



28 April 2021

A Singh
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Ref: DOIA 2021-1907

Dear A Singh,

Thank you for your email of 26 March 2021 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA), the following information:

“Under Official Information Act, may I please request the following information from INZ - From 1st January 2021 and when you reply to this request, please provide following data after each allocation of SMC and RFW application in the onshore non-priority and priority queue -

- 1. How many SMC and RFW onshore non-priority and priority applications were allocated in each allocation cycle, separate data for priority and non-priority applications?*
- 2. How many applications were in the unallocated SMC and RFW onshore non-priority and priority queue before and after each allocation cycle, separate data for priority and non-priority applications?
(Sounds like simple math, but numbers from previous OIA responses do not add up. So please provide this data for better clarity)*
- 3. What was the date of oldest unallocated application in SMC and RFW onshore non-priority and priority queue before and after each allocation cycle, separate data for priority and non-priority applications?”*

Our Response

As you may be aware, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has one queue for skilled residence applications. The applications in this queue include Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) and Resident from Work (RFW), and are not split into two separate queues based on the application category.

Part One: “How many SMC and RFW onshore non-priority and priority applications were allocated in each allocation cycle, separate data for priority and non-priority applications?”

Please see table one below which provides the number of skilled residence applications that were allocated from the onshore non priority and priority queues, between the periods 04 January 2021 to 26 April 2021.

Please note that allocations of applications to immigration officers occur weekly and the number of applications that are allocated is dependent upon processing capacity. The Government is currently reviewing its approach to the New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) and is considering replacing the planning range with a more targeted approach that focuses on management of specific residence visa types. In the meantime, INZ will continue to process applications at the same volume and with the same level of resourcing as the previous NZRP allowed for. This has an impact on the number of applications that can be allocated and the timeliness of application processing.

Also note that in February 2021, the Auckland region moved into Alert Level 3 twice which had an impact on the processing of skilled residence applications, and the capacity for immigration officers to be allocated new applications. With reduced processing capacity and reduced ability for some staff to access INZ offices during the COVID-19 response, for several weeks the INZ Manukau office had limited numbers of staff processing skilled residence applications from the office and reduced productivity for those working from home.

Table One

Allocation week	Priority Queue	Non Priority Queue
4-Jan-21	47	104
11-Jan-21	16	97
18-Jan-21	49	114
25-Jan-21	58	92
1-Feb-21	41	129
8-Feb-21	17	177
15-Feb-21	60	17
22-Feb-21	21	49
1-Mar-21	35	30
8-Mar-21	52	0
15-Mar-21	73	49
22-Mar-21	16	118
29-Mar-21	26	80
5-Apr-21	47	20
12-Apr-21	37	31
19-Apr-21	79	4
26-Apr-21	45	39

Part Two: “How many applications were in the unallocated SMC and RFW onshore non-priority and priority queue before and after each allocation cycle, separate data for priority and non-priority applications?”

Information on how many unallocated skilled residence applications were in the onshore non priority and priority queue after each allocation cycle, is not held in a reportable format. INZ can only retrieve the number of applications in the queues as at the current date.

Please see table two below which provides the total number of unallocated skilled residence applications in the onshore and offshore queues as at 15 April 2021, broken down by application type.

Table Two

Queue	Application Type		Total
	RFW	SMC	
Onshore Non Priority	4,308	7,193	11,501
Priority	69	16	85
Total	4,407	8,788	13,195

Part Three: “What was the date of oldest unallocated application in SMC and RFW onshore non-priority and priority queue before and after each allocation cycle, separate data for priority and non-priority applications?”

Information on the oldest unallocated application in the onshore non priority and priority queue before and after each allocation cycle, is not held in a reportable format. INZ can only retrieve this information for applications currently in the queues.

As at 27 April 2021, the oldest application in the skilled residence onshore non-priority queue pending allocation was accepted for processing by INZ on 06 August 2019, and the oldest application in the priority queue was accepted on 28 August 2019. This is the date that all information required for the acceptance of the application was actually received by INZ rather than the date the data entry was completed.

Most data used in OIA responses is pulled directly from the INZ Application Management System (AMS), and reflects the date that the data entry relating to the application was completed in AMS. On occasion an application is received by INZ on one date, but the data entry is not complete until a later date. In the interest of fairness, when allocating applications the Manukau office use the date that all information required for the acceptance of the application was actually received by INZ rather than the date the data entry was completed – which reflects when a client will perceive their application to have been submitted. This means that there may be differences noted in the allocation data, which is sourced directly from the Manukau office, when compared with other statistics about skilled residence, including number and dates of applications in the queues.

Please note that the skilled residence queue data is not static due to the complex nature of visa processing operations. Applications move between queues and this needs to be taken into account when comparing data over time. The data changes over time for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Applicants arriving into New Zealand on critical purpose visas result in their applications moving from the offshore queue to one of the onshore queues;
- A change in an applicant’s circumstances resulting in their application meeting the priority criteria and being moved to the priority queue;
- Applications being escalated via the Employment Visa Escalation (EVE) process - <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/korero/korero-july-2019/employment-visa-escalations-eve>;
- Applications selected to be used in training new Immigration Officers.

Any updates in regards to the allocation of applications can be found via the following link: www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/how-we-prioritise-resident-visa-applications/smc-and-rfw-timeframe-information

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Lautalie Leausa Vaa, Senior Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at Lautalie.Leausavaa@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,



Nicola Hogg
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Immigration New Zealand