



Fan Zhang
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Ref: DOIA 2021 - 1167

Dear Fan Zhang

Thank you for your email of 11 December 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

May I have the information in relation to Skilled Migrant Category Residence (SMC) Visa Application please?

Q1: What is the oldest date of the lodged application awaiting allocation of Case Officer (CO) within the non-priority queue as of your responding day?

Q2: May I have your advice about the total number of onshore SMC Residence Visa Application in the non-priority queue awaiting allocation of CO as of your responding day?

Q3: Based upon the feedback on the second question, the total number being provided by you, in which, how many of them were lodged before 11 June 2019? Would appreciate if the figure could be provided in a weekly lodgement manner.

Q4: How many applications from the priority queue and the non-priority queue were allocated for CO in September, October, November, December 2020, and as of your responding day respectively? It notes allocating CO occurs weekly. Would appreciate if the information could be provided in a weekly manner.

Our response

Please note that over the last couple of years, demand for the Skilled Residence sub-stream, which includes Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) and Residence from Work (RFW), has risen significantly. This has resulted in longer decision times for applicants. Residence applications take longer to process as there is more at stake and there is greater scrutiny of each application, which means there is a flow-on effect and the allocation of new applications to an immigration officer can take longer.

The New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) Planning Range sets the upper and lower number for residence visa approvals. The previous Planning Range was 50,000 to 60,000 residence approvals from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2019. The Government is currently reviewing its approach to the 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 same volume and with the same level of resourcing as the

previous NZRP allowed for, this does have an impact on the number of applications that can be allocated and the timeliness of application processing.

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

Question 1

What is the oldest date of the lodged application awaiting allocation of Case Officer (CO) within the non-priority queue as of your responding day?

As of 14 January 2021, the oldest date of the lodged SMC application (including applications where the principal applicant is either in or outside of New Zealand) awaiting allocation to an immigration officer for assessment within the non-priority queue is 14th January 2019.

Please note that applications for applicants who are outside of New Zealand are currently on hold. This is because people who are not New Zealand citizens or residents are unlikely to travel to New Zealand while our border is closed. Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is not able to legally grant a visa to people who are unlikely to meet the entry requirements. As such, offshore applications have been separated and are not currently being processed. Processing for offshore applications will resume when the border re-opens.

Question 2

May I have your advice about the total number of onshore SMC Residence Visa Application in the non-priority queue awaiting allocation of CO as of your responding day?

As of 14 January 2021, the total number of onshore SMC residence applications in the non-priority queue awaiting allocation to an immigration officer is 8216.

Question 3

Based upon the feedback on the second question, the total number being provided by you, in which, how many of them were lodged before 11 June 2019? Would appreciate if the figure could be provided in a weekly lodgement manner.

There are seven unallocated SMC applications for applicants in New Zealand that were lodged before 11 June 2019 that are in the non-priority queue awaiting allocation to an immigration officer.

Question 4

How many applications from the priority queue and the non-priority queue were allocated for CO in September, October, November, December 2020, and as of your responding day respectively? It notes allocating CO occurs weekly.

Please note that the skilled residence applications processed in the INZ Manukau office are made up of two categories: SMC and RFW. They are not split into two separate queues based on the application category. Once an application is accepted for processing it is then identified as to whether it meets the prioritisation criteria, or not, and triaged into either the priority or non-priority queue. Therefore the below data includes both SMC and RFW applications.

Table 1: weekly allocations of skilled residence applications from September 2020 to December 2020

Week beginning	Number of allocations from the priority queue	Number of allocations from the non-priority queue
7-Sep-20	45	177
14-Sep-20	77	97
21-Sep-20	63	123
28-Sep-20	49	110
5-Oct-20	58	152
12-Oct-20	82	58
19-Oct-20	44	147
26-Oct-20	8	169
2-Nov-20	16	175
9-Nov-20	67	172
16-Nov-20	68	184
23-Nov-20	40	205
30-Nov-20	70	156
7-Dec-20	52	143
14-Dec-20	57	171
21-Dec-20	50	79
28-Dec-20	0	122

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Dongrui Pang, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at Dongrui.Pang@mbie.govt.nz

Yours sincerely



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