



10 May 2021

Soni

By email: fyi-request-15039-17b5a2fe@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2021-1959

Dear Soni

Thank you for your email of 31 March 2021, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

*How many SMC files are still waiting for allocation till November 2019?  
Approximately How much time it will take for allocation of November 2019 SMC files?  
How many files are allocates to each case officers weekly basis and how many they processing weekly?*

Thank you for clarifying your request on 12 April 2021 as follows:

- 1. The number of skilled residence applications accepted on or before 30 November 2019 (inclusive) that are still awaiting allocation to an Immigration Officer.*
- 2. A weekly breakdown of the number of skilled residence applications allocated to Immigration Officers for assessment in 2021 to date.*
- 3. A weekly breakdown of the number of skilled residence applications completed in 2021 to date.*
- 4. As per your targeted time how much time it will take to allocate November 2019 skilled residence files.*
- 5. What month skilled residence files is Immigration allocating at the date of your response?*

**Our response**

- 1. The number of skilled residence applications accepted on or before 30 November 2019 (inclusive) that are still awaiting allocation to an Immigration Officer.*

There are 3,017 skilled residence applications that were accepted on or before 30 November 2019 that are awaiting allocation to an Immigration Officer. Note that this includes 901 skilled residence applications where the applicant is offshore. Visa processing for overseas applicants is still on hold. This is because INZ is not able to legally grant a visa to people who are unlikely to meet the entry requirements. Processing of these offshore applications will resume when the border re-opens. There may however be some offshore applicants based in a quarantine-free travel zone who will meet entry requirements. Once their eligibility to travel to New Zealand is confirmed, these applications will also be processed.



*2. A weekly breakdown of the number of skilled residence applications allocated to Immigration Officers for assessment in 2021 to date.*

Please refer to Table One attached.

Skilled residence queue data is not static due to the complex nature of visa processing operations. Applications move between queues and this needs to be taken into account when comparing data over time. The data changes over time for reasons such as but not limited to:

- Applicants arriving into New Zealand on critical purpose visas result in their applications moving from the offshore queue to one of the onshore queues;
- A change in an applicant's circumstances resulting in their application meeting the priority criteria and being moved to the priority queue;
- Applications being escalated via the Employment Visa Escalation (EVE) process - <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/korero/korero-july-2019/employment-visa-escalations-eve>;
- Applications selected to be used in training new Immigration Officers.

Most data used in OIA responses is pulled directly from the INZ Application Management System (AMS), and reflects the date that the data entry relating to the application was completed in AMS. On occasion an application is received by INZ on one date, but the data entry is not completed until a later date. In the interest of fairness, when allocating applications the Manukau office use the date that all information required for the acceptance of the application was actually received by INZ rather than the date the data entry was completed – which reflects when a client will perceive their application to have been submitted. This means that there may be differences noted in the allocation data, which is sourced directly from the Manukau office, when compared with other statistics about skilled residence, including number and dates of applications in the queues.

*3. A weekly breakdown of the number of skilled residence applications completed in 2021 to date.*

Please refer to Table Two attached.

*4. As per your targeted time how much time it will take to allocate November 2019 skilled residence files.*

This is not a request for Official Information as you are asking for a prediction of future information. We can advise that as at 10 May 2021 the oldest application in the onshore non-priority skilled residence queue was accepted on 13 August 2019.

*5. What month skilled residence files is Immigration allocating at the date of your response?*

INZ are currently allocating applications accepted in August 2019 from the onshore non-priority skilled residence queue.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Anna McLachlan, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at [Anna.McLachlan@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Anna.McLachlan@mbie.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Hogg', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

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

**Table One** - Allocation information relating to skilled residence (Skilled Migrant Category and Residence from Work) applications

Week commencing	Priority skilled residence applications allocated	Non-priority skilled residence applications allocated	Applications allocated via the employment visa escalation (EVE) process <sup>1</sup>
4 January 2021	47	104	4
11 January 2021	16	97	2
18 January 2021	49	114	0
25 January 2021	58	92	5
1 February 2021	41	129	3
9 February 2021	17	177	0
16 February 2021	60	17	6
22 February 2021	21	49	0
1 March 2021	35	30	1
8 March 2021	52	0	0
15 March 2021	73	49	0
22 March 2021	16	118	0
29 March 2021	26	80	2
5 April 2021	47	20	0
12 April 2021	37	31	1
19 April 2021	79	4	0
26 April 2021	45	39	3
3 May 2021	41	46	0

<sup>1</sup> Employment Visa Escalation is a process to respond to escalation requests for urgent allocation for employment related visas (and associated family members) for both Temporary Work Visas and Skilled Resident Visas. For more information see the INZ website here: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/korero/korero-july-2019/employment-visa-escalations-eve>

**Table Two** - Number of skilled residence applications completed in 2021 to date broken down by week completed

Year and week	Completed Applications
2021 W01	110
2021 W02	273
2021 W03	182
2021 W04	163
2021 W05	123
2021 W06	134
2021 W07	195
2021 W08	248
2021 W09	98
2021 W10	155
2021 W11	226
2021 W12	217
2021 W13	162
2021 W14	110
2021 W15	156
2021 W16	152

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