

OCI Services – FAQs

NOTE: These FAQs are prepared for general guidance to the service seekers. The FAQs cannot be considered as substitutes of statutory rules and hence cannot be quoted as the grounds for processing of applications. Each application is carefully considered on merits.

1. Who is eligible to apply?

Ans: A foreign national, who was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26.01.1950 or was a citizen of India on or at any time after 26.01.1950 or belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15.08.1947 and his/her children and grandchildren, is eligible for registration as an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI). Minor children of such persons are also eligible for OCI. However, if the applicant had ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh, he/she will not be eligible for OCI.

2. What is the procedure and documents required to apply for an OCI Registration?

Ans: Application for registration as OCI is to be made online through the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs at <https://www.ociservices.gov.in/>. Instructions therein may be perused carefully, particularly with respect to supporting documents required so that there is no mistake in submission of the application. Once the application form has been filed online, a copy of the printout of the same is required to be submitted at our Authorised Service Centres. Please note that submission for OCI registration is via appointment only. Please book your appointment for submission at https://www.hcilondon.gov.in/appointment_home/

3. What is fee for OCI Service's?

OCI Service	Fee
OCI fresh application	£215.00 (£197+£3) w.e.f. April 2024
Miscellaneous registration for changing any details in the card and linking of new passport with OCI	£20.00 (£18+£3)
For lost/damaged OCI Card	£79.00(£72+£3)
For the conversion of PIO to OCI	£79.00(£72+£3)

4. What are the specifications of the photograph to be uploaded with the application?

Ans: Photograph to be uploaded on the application should be of square shape of size not less than 51x 51 mm (with 80% coverage of face). It should have a plain light colour background (not white) without the border with a front view of the person's head and shoulders showing full face in middle of the photograph.

The height and width of the applicant photo must be equal. The minimum dimensions are 200 pixels (width) x 200 pixels (height). The maximum dimensions are 900 pixels (width) x 900 pixels (height).

The images of the photograph and signature must be in JPEG/ JPG format with max size 200 KB.

Note: Photographs that do not conform to the above standards will be rejected and may cause delays in processing the applications.

Follow the link for Guidelines for Photo & Signature

<https://ociservices.gov.in/Photo-Spec-FINAL.pdf>

5. Is it mandatory to have a Life Long Visa Sticker (OCI) in the foreign Passport?

Ans: No, the life Long Visa Sticker process has been discontinued by the Government of India. Applicants are required to carry a valid OCI Card with the current foreign passport (endorsed on the OCI Booklet).

6. Can I submit my OCI application through an agent?

Ans: No. OCI applications can be submitted at the Counter only by the applicants in person or by spouse or by parents in case of minors.

7. What will be issued after registration as an OCI?

A registration certificate in the form of a booklet will be issued.

8. Under what circumstances should existing OCI Cardholders apply for Re-issue of their OCI Cards?

Ans: Existing OCI Cardholders may apply for Re-issuance of their OCI Cards in the following contingencies: -

Reason for Service	Option to be Selected at OCI Web Portal
For a change of passport after attaining 20 years of age	Select "Change of Passport Particulars" Option
For Lost / Damaged OCI Booklet.	Select "Lost/ Damaged OCI Booklet" Option
For Change of name /nationality/ Appearance/Marital Status	Select "Change of Personal Particulars" option

9. After renewing my passport, do I have to carry my old passport along with the OCI card while travelling?

Ans: The requirement of carrying old passports, along with the OCI card, has been done away with. Henceforth, an OCI Cardholder travelling on the strength of an existing OCI card bearing old passport number is not required to carry the old passport. However, carrying the new (current) passport is mandatory.

10. I just turned 50 years old. Should I get my OCI Card Re-issued? I understand that I only need to update my particulars at the OCI Web Portal? Is my understanding correct?

Ans: Mandatory requirement of re-issuance of an OCI card each time a new passport is issued to a foreigner up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age is dispensed with. An OCI Cardholder is now only required to upload **a copy of**

the new passport containing the photo of the OCI Cardholder and **the latest photo** on the online system under OCI Miscellaneous Services **each time** a new passport is issued **up to 20 years** of age and **once** after completing 50 years of age. The OCI web portal has been suitably modified under “**OCI Miscellaneous Services**” to facilitate OCI Cardholders to update details of **new Passport and change of address** Online. These documents may be uploaded by the OCI cardholder within **three months** of receipt of the new passport. This service will be provided on **Gratis** basis. Existing OCI Cardholders may apply for **Online updation** of their particulars in the following contingencies:

Reason for Service	Option to be Selected at OCI Web Portal
For change of passport before 20 years of age or for change of passport after 50 years of age	Select “Change of Passport Particulars Option” Only
For a change of address/ Occupation	Select “Change of Address/ Occupation” Option only

11. What is the procedure for online updation of Passport particulars and address change in the OCI online Web Portal?

Ans : Detailed instructions to fill out the Online Application form and other requirements may be accessed at the MHA website – <https://ociservices.gov.in/welcome>. The procedure to avail of OCI Miscellaneous Services (Gratis) is –

- a. Applicant may apply online at <https://ociservices.gov.in> and opt for passport/address updation service under the OCI Miscellaneous Services, upload a photograph and required documents. These documents may be uploaded by the OCI Cardholder within **three months** of receipt of the new passport. This service will be provided on a **Gratis** basis.
- b. An auto email is sent to the applicant for the successful upload of documents.
- c. Once the application is granted by the Ministry, details of the new passport, address and contact, as the case may be, get updated in OCI records and an auto email is sent to the applicant informing that changes have been made in his/ her OCI records. This will normally take approx. 35-40 days since receipt of acknowledgement of the OCI application on their e-mail.
- d. Applicants are advised to await updates on their e-mail directly from the Ministry. **No physical copy of OCI will be sent/ provided by the mission**
- e. Applicant may check the status of their applications online on <https://ociservices.gov.in> under the “**Status Enquiry**” section.
- f. In the interim, should applicants require to travel to India, they may do so on the strength of their OCI Card and current new passport (provided there are no changes in personal particulars).

12. How to check the application status?

Ans: Applicant can check his/her OCI status online on the following link using current passport number and online registration number.

<https://ociservices.gov.in/statusEnquiry>

13. What is time taken for OCI registration?

Ans: Normally, the time taken for issue of OCI card is about 6 to 8 weeks from the date of acknowledgement of the application on the online system. However it may take longer in some cases depending upon individual circumstances.

14. Whether OCI Cardholders living in India should have a valid passport?

Ans: Yes. A Passport is the primary travel document. OCI is only a life-long visa. The stay of a foreigner in India without a valid passport is illegal even if he or she is an OCI Cardholder. Therefore, it is necessary that OCI Cardholders staying in India should have a valid passport at all times of his/her stay in the country.

15. Travelling to India when the OCI application is under processing. (Is there an emergency service for OCI)?

Ans: No. In case of an emergency, please apply for a visa. Processing of OCI applications will take around 6 to 8 weeks. Meanwhile, if applicant wants to travel to India, they can apply for Visa.

Visa services are online based.

For submission and payment please follow the link

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/>

16. Can OCI applications be made in India?

Ans: Yes. Any applicant wishing to apply in India may see guidelines available on the Ministry of Home Affairs website: <https://ociservices.gov.in/>

17. I hold a valid PIO Card. Am I required to convert this to an OCI Card? Will my PIO Card be valid beyond the conversion deadline?

Ans: The Government of India had announced vide Gazette Notification No.26011/01/2014IC.I dated 09 January 2015 that all PIO cardholders with valid PIO Cards as on 09 January, 2015 were deemed to be OCI Cardholders. As such, the PIO Card Scheme was withdrawn. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has mandated for machine readable electronic travel documents for travel w.e.f. 1 October, 2018. Therefore, it is necessary upon PIO Card holders to obtain electronic machine readable OCI Cards in lieu of handwritten valid PIO Cards. PIO Card holders were advised, from time to time, to convert PIO Card to OCI Card.

18. Who can't apply for OCI?

Ans: a) Military/Defence/Law personnel serving or retired can't apply

b) If you, your parent, grandparent on whose basis OCI applied is/had ever been a citizen of Bangladesh or Pakistan then you can't apply for OCI.

19. Can one apply for an OCI Card on a spouse basis?

Ans: An applicant can apply for OCI Registration under the category of spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or spouse of foreign origin of an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholder whose marriage has been registered and subsisted for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately preceding the presentation of the application. It is advised to include/add spouse's name in the passports/ OCI Card, where possible, for smooth processing of the application. A sponsor letter by the Spouse of Indian Origin is to be furnished along with the OCI application. Applicants who are of Indian origin are advised to apply for the OCI Card on their own merit and not on a spouse basis.

20. Is an OCI cardholder a citizen of India?

Ans: The OCI Cardholder is a foreign national holding a passport of a foreign country and is **NOT** a Citizen of India.

21. Can a person renounce OCI?

Ans: Yes. He/ She has to declare the intention of renunciation in Form XXXI to the Indian Mission / Post where OCI registration was granted, through the online Portal – <https://www.ociservices.gov.in/>. After receipt of the declaration form (Physical copy) and the requisite fees, the Indian Mission/ Post/FRRO shall process and issue an acknowledgement in Form XXXII.

22. Can I undertake journalism in India as an OCI Cardholder?

Ans: OCI Cardholders are required **to obtain Special Permission** from concerned authorities to undertake certain activities in India. In order to make it convenient for such OCI Cardholders, a separate sub-portal under the name “**Apply for Special Permission (Only for OCI Cardholders)**” has been created in the Online OCI web portal at – <https://ociservices.gov.in/welcome>. The link has detailed instructions as well as documents required to be submitted. The link would facilitate such OCI cardholders to apply for Special Permission.

23. What are the benefits available to an OCI Card holder?

Ans: OCI card holder gets the following benefits:

- A multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visa for visiting India.
- Exemption from registration with local police authority for any length of stay in India.
- Parity with Non-resident Indians (NRIs) in respect of economic, financial and educational fields as per the relevant Acts, except in relation to acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.

- OCI can be used as identity proof for the application for PAN Card and driving license as well as for opening a bank account if the OCI card holder is residing in India.

24. What are the benefits to which an OCI card holder is NOT entitled?

Ans: The OCI cardholder is not entitled:

- To vote;
- To be a member of a Legislative Assembly or of a Legislative Council or of the Parliament of India;
- To hold Indian constitutional posts such as that of the President, Vice President, Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court etc.;
- He/she cannot normally hold employment in the Government
- To undertake any Missionary work, Mountaineering and Journalism without prior permission of the Govt. of India;
- OCI cardholder shall also require a Protected Area Permit (PAP)/Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit any place which falls within the Protected/Restricted Area notified by the Government as in the case of any other foreigner.

25. Can an OCI holder undertake Research work in India?

Yes, after getting prior approval/special permission from the Indian Mission/Post/FRRO concerned.

26. What are the consequences of furnishing wrong information or suppressing material information?

If the registration as an OCI Cardholder was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact, the registration as an OCI Cardholder shall be cancelled under section 7D of the Citizenship Act, 1955. The person will also be blacklisted thereby banning his/her future entry into India.

