

# Global Process Manual

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## Escalations team: Handle a request for urgent allocation of a visa application

Date Published: 25 September 2023

Classification: In-Confidence

### When to use

When a request for urgent allocation of an application has been received into an inbox used for escalation requests.

Note that the expected timeframe for responding to a request in the inbox is two to five working days.

If the team receives a request for reconsideration or review of a request that has previously been considered against escalation criteria (as at Step 3) and declined, go to Step 4.

Refer to SOP *INZ staff: Handle a request for urgent allocation of a visa application* for guidance on the type of request that should be sent to an inbox used for escalation requests.

### Role

Member of the Escalations team

### Steps

#### 1. Receive the request

- Open the request in an escalation requests inbox.
- Open the application involved in the request (if an open application is applicable to the request).
- Identify what the requestor is asking for and refer to the below table:

If the request is for	Then
Urgent allocation of an application	Go to <b>Step 3</b>
Urgent processing of an application that has already been assigned to a case officer <b>OR</b> A general query or request for status update <b>OR</b> A complaint	Go to <b>Step 2</b>

#### 2. Refer request to Immigration Officer (IO) or Immigration Contact Centre (ICC)

If the query or request is	Then
For urgent processing of an application that has already been assigned to an IO (Immigration Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to the applicant or their representative to let them know that the application has been assigned to an IO, and that the IO will contact them directly if they need further information</li> <li>• BCC the IO into this email</li> <li>• Add a copy of this correspondence to AMS or ADEPT (depending on what type of application it relates to - refer to note below for guidance)</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p>
A general immigration question or application status update request, from either the applicant or their	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct the applicant or their representative to contact the <a href="#">ICC</a> , or forward their enquiry to the <a href="#">general enquirv inbox</a> (note: this email address is not to be</li> </ul>

<p>representative OR A notification from the applicant or their representative that there is an error in the applicant's visa label</p>	<p>released to the public)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add a copy of this correspondence to AMS or ADEPT (depending on what type of application it relates to - refer to note below for guidance)</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p>
<p>A complaint from an applicant or representative about a matter handled by INZ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct the applicant or their representative to submit their complaint via the online feedback form on the <a href="#">INZ website</a></li> <li>Add a copy of the correspondence into AMS client notes</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Note:</b> For applications held in AMS, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into AMS application notes. For 2021 Resident Visa applications, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into AMS client notes. For all requests relating to applications in ADEPT, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into ADEPT general notes.</p>

**3. Consider/review and decide the request**

Consider whether the following escalation criteria apply to the request, and whether it genuinely requires urgent allocation:

- Compelling personal circumstances
  - Humanitarian factors
  - Matters of national interest
- Members of the Escalations team will work together to ensure consistency in determining whether priority will be given.
  - Consideration will be given to the specific circumstances detailed in the request and held in INZ's systems.
  - Each request will be assessed based on the merits and individual circumstances presented.

If	Then
<p>Accepting request for urgent allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the applicant or their representative to let them know that their request for escalation has been accepted, and their application will be allocated to an IO as a priority</li> <li>Make sure to BCC the relevant INZ contact person* into this email. This contact person will ensure the application is allocated to an IO</li> <li>Add a copy of this correspondence to AMS or ADEPT (depending on what type of application is - refer to note below for guidance)</li> <li>Add a record of the request and the outcome into the team's request spreadsheet</li> <li>Move the email to the appropriate folder in Outlook</li> </ul> <p><b>*Note:</b> Each office/branch will have a specific contact person for allocating applications to an IO. Refer to Manager if unsure of who this contact person is.</p> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p>
<p>Declining to accept request for urgent allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email the applicant or their representative to let them know that their request for escalation has not been accepted. Refer them to the <a href="#">ICC</a> or the <a href="#">INZ website</a> , as appropriate</li> <li>Add a copy of this correspondence to AMS or ADEPT (depending on what type of application it relates to - refer to note below for guidance)</li> <li>Add a record of this request into the team's request spreadsheet</li> <li>Move the email to the appropriate folder in Outlook</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Note:</b> For applications held in AMS, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into AMS application notes. For 2021 Resident Visa applications, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into AMS client</p>

	<p>notes. For all requests relating to applications in ADEPT, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into ADEPT general notes.</p>
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**4. Reconsider a previously declined escalation request**

**Note:** To ensure a fair review, a reconsideration request must not be considered by the same team member who considered the original request.

Confirm that the request for reconsideration relates to an escalation request that has recently been considered against escalation criteria and declined by the Escalations team.

If	Then	
It is a new request that has not previously been considered by the team	Go to <b>Step 1</b> to review the request <b>END OF THIS STEP</b>	
The request is for reconsideration of a decline decision	Open the application involved in the request and check that it is not allocated to an IO	
	If	Then
	The application has now been allocated to an IO	Refer to process at <b>Step 2</b> <b>END OF THIS STEP</b>
The application remains unallocated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email the applicant using the reconsideration template (advising them that the request will be reconsidered by a different member of the team to ensure it receives a fair review)</li> <li>Now refer to process at <b>Step 3</b> <b>END OF THIS STEP</b></li> </ul>	

END

See Also

[Request for Urgent Allocation of a Visa Application](#)

[INZ staff: Handle a request for priority allocation of a visa application](#)

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# Global Process Manual

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## INZ staff: Handle a request for priority allocation of a visa application

Classification: In-Confidence

Date Published: 25 September 2023

### When to use

When an individual or team within Immigration New Zealand (INZ) receives a request for the urgent allocation or processing of a visa application. A request will typically come from an applicant or their representative, asking for their application to be processed urgently due to their personal circumstances. These requests must be sent to the Escalations inbox so the team can decide whether priority allocation is warranted.

For a small amount of visa types requests must be directed to ICC as a first point of contact. This detailed in the following steps.

Note that if the request relates to an application held in a Pacific office, it must be directed to a separate inbox.

It is important to note:

- A request sent to the Escalations team may not necessarily be accepted for urgent allocation.
- If the team decides that an application does warrant urgent allocation, the application may not necessarily be decided or completed quickly (this is dependent on the specific circumstances of the applicant and/or their application).

Refer to SOP Escalations team: Handle a request for urgent allocation of a visa application for instruction on considering a request once it has been received in the Escalations inbox.

If a Visa Operations Manager (VOM) receives a request and it looks eminent urgent (i.e., family member dying), then the VOM should consider it in-office against the three escalation criteria (compelling personal circumstances; humanitarian factors; matters of national interest), rather than directing it to the Escalations team. If the application in question warrants priority allocation and is for a Visitor Visa or Accredited Employer Work Visa held in ADEPT, the VOM should refer to SOP Invoke and use Jump to Assessment (JTA) feature in ADEPT to decide if the JTA feature should be used. If the VOM decides to handle the request in-house, they must email the Escalations team to advise them of this, making sure to include the original escalation request so the Escalations team can add it to their centralised reporting data.

### Role

- INZ Leadership Team
- INZ Risk and Verification
- INZ/Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) staff within the offices of the Minister of Immigration and Associate Minister of Immigration
- Customer branch staff, including Relationship Managers and Business Advisors
- INZ Complaints team, including Analysts and Team Leader
- Immigration Contact Centre (ICC)
- INZ processing office staff, including Immigration Officers (IOs) and Immigration Managers (IMs)

### Steps

#### 1. Receive escalation request

Identify if it is:

- a request for the urgent allocation/escalation of a visa application, or
- a request for an update on a visa application, or
- a general immigration query, or
- a complaint

If the query or request relates to	Then
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Urgent escalation of an application	Go to <b>Step 3</b>
Urgent processing of an application that has already been assigned to a case officer <b>OR</b> A general query or question about a visa that has been granted <b>OR</b> A complaint	Go to <b>Step 2</b>

**2. Where to direct a query or request for status update**

- If the request is not for urgent allocation of an application, it does not need to be sent to the Escalations team for their response.
- Refer to the below table for guidance on how to respond to the requestor.

If the query or request is	Then
For urgent processing of an application that has already been assigned to a case officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward the enquiry to the IO the application is assigned to (and CC in their IM), or direct the applicant or their representative to contact the <a href="#">ICC</a></li> <li>• Add a copy of this correspondence to AMS or ADEPT (depending on what type of application it relates to – refer to note below for guidance)</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p>
A general immigration question or application status update request, from either the applicant or their representative <b>OR</b> A notification from the applicant or their representative that there is an error in the applicant’s visa label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct the applicant or their representative to contact the <a href="#">ICC</a> , or forward their enquiry to the <a href="#">general enquiry inbox</a> (note: this email address is not to be released to the public)</li> <li>• Add a copy of this correspondence to AMS or ADEPT (depending on what type of application it relates to – refer to note below for guidance)</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p>
A complaint from an applicant or representative about a matter handled by INZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct the applicant or their representative to submit their complaint via the online feedback form on the <a href="#">INZ website</a></li> <li>• Add a copy of the correspondence into AMS client notes</li> </ul> <p><b>END OF PROCESS</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Note:</b> For applications held in AMS, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into AMS application notes. For 2021 Resident Visa applications, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into AMS client notes. For all requests relating to applications in ADEPT, a copy of the correspondence must be pasted into ADEPT general notes.</p>

**3. Send the request to the Escalations team**

Forward the request to the Escalations team. Refer to the below table for the correct email address.

If the application is held	Then
In a Pacific office	Forward request to <a href="#">this inbox</a>
In any other office and is an application for: PRV --	Direct the enquiry to <a href="#">ICC</a> . They will review and forward to the Escalations team if required

<b>OR</b>	
Visitor visa	
In any other office and any other visa type	Forward request to <a href="#">this inbox</a>

- Advise the requestor that the Escalations team will be in contact with them within an expected timeframe of two to five working days.
- If application is in AMS, add a copy of the correspondence into AMS notes, under the applicant’s client number. If in ADEPT, add a copy of the correspondence into ADEPT general notes.
- The Escalations team will contact the applicant or their representative directly to let them know the outcome of their request for priority allocation.

END

See Also

[Request for Urgent Allocation of a Visa Application](#)

[Escalations team: Handle a request for urgent allocation of a visa application](#)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982.

# VisaPak Database

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## Centralising INZ escalation to allocation requests

**To:** All Visa Operations staff

**From:** Escalations Team

**Action required:** Discuss with your teams

### Context

This VisaPak supersedes the information provided in previous VisaPaks as noted below:

- [Visa Pak 409](#)
- [Visa Pak 520](#)

Where an application has been lodged with Immigration New Zealand (INZ) but has not yet been allocated, it is considered unallocated or queued work. INZ would normally allocate applications for processing in date order, or in line with business priorities and general instructions. It is possible that an applicant or stakeholder has circumstances that would warrant a request for the unallocated application to be allocated urgently. This is deemed to be a request for escalation for priority allocation. Requests may be made through the Immigration Contact Centre (ICC) or directly through emails or phone calls with processing offices.

A centralised Escalations team has been established to receive, acknowledge, and decide which escalations requests meet the threshold for urgency and communicate the outcome of the request back to the requestor. The team will also liaise with the onshore office network to request the allocation of those applications that meet the threshold. The purpose of this team is to lift the administrative burden of managing these processes from the offices by operating a centralised, consistent, and transparent escalation process.

There is additional planning underway to extend this centralised approach to support the operational sites in the Pacific.

### Updates

The team has taken on the escalation mailboxes and processes from each onshore office (this includes the Employment Escalation process (EVE) and visitor visa escalations, which have previously been the subject of VisaPak advice) while looking for ways to create improvements and reflect the MBIE Customer Promise.

Improvements that will soon be delivered:

- New Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) will be published on Monday 25 September to document the new processes for the Escalations team and the wider network including ICC.
- The new SOPs implement a set of three criteria that are used to review all escalation requests, regardless of visa type. This incorporates the previous EVE, visitor and student visa escalation criteria.
- Planning is underway for communications to external stakeholders and relevant updates to the INZ website. This will ensure that there is a clear understanding for applicants of how to request an escalation of an unallocated application.
- The current monitored inboxes will be replaced by dedicated escalation request mailboxes. This will begin initially with the [visaescalations@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:visaescalations@mbie.govt.nz) mailbox. These changes will be facilitated with the updates to the INZ website. The Escalations team will continue to monitor all current escalation inboxes and these will be rerouted into the centralised [visaescalations@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:visaescalations@mbie.govt.nz) inbox within the next month.

Improvements that have already been made:

- Timeframes for escalation requests review have been improved and are now responded to within two (2) to five (5) working days.
- An internal review process (similar to a reconsideration process) has been developed for requests that are received a second time to ensure a fair process.
- Monthly reporting has been in place from August onwards for Heads of Operations. This will provide insight into the volume of the work and identify trends for escalations across visa types.

### Action

Please discuss with your teams. Please do not action escalation requests ad hoc within your sites. Any escalation requests received should be sent to [visaescalations@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:visaescalations@mbie.govt.nz)

The SOPs can be accessed here [Global Process Manual](#) from Monday 25th September.

Contact	Frazer Hopkins
Publish on Visa Pak Database	Yes
Publish on INZ website (publicly available)	No
Visa Pak issue date	22 September 2023
Visa Pak number:	556

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