



Australian Government

Department of Immigration
and Citizenship

Information about DNA testing for visa and citizenship applicants

Form

1259i

About DNA

DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) is the genetic material present in every cell of the body. For example, it is in blood, saliva, skin and hair. Everyone has DNA. A person inherits their DNA makeup from their parents. Therefore, blood relatives share similar DNA.

DNA testing

DNA testing compares genetic material from 2 or more people to determine if they are biologically related. The genetic material for testing is usually taken from a mouth swab or blood sample.

Why DNA testing is suggested for some applicants

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (the department) endorses DNA testing as one means of providing evidence of a claimed biological family relationship. Usually other forms of evidence such as birth certificates or family books are available. However, DNA testing is a useful option when documentary evidence of a claimed biological relationship is unreliable or is unavailable.

The department may suggest that you undertake DNA testing as a means to prove a claimed biological relationship when the department is not satisfied with available evidence of a claimed relationship.

You may be required to provide evidence of a family relationship to meet the criteria for the grant of a visa or Australian citizenship by descent. DNA test results provide evidence of claimed family relationships, for example parent-child relationship or brothers and sisters.

DNA testing is not mandatory

You do not have to undertake DNA testing when its use is suggested.

DNA testing is not required by law. It is another form of evidence; usually an alternative to a birth certificate. If you decide to undertake DNA testing, the department provides information on how to arrange a test that will meet the department's requirements. Any test obtained outside the departmental requirements may not be accepted.

If you decide not to undertake DNA testing, a decision on your visa or citizenship by descent application will be made on the information available to the department at that time.

Costs for DNA testing

Applicants for migrant visas or Australian citizenship by descent must pay the full costs for DNA testing.

The department pays the full costs of DNA testing for refugee visa applicants. However, Special Humanitarian Program applicants who are offered DNA testing must pay the full costs of DNA testing.

Counselling

You can seek counselling (advice) from a health professional or Panel doctor before you decide to do DNA testing. You can also seek counselling after the DNA test results are known.

Note: You will be responsible for paying for any counselling you undertake.

What the DNA test results show

DNA testing of a parent and a child shows the biological link between them.

In most cases DNA testing confirms the claimed relationship.

Sometimes the DNA test does not give a clear result of a relationship for other family members. If a result is not clear, the laboratory will explain the results.

What the DNA test results are used for

The DNA test results disclosed to the department will be used strictly for immigration purposes only.

Privacy and confidentiality issues

The department is bound by the *Privacy Act 1988*.

DNA testing laboratories must obtain your written consent before they can disclose your DNA test results to the department or to a sponsor.

You can get more information about privacy and confidentiality of your DNA testing results from the laboratory undertaking your DNA testing.

Laboratories

If the department suggests you undertake DNA testing, they will recommend you use certain laboratories with which arrangements are in place to do DNA testing for immigration purposes. Details of these laboratories will be provided by the department in the letter to clients.

The process for DNA testing

The process for DNA testing involves the following steps:

1. The department sends you a letter suggesting you undertake DNA testing. The letter will give you information about DNA testing, the DNA testing process and a list of DNA testing laboratories.
2. You decide if you want to proceed with DNA testing. You can seek counselling from a health professional or panel doctor if you wish.

If you decide **not** to proceed with DNA testing, the department will decide your visa or citizenship by descent application on the information available at that time.

3. If you decide to proceed with DNA testing, you need to contact a DNA laboratory to make an appointment and you arrange with the laboratory to pay the costs of the DNA testing.

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4. The laboratory will contact you to arrange to collect samples from you and others being DNA tested. Samples are usually taken from a mouth swab or blood spot.

A representative of the department **must** be present when the samples are taken from all donors overseas. Occasionally sample-taking from donors in Australia will also be witnessed.

DNA tests that do not meet the department's requirements **may not** be accepted. (DNA tests results that are recognised legally in Australia may be acceptable).

5. You will be requested to sign a consent form to allow the results to be provided direct to the department. The DNA test results will be sent to you as well as to the department.

The results of DNA tests are usually available 14 days from the date the DNA laboratory receives all samples.

Note: There is a different process for DNA testing for refugee applicants. The department will advise the necessary arrangements.

Read this information in other languages

This information is also available in the following languages:

- Amharic;
- Arabic;
- Dari;
- French;
- Mandarin;
- Somali;
- Tagalog;
- Vietnamese.

Need more information about DNA testing

If you or your relative have been asked to undertake DNA testing and you have further questions, or need more information about DNA testing, please contact the office of the department that suggested the test or visit the department's website **www.immi.gov.au**

Home page **www.immi.gov.au**

General enquiry line

Telephone **131 881** during business hours in Australia to speak to an operator (recorded information available outside these hours). If you are outside Australia, please contact your nearest Australian mission.