



Overseas Citizen of India Scheme

[Source: BT](#)

The Home Ministry has **expanded rules** for **cancelling Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards**, allowing revocation if a holder is convicted with **imprisonment of 2 years or more**, or is **charge-sheeted for offences punishable with 7 years or more**.

- This change is introduced under **clause (da) of Section 7D of the Citizenship Act, 1955**.

Overseas Citizen of India Scheme

- **About:** The **OCI scheme** was launched in **August 2005** by amending the **Citizenship Act, 1955** to allow registration of **Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)**.
 - An **OCI card** is given to **foreign passport holders** of Indian origin and serves as a **multiple-entry, multi-purpose, lifelong visa** for visiting India.
 - However, **OCI does not grant dual citizenship**.
 - Cardholders are **also exempt from registering with the local police**, irrespective of their stay duration.
 - Currently, there are **over 4.5 million OCI cardholders**, with the largest populations in the **US, UK, Australia and Canada**.
- **Eligibility:** **Citizens of India on/after 26 January 1950**, or were **eligible for citizenship** on that date **their descendants**, and spouses (married for ≥ 2 years).
 - Individuals who are or have been citizens of **Pakistan or Bangladesh** are specifically excluded from the **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) scheme**.
- **Restrictions:**
 - **No political rights** (cannot vote, contest elections, or hold **constitutional posts** such as President, Vice President, Judge, etc), unlike Non-Resident Indians.
 - **No right to public employment** under **Article 16 & not eligible for Indian government services**, except as specially notified.
 - Special permits are required for **research, missionary/journalistic work, mountaineering, and visits to protected/restricted areas**.
- **Revocation:**
 - **Fraud or Misrepresentation:** OCI cards obtained through false information, concealment, or fraud can be canceled.
 - **Disaffection to Constitution:** Actions or statements against the Constitution of India may lead to cancellation.
 - **Wartime Assistance to Enemy:** Involvement in aiding the enemy during any war involving India can revoke the card.
 - **Serious Criminal Offenses:**
 - Sentenced to ≥ 2 years imprisonment.
 - Named in a chargesheet for offenses punishable with ≥ 7 years imprisonment.
 - **Actions Prejudicial to India's Interests:** Cancellation possible if deemed necessary for **sovereignty, integrity, security, foreign relations, or public interest**.

Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder V/s Non-Resident Indian

Aspect	Overseas Citizen of India	Non-Resident Indian (NRI)
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	Cardholder	
Legal Status	A person registered as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholder under Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.	An Indian citizen who resides outside of India for a specified period (typically more than 182 days in a financial year).
Visa Requirement	The OCI card serves as a multiple-entry, lifelong visa.	Not required as they hold an Indian passport.
Political Rights	Does not have the right to vote in Indian elections.	Has the right to vote in Indian elections, but must be physically present in their constituency to cast the vote.
Scope of Allowed Activities	All activities except activities like research, missionary work, mountaineering, journalism, and visiting restricted areas, that need special permission from Indian authorities.	All activities

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