



9 June 2021

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Daniel

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Dear Daniel

OIA request 20/21 0563 Request for citizenship information

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 11 May 2021.

You requested –

1. Underneath check processes are from Citizenship Guide November 2020. Can you please tell how many hours efforts(department wise) it takes for a case officer to collect information from these department ? Please add in reply if there is any extra department to collect information by Citizenship case officer.

- *New Zealand Police (some convictions are assessed under section 9A of the Citizenship Act)*
- *New Zealand Security Intelligence Service*
- *Ministry of Social Development*
- *Ministry of Justice*
- *Inland Revenue Department*
- *Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.*

2. Time taken by a citizenship case officer to approve citizenship (till approved citizenship) for a normal person with no bad credit, no traffic offense, no tax due, etc? Please add in reply if there are more checks? Please provide data from Jan 2021 to June 2021.

3. Number of Citizenship files processed per day by a Citizenship case officer (till approved Citizenship), Please provide data from Jan 2020 to June 2021?

4. How many Citizenship case officers are there in DIA by City wise to process the citizenship files? How many in Auckland, Wellington etc?

5. Number for citizenship files allocated to per case officer?

6. Time taken by a case officer to process the file? (till approved citizenship) Please provide data from Jan 2020 to June 2021.

7. How frequently the citizenship ceremonies are happening? Just asking months and frequency in a month? Please provide data from Jan 2021 to June 2021

8. Number for citizenship files applied in Auckland? How many online and paper based? Please provide data from Jan 2020 to June 2021.

9. Citizenship applications Approved by month (Jan 2021- June 2021)?

10. Currently which months citizenship files are in processing or allocated to citizenship cases officers for Auckland?

For ease of reading, our response has been broken down by each question.

Question one

It is not possible for the Department to isolate the efforts associated with external agency checks. This is because they are performed throughout the processing time and no record is kept of the administration time it takes to request each piece of information.

The portion of your request relating to the time taken for external agency checks must therefore be refused pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act; that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

A common external agency the Department performs checks with that was not included in the list you provided is Customs New Zealand. In addition, the Department may, in some cases, check with other agencies, if information received indicates that they may have information relevant to the applicant's ability to meet the requirements. I note this could be any government agency.

Question two

I can confirm the average number of business days it took for an application to be approved after having been submitted, between January 2021 and end of May 2021, was 163. Under section 15(1)(b) of the Act we also wish to notify you of our decision to release the average number of business days it took for an application to be approved after having been submitted to a case officer, should we be able to successfully collate this information. We anticipate having a response with the outcome to you no later than 21 June 2021.

As checks are performed throughout processing, we are unable to determine which applications may or may not be straightforward and therefore no data is collected to distinguish between the complexity of applications.

As advised in response to question one, a common external agency the Department performs checks with that was not included in the list you provided is Customs New Zealand. In addition, the Department may, in some cases, check with other agencies, if information received indicates that they may have information relevant to the applicant's ability to meet the requirements. I note this could be any government agency.

Please note when we refer to an application being approved, this is when the Minister or delegated official has approved for citizenship to be granted to an applicant, in most cases, pending their attendance of a citizenship ceremony.

Questions three and six

Citizenship applications take more than one day to process. Although there is no specific timeframe, the time taken to process a citizenship application depends on what further information may need to be sought from the applicant or other external agencies.

Should it be of use to you, however, please find below a table showing the average number of grant applications approved per case officer each month.

In response to question six, this table also provides the average number of business days it took for an application to be approved after having been submitted. Under section 15(1)(b) of the Act we also wish to notify you of our decision to release the average number of business days it took for an application to be approved after having been submitted to a case officer, should we be able to successfully collate this information. We anticipate having a response with the outcome to you no later than 21 June 2021.

Please do note that these applications could have been submitted at any time, and were not necessarily submitted on the same month they were approved.

I also note that April and May 2020 show lower numbers of citizenship applications being approved, as this was during Covid-19 lockdown.

Average processing per CO per month	Average processing days	Approval month
49	57	Jan 2020
54	63	February 2020
46	58	March 2020
8	93	April 2020
26	98	May 2020
51	97	June 2020
38	95	July 2020
44	101	August 2020
49	107	September 2020
43	100	October 2020
45	107	November 2020
48	114	December 2020
23	127	January 2021
35	134	February 2021
51	166	March 2021
31	179	April 2021
37	189	May 2021

Question four

Please find below a table showing how many staff are trained in processing citizenship by grant applications as at the month of May 2021.

Auckland	Christchurch	Wellington	Total
12	6	27	45

Question five

I can confirm as at the end of May each case officer had an average of 56 applications they were working on.

Question seven

Please find below a table showing how many ceremonies were held throughout New Zealand each month so far this year. I note that no ceremonies were held in the month of January.

Month	Number of ceremonies held across New Zealand
February 2021	18
March 2021	24
April 2021	22
May 2021	28
Grand total	92

Question eight

I can confirm a total of 11,628 paper applications were received in our Manukau and Auckland offices between 1 January 2020 to end of May 2021.

I note no data has been provided for the number of online applications submitted to the Manukau and Auckland offices. This is because online applications come through a central online system, and are then allocated to case officers throughout the country in order of received date, opposed to being submitted directly to a specific office.

Question nine

Please find below a table showing the average number of citizenship applications approved each month between January 2021 and May 2021.

Month	Total grants approved	Average days to approval
January 2021	819	127
February 2021	1283	134
March 2021	2081	166
April 2021	1165	179
May 2021	1456	189

Question ten

I can confirm that files from September 2020 are currently being allocated to case officers. I do note however, that the majority of files currently still being processed are from August 2020.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Julia Taylor
Manager Operational Policy and Official Correspondence
Service Delivery and Operations