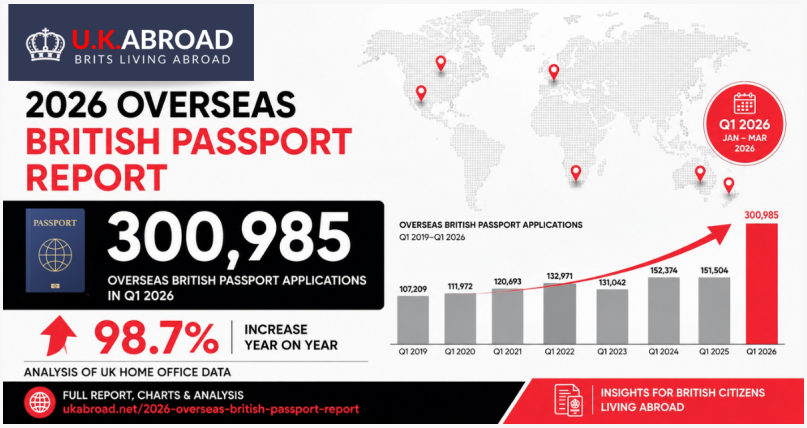
Overseas British Passport Applications Surge 99% in Q1 2026 Amid UK ETA Changes

Overseas British passport applications surged 98.7% in Q1 2026, reaching 300,985 as new UK ETA travel rules came into force.



U.K.ABROAD 2026 Overseas British Passport Report showing 300,985 overseas applications in Q1 2026

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Overseas British Passport Applications Surge 99% as UK ETA Rules Take Effect

U.K.ABROAD analysis of Home Office data reveals 300,985 overseas British passport applications were made in Q1 2026, almost double the number recorded a year earlier.

Overseas British passport applications increased by almost 99% during the first quarter of 2026, according to new analysis of UK Home Office data by independent British passport assistance service U.K.ABROAD.

> Overseas British passport applications nearly doubled in Q1 2026. While the data does not tell us why, the timing coincides with major changes to UK travel rules for dual British citizens."
>
> *Tracey Roberts, Senior Advisor, U.K.ABROAD*

The U.K.ABROAD 2026 Overseas British Passport Report found that HM Passport Office recorded 300,985 overseas passport applications between January and March 2026, compared with 151,504 during the same period in 2025.

This represents a **98.7% year-on-year increase** and puts overseas application volumes substantially above those recorded in recent years.

The surge coincided with a significant change to UK travel requirements. Mandatory enforcement of the UK's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system began on **25 February 2026**, making travel documentation particularly important for British citizens living overseas.

Overseas applications reach exceptional levels

U.K.ABROAD analysed Home Office passport figures going back to 2019 to put the latest increase into context.

Between 2019 and 2025, first-quarter overseas British passport applications ranged from approximately 107,000 to 152,000. In Q1 2026, the figure reached **300,985**.

The increase means overseas applications in the first three months of 2026 were almost double the number recorded during the same period in 2025 and more than double several earlier first-quarter figures.

Overseas applications also represented approximately **12.2% of all British passport applications** recorded during Q1 2026.

March was the busiest month of Q1

HM Passport Office received **2,461,979 passport applications** overall during the first three months of 2026.

Applications increased from 794,883 in January to 800,365 in February and **866,731 in March**.

March was the first full calendar month following mandatory ETA enforcement and recorded 71,848 more applications than January.

Why ETA matters to dual British citizens

British and Irish citizens do not require an ETA, while dual British citizens cannot obtain one.

Current UK Government guidance says dual British citizens can prove their status for travel using a valid British passport, valid Irish passport, or another valid passport with a Certificate of Entitlement to the Right of Abode.

This is particularly relevant for British citizens who have lived abroad for many years and routinely travel using an Australian, American, Canadian, New Zealand, European or other foreign passport.

The Home Office passport statistics do not record why individual applications were submitted. The increase therefore cannot be directly attributed to ETA enforcement. However, the timing of the surge makes the new travel requirements important context for understanding overseas passport demand in 2026.

International applications in the system more than doubled

The analysis also identified a significant increase in international passport applications remaining in the system.

At the end of Q1 2026, 135,527 international applications were in the passport system, compared with 55,455 at the end of Q1 2025, an increase of approximately 144% year on year.

Of these, **52,755 were awaiting initial documents from customers**, while 82,772 were classed as work in progress. Among the work-in-progress applications, **28,680 required further information**.

These figures do not necessarily indicate that applicants made errors or experienced delays. They do, however, demonstrate the importance supporting documents can play when applying for a British passport internationally.

Supporting British citizens applying from overseas

U.K.ABROAD provides independent assistance to British citizens applying for passports from outside the UK.

U.K.ABROAD is an independent British passport assistance service supporting British citizens applying for passports from overseas. The company provides guidance on renewals, first-time applications, supporting documents and passport application requirements.

Read the full 2026 report

U.K.ABROAD analysed publicly available HM Passport Office performance data published by the UK Home Office. Q1 figures cover January to March of each respective year. Percentage changes have been calculated by U.K.ABROAD from the published figures.

Read the full report:
https://www.ukabroad.net/2026-overseas-british-passport-report/

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