



20 October 2023

Wendy Yang

[fyi-request-24133-3584c0cc@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-24133-3584c0cc@requests.fyi.org.nz)

DOIA 2324-0593

Tēnā koe Wendy

Thank you for your email of 13 September 2023 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following:

- 1. Please help provide the entire process for each visa category from submission of application to assignment to different branches and visa officers.*
- 2. Are visa applications allocated in order of visa submission date?*
- 3. Are visa numbers sorted by submission date? Why can some visas under the same visa category have late submission dates but be assigned to visa officers in advance?*

On 21 September 2023, following our request for clarification, you confirmed that you wanted the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each visa category for Question 1.

### **Our Response**

*Question 1: Please help provide the entire process for each visa category from submission of application to assignment to different branches and visa officers.*

Please find the information requested in the attached Appendix, which contains extracts from Immigration New Zealand's Global Process Manual. The Global Process Manual contains SOPs on how visa applications are lodged, sorted, and allocated to different branches and immigration officers for processing.

The SOP process is differentiated based on temporary-entry and residence class applications. Visa categories that have no set SOP in place for lodgement purposes will follow generic SOPs set out for lodging applications either online or via the Application Management System (AMS).

Some information is withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- Section 6(c) as releasing the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial.
- Section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of the natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

I have considered whether withholding that information is outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available, in accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA, however it is my opinion that such grounds do not exist.

Please note that some information pertained within the SOPs have been blanked out, this information has not been redacted but was removed when the SOPs were created for training purposes.

*Question 2 Are visa applications allocated in order of visa submission date?*

*Question 3: Are visa numbers sorted by submission date? Why can some visas under the same visa category have late submission dates but be assigned to visa officers in advance?*

Visa applications are generally assigned for processing according to their lodgement date; however, some visa applications may be prioritised after consideration of the applicants' personal circumstances. Each application and request for prioritisation are considered on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the link below for information regarding why some applications are processed faster than others.

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/waiting-for-a-visa/why-some-applications-are-processed-faster-than-others>

More information about the order of processing visa applications can be found in Immigration New Zealand's Operational Manual:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/#44854.htm>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the Ministry's response to your request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact [inzoias@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:inzoias@mbie.govt.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



Sarah Clifford  
Director Visa  
Chief Operating Officer Branch  
Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment