



UK Visas and Immigration has introduced a new process to digitally scan all documents submitted in support of **settlement visa applications**. The below explains the changes and new processes to be followed.

From 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2017, all supporting documents should be sent directly to the UK address below by either the applicant or sponsor or representative.

All supporting documents should be sent within 20 working days for a standard settlement application and 10 working days for Priority Visa settlement. This is calculated from the date of biometric enrolment.

Settlement Applications, International Operations and Visas  
PO Box 5852  
Sheffield  
United Kingdom  
S11 0FX

Alternatively, applicants can use a new service, whereby their supporting documents will be scanned and submitted to UKVI by our commercial partner, VFS Global at the Visa Application Centres in **Bangkok** and **Chiang Mai**. VFS Global's scanning service at the Visa Application Centres will be free of charge until Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 when an additional fee will apply to the scanning service.

Between 21<sup>st</sup> April and 5<sup>th</sup> May for **Bangkok** (and 28<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> May for **Chiang Mai**) UKVI will retain the hard-copy supporting documents in addition to holding digital scans. Original hard-copy supporting documents retained by UKVI will be returned to the customer, along with the passport, at the time the visa decision is made by UKVI.

After May 5<sup>th</sup>, (12<sup>th</sup> May in **Chiang Mai**) all supporting documents will be immediately returned to the customer after the documents have been scanned by VFS Global at the UK visa application center.

**Settlement customers will need to:**

1. Attend their chosen Visa Application Centre to submit their biometrics and passport. Visa applicant's passports will be retained by UKVI until the visa decision is made.
2. Arrange to post or courier their supporting documents directly to UKVI in Sheffield or contract VFS Global to digitally scan the supporting documents as outlined above.

UKVI aims to make a decision on a settlement application within 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 Thailand.

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.

Your supporting documents will be returned to you once scanned. Your passport will be returned once a decision has been made on your application.

#### **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<sup>th</sup> May 2017, all the supporting documents for your application should be sent directly to Sheffield at the address above, unless you choose the digital scanning option.

**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.

**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