



1 July 2021

Parmod Kumar

fyi-request-15649-50561569@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: DOIA 2021-2475

Dear Parmod Kumar,

Thank you for your email of 02 June 2021 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA), the following information:

"1.As of date when you response this request, which date's of SMC Application is at the front of the queue to be allocated to an officer in the wellington branch(Special assessment team SAT) 2.How many total smc files (monthly breakdown please) sent to wellington branch at the moment waiting for co. 3.How many smc application lodgement August 2019, are waiting for allocation in wellington branch. 4.Are all smc application sent to wellington branch for further processing goes to one department for processing like SAT or other department as well. 5.What is the average processing time for SMC files sent to wellington branch. 6.How many officers approx works on SMC files in wellington branch and is there a separate queue for different type of visa category(smc,work visa etc) or all in one queue."

Our Response

Question One: "As of date when you response this request, which date's of SMC Application is at the front of the queue to be allocated to an officer in the wellington branch (Special assessment team SAT)"

As at 19 June 2021, the oldest Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) application currently on hand with the Specialist Assessment Team (SAT) pending allocation to a case officer is dated 18 October 2017.

Question Two: "How many total smc files (monthly breakdown please) sent to wellington branch at the moment waiting for co." and;

Question Three: "How many smc application lodgement August 2019, are waiting for allocation in wellington branch"

Please refer to table one below which provides the number of SMC applications currently on hand as at 19 June 2021 in the SAT awaiting allocation to a case officer. This has been broken down by month the applications were accepted for processing by Immigration New Zealand (INZ).

Please note figures of five or fewer have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons. Where information is withheld under section 9, I do not consider that the withholding of this information is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.

Table One

Accepted Month	Number of applications
Oct-17	<=5
Aug-19	6
Sep-19	<=5
Oct-19	<=5
Nov-19	<=5
Dec-19	<=5
Feb-20	<=5
Mar-20	<=5
May-20	<=5
Jun-20	<=5
Aug-20	<=5
Total	25

Question Four: “Are all smc application sent to wellington branch for further processing goes to one department for processing like SAT or other department as well.”

In 2018, INZ centralised the processing of skilled residence applications in the INZ Manukau office. In some cases applications may be referred to the SAT for further verification. When checks are completed the applications are sent back to the original processing office to finalise their assessment, and make a decision on the application.

Question Five: “What is the average processing time for SMC files sent to wellington branch”

INZ measure average processing times in calendar days from the time an application is accepted for processing, to when the application has been finalised and completed in the Immigration Application Management System.

Please see table two below which provides the average calendar days taken by the SAT, to process SMC applications completed between 1 January 2017 and 21 June 2021 (inclusive). This has been broken down by percentiles and the number of applications these relate to.

Table Two

Number of applications completed:	50% completed within:	75% completed within:	90% completed within:
39	420	498 days	952 days

The time taken to assess an application can vary considerably and is impacted by a number of factors. This can depend on the quality of the supporting documents and whether we require further information or verification of the information provided. Residence applications naturally 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.

Any updates in regards to the allocation of skilled residence applications can be found via 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 Six: "How many officers approx works on SMC files in wellington branch and is there a seperate queue for different type of visa category (smc, work visa etc) or all in one queue"

As at 28 June 2021, there are five Immigration Officers within the SAT that work on SMC applications as well as other visa application types. Applications referred to the SAT are placed into one queue and the general practice followed is to allocate files in the order in which they are received. The Immigration Manager will however consider prioritising applications where there are exceptional circumstances present.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decision to refuse parts of your request. 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 Lautalie Leausa Vaa, Senior Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at Lautalie.Leausavaa@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Hogg', is positioned above the typed name.

Nicola Hogg
General Manager - Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand