised from the old version of the Life in the UK handbook?**

If you studied using the old handbook you will be able to take the old test until the 30 June 2007. You will need to inform the test supervisor that you would like to take the old version of the test upon your arrival at the test centre.

From the 1 July 2007 onwards you will not be able to take a test based on the old (first edition). You should therefore ensure that you have studied the correct version of the handbook.

### **72. Does the new test include history?**

No. We decided when testing was first introduced that it would be unfair for migrants to have to answer questions that many British people would have difficulty with. However, reading the history chapter will help people better understand some of the later chapters, especially those on the British electoral system and on the UK today. Chapters 7 and 8 are essentially a digest of useful information so we will not be testing on them. Chapter 9 is about getting involved with the community and whilst we will not be testing on this chapter we recommend that you read it carefully as it will help you become a full and active citizen. This change is in line with the initial recommendations of the independent Life in the UK Advisory Group.

### **73. Can I practice taking the test?**

The Life in the UK Test website [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk) includes a short tutorial to help you prepare for the test. At the test centre you will have ten minutes to try a short practice test before the real test starts.

### **74. What identification should I take with me to the test?**

You will need to confirm your identity by presenting photographic identification at the test centre. Acceptable forms of ID are:

- a passport (from your country of origin)
- a UK photo card driving licence, full or provisional
- one of the following Home Office travel documents: a Convention Travel Document (CTD), a Certificate of Identity Document (CID) or a Stateless Person Document (SPD)
- an Immigration Status Document, endorsed with a UK Residence Permit and bearing a photo of the holder

Applicants who have had previous contact with the Home Office (for example, applying for an extension of stay) will have been issued with a Home Office reference number. Applicants should take this number with them when registering for the test. Further information about the test can be found at [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk)

### **75. Will I get a certificate?**

You will get a letter which proves you have been successful. It is called your **pass notification letter**. It needs to be kept safe and then attached to your

completed indefinite leave to remain application form when you send it to the Home Office. As confirmation, the test centre will also notify the Home Office of all results electronically.

### **76. What if I am visually impaired?**

The Life in the UK handbook will shortly be available in large print and audio formats for people with visual impairment. You should contact TSO at [www.tsoshp.co.uk](http://www.tsoshp.co.uk) to order these. The computer can read out each question if required, and in some cases it will be possible for someone to help you enter your answers on the computer. Test centres can also provide support for people with special needs. Check this with your chosen test centre.

### **77. I do not have access to the internet. What can I do?**

In England, contact UK online on 0800 77 1234 for details of local centres providing computer and internet access. In other parts of the UK, contact your local library or Citizen's Advice Bureau for information on free or low cost access to computers and the Internet.

### **78. I have no experience of using a computer? Is the test only available on computer?**

Yes it is, but do not worry! The test requires only very basic mouse or keyboard skills. The Life in the UK website contains free training and the test centres themselves specialise in supporting learners who are new to computers.

### **79. What do I need to learn before taking the test?**

All the information on which you will be tested is contained in:

- Previous book (first edition) - chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the handbook.
- Current book (second edition) – chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

We advise you to read them very carefully and make notes. Also look at the "Prepare for the test" section of the Life in the UK Test website.

### **80. Is there be training or coaching available for the test?**

Guidance is available on the Life in the UK Test website. Visit the Navigation tutorial to practice finding your way around the test system. Some Further Education and Adult colleges are offering preparatory courses for the test, and in the future some private sector colleges may do so too. There are a number of so-called "study guides" to the Life in the UK test available commercially; they vary greatly in quality. None are officially endorsed, and none contain genuine test questions, even though they might say they do. Some of these study guides are of limited value and some will actually mislead you, so you should think carefully before you spend your money. Everything you need to know to pass the test is included in the official publication, "Life in the UK: A Journey to Citizenship"

### **81. What is the waiting time for taking the test?**

This will vary from centre to centre, but you should not normally have to wait for more than one month.

### **82. What is the pass mark for the test?**

The pass mark varies slightly, based on the questions asked in each test, but will generally be in the region of 75%. This variation in the pass mark is a normal feature of this type of test, and ensures a fair result for all candidates. Candidates will not be informed of their overall mark but will be told if they have passed or failed. Candidates who fail the test will be given advice on their areas of weakness and the topics in the handbook they should revise.

### **83. Is the test available in any other language?**

You can take the Knowledge of Life in the UK test in Welsh or Scottish Gaelic but you will still have to demonstrate knowledge of the English language in order to qualify for settlement.

### **84. Will those who pass the Life in the UK Test still have to prove knowledge of English to ESOL Entry 3?**

No. The language used in the UK test will be at ESOL Entry 3 and so applicants who pass the test will automatically have shown that they have the required level of ability in English.

### **85. Who manages and runs the Life in the UK Test?**

The Life in the UK Test service is managed by Ufi Ltd. on behalf of the Home Office. Ufi Ltd. is an organisation based in Sheffield, which is responsible for "learndirect" and "UK online centres". It was established by the Government in 1998 to promote e-learning. It operates a network of more than 2,000 learning centres providing access to a range of e-learning opportunities.

### **86. What are the Life in the UK Test centres?**

Each test centre is an independent organisation with experience in delivering courses and computerised tests for English language, maths and IT. They specialise in supporting adult learners who are new to computers. Each one has had to meet rigorous criteria for selection and approval as a Life in the UK Test Centre.

## **ESOL course Q&A**

### **87. What is ESOL?**

It means English for Speakers of Other Languages. The courses are concerned with the teaching of English to speakers of other languages who wish to live and work in the UK. Successfully gaining an ESOL qualification in speaking and listening through attending a course with both language and citizenship elements will mean you have met the language and knowledge of life in the UK requirements for settlement at the same time. It is also a useful qualification to have if you want to get a job.

### **88. Where do I go to find an ESOL course? What do I need to ask for?**

The courses are available at many Further Education and Adult and Community Colleges across the UK. They are mainstream courses leading to a recognised qualification from one of the approved ESOL Awarding Bodies. If you wish to do a course for settlement purposes you should make sure the college course you are offered leads to an ESOL qualification which is taught using a citizenship syllabus, and is valid for settlement purposes. You should check that the college will give you a letter to this effect when you successfully complete the course.

### **89. Will I have to pay for a course?**

The DfES has reinstated access to eligibility for further access for vulnerable learners, including spouses and low paid workers. Guidance is also being developed to encourage providers to work with Government agencies and to support learners. This will include seeking evidence of learners' financial circumstances. These DfES regulations governing fees are for the 2007-8 academic year. Refugees and other priority groups such as those on benefits will still qualify for free tuition. Further information can be found on the Skills for Life website at: [www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/planning](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/planning) and funding. Details of the ESOL funding guidance can be found on [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

### **90. What ESOL qualification do I need to obtain?**

Applicants need to progress one ESOL level (in a course taught using a citizenship syllabus) in order to meet the new knowledge of life and language requirements. Therefore applicants using the ESOL route may not necessarily have to reach ESOL entry level 3 in order to satisfy the requirement.

### **91. Why should someone who already has an ESOL Entry 2 certificate – have to improve further when someone with no language ability only has to get to ESOL Entry 1?**

The point of this provision is to demonstrate that someone has the commitment to learn or improve their competence in English. Someone may have achieved ESOL Entry 2 in the past but may not necessarily have had the benefit of studying in the context of the citizenship learning materials that have been specially developed to aid integration.

### **92. Will I get a certificate at the end of the course?**

Yes. The Home Office will need to see the original ESOL certificate from one of the approved Awarding Bodies and a letter from the college where you studied confirming that the qualification was gained on a course using citizenship materials. These documents must be submitted to the Home Office when you make your application for settlement.

### **93. Who are the approved Awarding Bodies?**

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the Awarding Bodies approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are Cambridge ESOL, City and Guilds (Pitmans), Edexcel, Education Development International (EDI), English

Speaking Board (International) Ltd., National Open College Network, Open College of the North West and Trinity College, London. In Scotland, the only Awarding Body is the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

**94. How long will it take me to complete the course?**

This will depend on the level of language skills that you have at the moment and how quickly you learn, however on average students take between 200 and 450 hours of tuition for each ESOL level. The college you approach should be able to advise you on how long it might be.

**95. How long will I have to wait to get on a course?**

This will depend on what area you live in. Some areas will have waiting lists. We advise that you enrol on a course as soon as possible to ensure that you have completed it before your leave to remain expires.

**96. What if I can't get on an ESOL course or complete my ESOL course before my current leave expires?**

If your leave is due to expire before you can obtain the necessary "knowledge of life in the UK" evidence you should apply to Border and immigration Agency to extend your leave to remain. Failure to do so will mean that you are in the UK illegally and may be subject to removal. To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and Immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**97. Can I take an ESOL with citizenship course at any time?**

Yes, you can take the course at any time, even before you are considering applying for settlement. Bear in mind that you will need to keep the qualification you get and the letter from the college safely until you are eligible to apply for naturalisation.

**98. Will you accept certificates from any college?**

No.

Certificates are issued by recognised awarding bodies only, and **not** by colleges themselves. We will only accept ESOL Skills for Life certificates (or in Scotland 2 ESOL Units at Access Level under the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework approved by the Scottish Qualification Authority) that have been awarded by one of the nine accredited awarding bodies:

- University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (ESOL Cambridge)
- Trinity College London
- City & Guilds (Pitmans)
- Edexcel
- English Speaking Board (International)(ESB)
- National Open College Network
- Open College of the North West (OCNW)
- Education Development International (EDI)
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

**and**

- Obtained by attendance at a public sector (Further Education, Adult or Community) college.

**99. If I progress from one level to another on an ESOL course now will my certificate and college letter still be valid when I am eligible to apply for settlement?**

Yes. Your certificate is a recognised ESOL qualification, or part of one, and therefore has no expiry date: the letter from the college will be confirmation that the course you took was valid for the purposes of obtaining settlement.

**100. I am eligible to apply for settlement. What do I do if I want to do an ESOL course with citizenship content now but all my local colleges have waiting lists?**

You should ensure that your leave to remain in the UK is still valid and, if necessary, apply for further leave to remain before your current period of leave expires. To find out how to extend your leave to remain you should either contact Border and immigration Agency Enquiry Bureau on 0870 606 7766, or visit our website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Inevitably there will be increased demand for courses as the new requirements come into force, and it is possible that there will be waiting lists in some areas. The Government will work to keep these waiting periods as short as possible. If you are in work and can afford to do so, you might want to consider going to a private sector language school to get your competence in English to the level you need to do the stand alone test. For your own protection, you are advised to go to a private college that is accredited under the “English UK” scheme, which will guarantee you a high quality course at a fair price. It has a website, [www.englishuk.com](http://www.englishuk.com), which contains details of privately owned schools as well as some public sector centres offering English courses in the UK. If you are intending to take the stand-alone test, you don’t have to enrol on an ESOL course, provided the course you do enrol on gets you an equivalent level to ESOL Entry 3 so that you can take the test without difficulty.

**101. What should I do if I am doing an ESOL course but it doesn't have the citizenship content?**

This will not be valid for the purposes of becoming settled. You will have to ask your tutor if it is possible to introduce the citizenship materials, change to a course with citizenship content or, if you have reached ESOL Entry Level 3, take the stand alone Life in the UK Test.

**102. Where can I get further information?**

Information can be found on this website and from from the Life in the UK Test website. Alternatively, you can telephone the Test Helpline on 08000 154245, or, if you only want information about language courses, the learndirect helpline on 0800 100 900 or the learndirect website at [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk) may be able to help.

The Home Office can be contacted by telephone or in writing at:

Home Office

Border and immigration Agency

Lunar House

40 Wellesley Road

Croydon

CR9 2By

Telephone: 0870 606 7766