

**U**NLIKE MOST other countries, the United Kingdom allows its citizens to hold dual nationality. A person with dual citizenship is a citizen of two countries at the same time. This article explores the process for someone who is Filipino considering to be British but wish to retain his/her Philippine nationality. We will also look at British citizens who may be entitled to apply for Philippine citizenships.

## Filipino national applying for British Citizenship

Once granted settlement status (indefinite leave to remain) in the UK you may wish to consider applying for British citizenship. This is done through a process called “naturalisation”. The conditions are generally:

- be over 18
- prove you were in the UK exactly 5 years\* before the day the Home Office receives your application
- prove your knowledge of English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic
- have passed the life in the UK test
- intend to continue living in the UK
- be of good character

(\*there are different time requirements if you are married to a British citizen and there are additional conditions regarding absences from the UK)

The final step in the process is taking your oath of allegiance. Once naturalised, you are British, and you may then apply for

# Becoming British and Dual Citizenship



a British passport.

For Filipinos a very common concern is whether they lose their Philippine citizenship upon acquisition of British citizenship. This was true until 2003, but the good news is that this is no longer the case.

## The Republic Act 9225:

The main change came about in 2003 with the introduction of the Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act.

“RA 9225, otherwise known as the Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003, declares that natural born Filipinos who were naturalized in other countries could reacquire or retain their Philippine citizenship after undergoing the procedure provided for under the law. RA 9225 took effect on September 17, 2003 and is also commonly referred to as the Dual Citizenship Act. Philippine citizenship is reacquired by taking the Phil-

ippine oath of allegiance before a duly authorized Philippine official. This does not require one to renounce his allegiance to any other country.”

**“Natural-born Filipinos who have acquired the citizenship of another country through naturalization may retain or re-acquire their Philippine citizenship, making them dual citizens of both the Philippines and the country where they were naturalized.”**

(<https://cfo.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/2018/DUAL-CIT-PRIMER-FINAL.pdf>)

The above means that a Filipino citizen who is regarded “natural born” and who has successfully applied for naturalisation as a British citizen may retain or reacquire their Philippine citizenship.



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## Who is regarded a “natural born” Filipino?

Someone, born to at least one Filipino parent, regardless of where he was born, is considered to be a “natural born” Filipino. Many Filipinos in the UK are likely to satisfy this requirement and will therefore be considered “natural born” Filipino.

## Process for reacquiring or retaining your Philippine citizenship in the UK

The same process applies regardless of whether you are applying to reacquire (pre-2003) or retain your Philippine citizenship. You must submit your petition (application) to the Philippine Embassy along with documents such as your Philippine Birth Certificate (if born in the Philippines) or Report of Birth (if born abroad). Similar to a British naturalisation application, you will be required by the Embassy to undertake the Oath of Allegiance. Once you complete the process you may then take the next and final step – obtain a Philippine passport.

## Do I need to inform the Philippine before you apply for British citizenship?

No, in fact the process of retaining your Philippine citizenship can only happen after you have become British.

## Do I need a new Philippine passport after retaining your Philippine citizenship?

Yes, you do because your Philippine passport is no longer valid once you become a naturalised British Citizen. It does not matter if your “old passport” has not yet expired.

## Can children born in the UK to a Filipino parent apply for dual citizenship?

A child born to a parent with Philippine citizenship is regarded a natural born Filipino. This means you can also apply for dual citizenship for your child, who already holds British citizenship, provided you can prove that you had Philippine citizenship when he was born. It follows that he will also be entitled to a Philippine passport. ■

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