

Summary: Through the naturalisation process, a non-Irish national can be issued with a certificate of naturalisation and make an application for an Irish passport. The statutory criteria include the requirement that the applicant have acquired five years reckonable residency in the State and be of good character. The Minister exercises absolute discretion in determining applications for a certificate of naturalisation.

Naturalisation is the process whereby a non Irish national can apply to become an Irish citizen.

An application for a certificate of naturalisation will be considered under the provisions of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, as amended. The Act provides that the Minister for Justice and Equality may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. The granting of Irish Citizenship through naturalisation is a privilege and an honour and not an entitlement.

An application for Naturalization can be made by any person who has acquired 5 years of reckonable residency in the State, or in the case of refugees and of spouses of Irish Nationals, they need only have acquired 3 years. All applicants must have a period of one year of continuous reckonable residence in the State immediately prior to the date of the application for naturalisation.

Reckonable residency is calculated at the time of submitting the application, and not at the determination of it. Reckonable residency is lawful permission to remain on stamp 1, 3 or 4 conditions. Time as a student or asylum seeker is excluded from reckonable residency calculations. In certain specific cases, stamp 2 or 2 A may be regarded as reckonable.

As well as satisfying the requirements of reckonable residency, applicants must be of good character.

There are four different forms for application for naturalisation:

Form 8 for a person of eight years and over

Form 9 to be completed by a naturalised parent on behalf of a minor child

Form 10 for a minor child of Irish descent or Irish associations, completed by parent or guardian

Form 11 for a minor child born in the State where parent/guardian has 5 years reckon-able residence since the birth of the child.

Each form specifies full details of what supporting documentation is required to be submitted with the application.

On 17th June 2011, the Minister announced that all applications submitted on and after this date would be processed in six months. Application processing times prior to this were extremely long and applicants waited between two and four years to have their applications determined. Processing times have reduced substantially since this announcement and applications are generally processed within six months.