



17 July 2026

Tobias Tohill

fyi-request-34835-d7e56bcd@requests.fyi.org.nz

REQ-0034021

Tēnā koe Tobias,

Thank you for your email of 3 June 2026 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following:

With regards to the assessment of Accredited Employer Work Visa applications, we write to request information that provides guidelines, definition, list of examples, scenarios, staff training manuals, internal operating procedures, standard operating procedures, memos to staff, updates to staff, unpublished Visa Paks, or any other information that is not publicly available on the following;

- 1. What constitutes 'independently verifiable evidence'*
- 2. What is not considered to 'independently verifiable evidence'*
- 3. Whether any such country profile information held by Immigration New Zealand should be referred to when immigration officers consider whether evidence provided constitutes sufficiently 'independently verifiable evidence' in their assessments of particular applications*
- 4. Standard Operating Procedures for AEW. Work Visa processing with regards to assessment of work evidence, including any definition or guide as to what constitutes verifiable evidence or independently verifiable evidence*

For the avoidance of doubt, this request excludes all information publicly available on websites, including immigration instructions, published Visa Paks and guides.

Please feel free contact me should you required any clarification of this request.

On 1 July 2026, we notified you of an extension of the timeframe to respond to your request, to 16 July 2026.

Our Response

Question 1

What constitutes 'independently verifiable evidence'

There is no formal definition of “independently verifiable evidence” set out in legislation or immigration instructions, however the term is used by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) in its commonly understood meaning. It can generally be understood as:

Evidence that originates from an independent third party and can be verified through means not connected to the applicant.

In practice, this means evidence that:

- Does not rely solely on the applicant's own statements,
- Is not dependent on third-party contacts provided by the applicant, and
- Can be corroborated through independent methods (e.g., alternative contact channels, public records, or other trusted sources).

Where evidence cannot be independently verified through such means, it may be considered inconclusive. This creates a situation where immigration officers may be unable to be satisfied that the relevant information is genuine. Under immigration instructions, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that they meet the required criteria.

Question 2

What is Not Considered "Independently Verifiable Evidence"

Broadly, evidence would not be considered independently verifiable where it:

- Relies solely on applicant declarations,
- Depends on third-party information supplied by the applicant that cannot be verified through means unconnected to the applicant for example a reference letter from an employer
- Cannot be confirmed using independent and reliable sources.

Question 3

Use of Country Profile Information

Country Profile Information is a resource used when considering what type or form of documents an immigration officer should consider acceptable when assessing applications, although it is considered alongside a holistic assessment of other factors provided in the application.

Question 4

Standard Operating Procedures for AEWV Processing

There are no Accredited Employer work visa (AEWV) standard operating procedures that set out the definition of independently verifiable evidence or directly concern the assessment of an applicant's evidence of work experience. We have identified one AEWV training document concerning independently verifiable evidence which is provided in the attached appendix. The training document contains both fictional and real examples and where necessary information has been withheld.

We are withholding some information under the following sections of the Act:

- 6(c) to avoid prejudice to the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial; and
- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons;
- 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

I do not consider that the withholding of this information is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.

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.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact inzoias@mbie.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine L'Estrange'.

Catherine L'Estrange
Acting Director Visa
Chief Operating Officer Immigration
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment