



04 March 2021

Elsa Philip
fyi-request-14701-92066543@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2021 – 1535

Dear Elsa

Thank you for your email on 17 February 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

- 1. As of 17th Feb 2021, which date's application (SMC Application) is at the front of the queue (to be allocated to an officer in the SAT)*
- 2. Is the queue (to be allocated to an officer in SAT) same for SMC/ Work/ Student visas or are there different queues?*
- 3. Are the applications cherry picked when assigned to an officer in SAT, or does it go date wise?*
- 4. On an average - what is the time frame that is currently in place if the application is sent to the SAT? I acknowledge it differs from each individual case, but I believe there still is an average timeframe.*

Our response

1. As of 17th Feb 2021, which date's application (SMC Application) is at the front of the queue (to be allocated to an officer in the SAT)

As at 17 February 2020 there are no Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) residence applications in the Specialist Assessment Team (SAT) queues waiting to be allocated to an immigration officer. All applications have been allocated.

2. Is the queue (to be allocated to an officer in SAT) same for SMC/ Work/ Student visas or are there different queues?

There are specific queues which applications are allocated from based on the application category.

3. Are the applications cherry picked when assigned to an officer in SAT, or does it go date wise?

As per Immigration Instruction **A16.1 (e)** applications are generally processed in lodgement date order. Immigration Managers may use their discretion to allocate applications outside of lodgement date order dependent on individual circumstances. For more information about the order of visa application processing, please see the relevant immigration instructions on the Immigration New Zealand website: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/#44854.htm>.



4. On an average - what is the time frame that is currently in place if the application is sent to the SAT? I acknowledge it differs from each individual case, but I believe there still is an average timeframe.

All SMC applications processed by SAT would need to be manually reviewed to determine an average processing time. This exercise would require substantial collation and therefore question 4 of your request has been refused under section 18(f) of the OIA.

Providing this information would remove Ministry staff from their core duties and therefore the greater public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the public service would not be served. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, both cases, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

You have the right to contest the decision to refuse information by seeking an investigation and review of that decision by the Ombudsman. 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 Adam Jones, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at adam.jones@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Hogg', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Nicola Hogg
General Manager – Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment