



MEMO

DATE	20 July 2023
TO	Immigration Leadership Team Chief Operating Officer Immigration Leadership Team
FROM	Steve Cantlon, Manager Quality and Assurance, Assurance Branch
APPROVED BY	Zoe Goodall, General Manager, Assurance Branch
SUBJECT	VISA DECISION QUALITY RATINGS REPORT – 1 JAN – 31 MAR 2023 (2022/23 Q3)

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Immigration Leadership Team (ILT):

- **Note** the INZ visa decision quality assurance (QA) results for the Jan-Mar 2023 (2022/23 Q3) quarter. **Noted**
- **Note** that INZ Residence has increased to 87.1%. **Noted**
- **Note** that INZ Temporary has increased to 83.3%. **Noted**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Residence:

In 2022/23 Q3, the aggregate residence quality rating increased to 87.1%. This is a significant increase from the previous quarter which achieved 81.6%.

In response to the results seen in the Oct-Dec 2022 (2022/23 Q2) quarter, the Quality and Assurance team (Q&A) organised calibration sessions with various processing offices. The Pacific Calibration occurred on 27 April 2023, and it is hoped that insights and learnings will improve the QA results in the coming quarters. Calibration with the Manukau Skilled Migrant (SMC) team is scheduled for 26 July, and Palmerston North have recently reached out for a calibration session in the temporary, student visa space.

The Q&A team are beginning to assess Plone based SMC residence visas following the reopening of the SMC category in November last year. Interim results of these applications are very promising and is likely a result of the collaborative approach taken across business units to ensure a successful reopening of the category.

With the announcement of the new SMC policy opening in October 2023, the Q&A team will look to take a sample, most likely in 2023/24 Q3; timing obviously being dependent on their being a sufficient pool of decided applications.

Based on the low number of 2021 RV applications remaining as at 30 June 2023, we anticipate that 2022/23 Q4 will be the last time a sample will be included in Q&A testing. The Risk and Assurance team will also review the ongoing benefits of conducting a review of 2021 RV decisions under the Settled criteria, noting no issues have been identified to date through this testing¹.

Temporary:

The aggregate temporary visa decision quality rating increased this quarter to 83.3% from 80.9% in the previous quarter.

ADEPT Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) achieved another low score this quarter, decreasing to 63.3%. It appears this is due to a misalignment between what Technical Advisors are prompted to check at the quality control (QC) stage compared to what is measured at quality assurance (QA). Therefore, the Q&A team will reach out to the ADEPT Operations Team to discuss how we can better align the QC process, while minimalising the impost on front line / operations staff as far as possible. Analysis on the AEWV results, and discussion on the QC process is on page 4.

While both Residence and Temporary quality results improved this quarter, given the aggregate of the three quarter's results, statistically it is now considered "unattainable" for INZ to achieve the MBIE Estimates Measure of 90% for the 2022/23 Financial Year.

More detailed residence and temporary analyses are on pages 3 and 4.

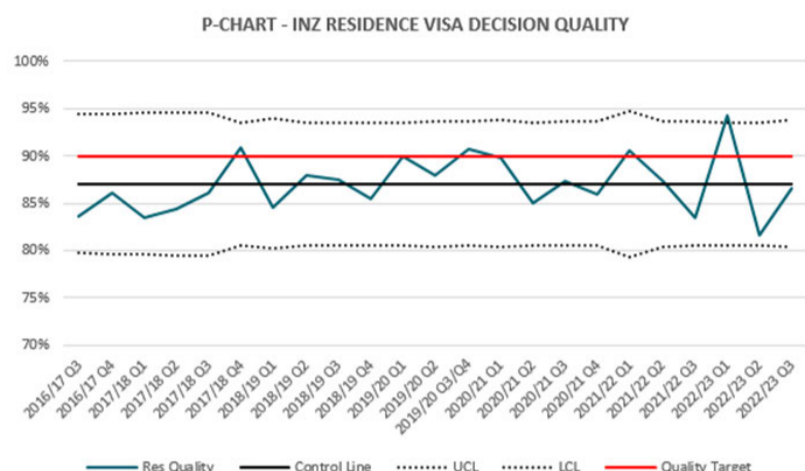
¹ Review of 2021 Resident Visa decisions under the Settled criteria during the period 1 Jan – 31 March 2023 (Q3 FY 22/23)

QA Insights from the Jan-Mar 2023 Quarter (2022/23 Q3)

RESIDENCE OVERALL QUALITY

The aggregate residence quality rating for 2022/23 Q3 increased from 81.6% to 87.1%² (see p-Chart of INZ Residence Visa Decision Quality in Figure 1). The quality rating has rebounded from the low rating last quarter, driven by increased ratings in most of the sample groups. Of the eight sample groups, six achieved or exceeded the 90% quality threshold.

Residence quality results by sample group and quality domains are shown in Appendix 1 on pages 5 and 6.



RESIDENCE QUALITY VARIATION BY SAMPLE GROUP

Figure 1

Figure 2 displays the quality results of the eight Residence sample groups and highlights the percentage point movements between 2022/23 Q2 and 2022/23 Q3. Six sample groups achieved the quality rating of 90% compared to just three in Q2. Of the six, five increased their result on last quarter.

It should be noted that although the Specialist Assessment Team (SAT) achieved 100% quality assurance (QA) this quarter, the Quality and Assurance team (Q&A) were only able to sample 15 assessments instead of 30, as the SAT did not make 'sufficient decisions' (for sampling purposes) during the January to March period³. This is because the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) applications are no longer processed by the SAT. On [1 November 2022](#) the processing of RFSC was transferred to the Refugee Quota Branch to be assessed by the Complementary Pathways Team⁴.

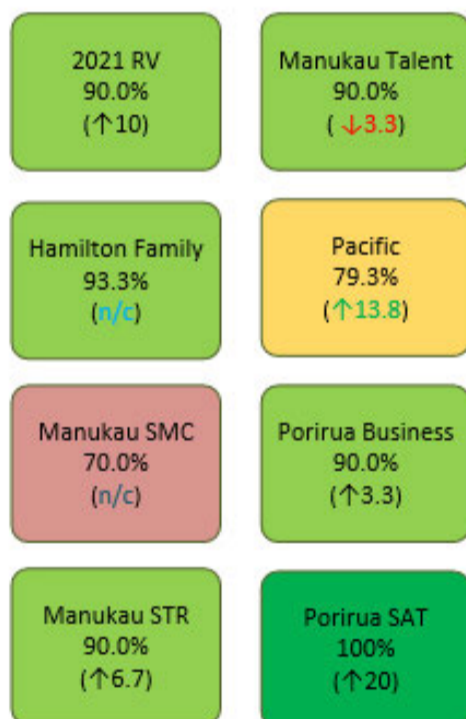


Figure 2

Pacific Residence increased by 13.8 percentage points to 79.3%. Although this result is under the 90% quality threshold, it is a significant increase from the 65.5% the sample groups achieved in Q2. This quarter the Risk domain achieved 100% conformance and Instructions increased over 90%. As noted in the 2022/23 Q2 report, a calibration session between the Pacific Technical Advisors (TA) and members of the Q&A team was held on the 27 April 2023. In this session Q&A ran a demonstration of the QC Tool, explaining what each question means and how they should be marked. Reference to relevant instructions and standard operating procedures were shared. In addition, two residence applications were assessed through the QC Tool in real time, which prompted a good discussion and helped increase understanding. It is hoped that results for the Pacific will continue to increase, with any insights and learnings gained from the calibration session influencing process improvements in the office.

² The residence QA sample size for 2022/23 Q3 was 224. The confidence interval is +/- 6.5 at 95% level of confidence. The confidence interval of 6.5 means that if Q&A had sampled 100% of the resident population (decided resident visas in Jan-Mar 2023) we would be 95% confident that the quality of the decision would fall in between 83.5 (90-6.5) and 96.5 (90+6.5).

³ QA sampling requires each sample group to make no less than 12 decisions per month.

⁴ While Q&A will not be taking a sample of these decisions, the Q&A Business Analysts have created a QC monitoring tool for the Immigration Manager, so they can identify potential quality issues that might be causing rework for processing staff, which can then influence training gaps.

SKILLED MIGRANT CATEGORY

Manukau SMC achieved 70% again this quarter. While the Risk domain increased this quarter, errors were identified in Instructions and the Processes domain decreased further to just 23.3%. Full QA comments were released to the Manukau Practice Leads and a calibration session is scheduled for 26 July 2023. Figure 3 illustrates the continued decreases in the *Instructions – Compliance* and *Processes – Documentation* subdomain.

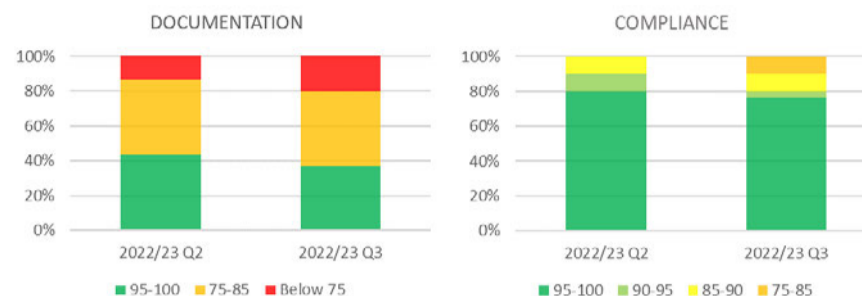


Figure 3

Six applications were marked down for non-compliance with relevant immigration instructions. Issues identified include an application where the principal applicant's (PA) work experience was incorrectly determined which led to the wrong number of points being awarded. Q&A calculated the total points to being below 160. In another application, the PAs health status was incorrectly established. Medicals were assessed under the wrong guidelines – the applicant provided a limited medical certificate (LMC); however, Q&A identified that a general medical certificate (GMC) was required. The applicant was previously NOT ASH under GMC because the PA has a listed condition as per A4.10.1 which is likely to impose significant costs and/or demands on New Zealand's health service. However, because they had lodged a 2021RV application they were assessed under LMC and deemed ASH. The applicant withdrew their 2021RV application as their SMC was approved. The IO should have reopened the health case.

19 applications (63.3%) had errors identified in the Documentation sub domain. This sub domain refers to whether the application form and supporting documents were date stamped in accordance with lodgement instructions, whether the documents on file are original or certified originals and if required, whether documents were translated in a way that meets immigration instructions. Of the 19 applications, five had errors with the data stamp process, one had errors due to not meeting translation requirements, but all 19 applications failed to meet original sighted requirements⁵.

PLONE SMC

With the reopening of the Skilled Migrant Category in November 2022, Manukau are now deciding applications that were invited to apply under the refreshed policy. As such, Q&A are beginning to see more Plone applications fall into the SMC sample. This quarter, seven of the 30 SMC applications were Plone⁶. Of the seven, five achieved over 90%. The remaining 23 applications were 'old' paper files.⁷

In the upcoming quarter (2022/23 Q4) the sample comprises of 27 Plone applications and just three paper files. Q&A prioritised the assessment of these applications so interim results could be shared in this report. The interim results are excellent; sitting at 95.6% with 23 of 30 assessments completed. The initial feedback from the Quality Assurance Assessors is that the case summary is very good and straightforward, which means less errors, especially in Rationale. In addition, the updated SMC SOPs are very good and easy to follow. The interim results are showing a promising increase in the Rationale and Processes domains, as illustrated in Figure 4.

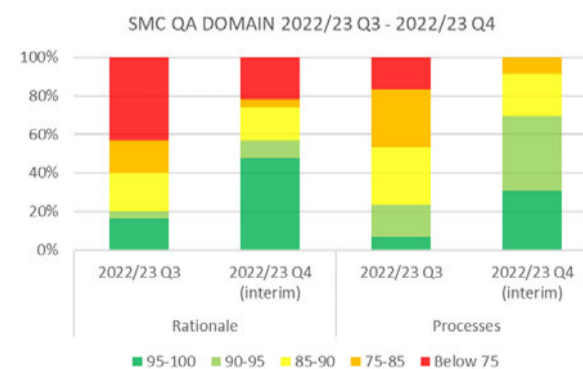


Figure 4

⁵ 'Original sighted' requirements refer to documents being an original, or certified copy, or photocopies of documents endorsed as original sighted and dated by the processing officer (with originals returned to the applicant), or uncertified photocopies where acceptable.

⁶ i.e., SMC applications lodged after the reopening last year.

⁷ The previous quarterly report noted that quite a few of the quarters sample were 'old' (i.e., lodged as far back as 2017) and contained applicants who were ineligible to apply for the streamlined 2021 Resident Visa, citing concerns with the employer, job offer or work experience.

TEMPORARY OVERALL QUALITY

The aggregate temporary quality rating for 2022/23 Q3 is 83.3% (see p-Chart of INZ Temporary Visa Decision Quality Rating in Figure 5). This is an increase on the 2022/23 Q2 result of 80.9%⁸. The p-Chart in Figure 4 illustrates the quality ratings for temporary over the last six years⁹.

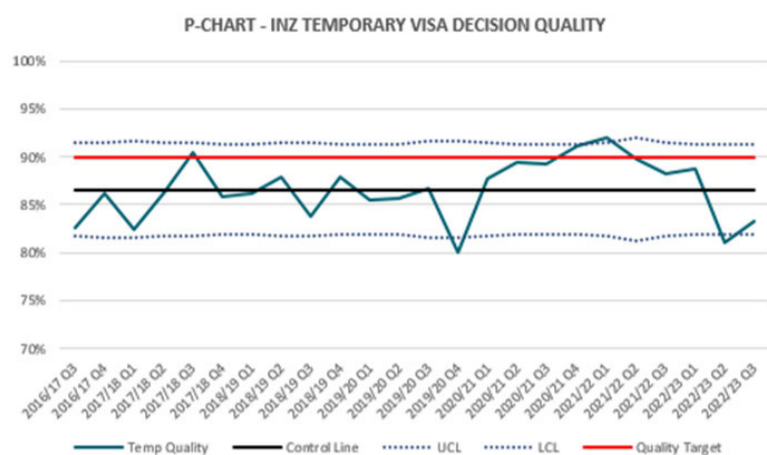


Figure 5

TEMPORARY QUALITY VARIATION BY SAMPLE GROUP

Of the 15 temporary sample groups, eight achieved the 90% quality target (see Figure 6). Nine sample groups maintained or improved on last quarter's quality ratings. Manukau significantly increased by 27.7 percentage points to 83.3% after achieving 55.6% last quarter.

The ADEPT Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) and Apia sample groups decreased this quarter, both achieving 'extremely poor'¹⁰ quality ratings i.e., being assessed as below 75%, for the second consecutive quarter. AEWV decreased 11.7 percentage points to just 63.3% while Apia fell to 53.6%. As mentioned on page 3, the Q&A team hosted a calibration session with the Pacific Technical Advisors at the end of April. We anticipate process improvements made following that session will begin to show in the QA results for the next quarter (2022/23 Q4). The AEWV results and apparent disconnect between the QC process on ADEPT and QA are discussed further within this section.

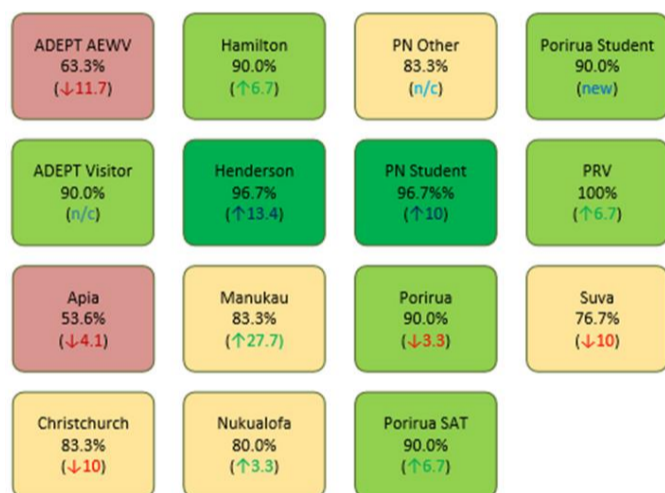


Figure 6

Temporary quality ratings by sample group and 'quality domain' are illustrated at Appendix 2 on pages 7 to 9.

ACCREDITED EMPLOYER WORK VISA

The Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) sample group has continued to decrease from the previous quarter, achieving a rating of 63.3% this quarter. This is the third quarter that AEWV applications have been sampled. The first quarter in Jul-Sep 2022 (2022/23 Q1) achieved 90% however, the entire sample contained hybrid applications, which refers to work visa applications that are processed in both ADEPT and AMS¹¹. The second quarter sampled, 2022/23 Q2 was made up of 11 hybrid applications with the remaining sample (49 applications) being ADEPT. This quarter, just three of the 60 applications were hybrid. The decreasing QA results coincides with the processing of applications solely in ADEPT. These applications are processed on an activities basis¹².

Of the 60 applications, Q&A found 20 (33.3%) had errors in Risk and seven (11.6%) had errors identified in the Instructions domain (Figure 7). These two domains are the greatest area of concern for this sample group, as Instructions makes up 55% of an overall QA assessment score, with Risk making up 15%¹³. In total, there were 28 Risk errors in 20 applications. The Risk domain contains questions on identification, mitigation, and verification, so eight applications were marked down twice, leading to 'extremely poor' QA results for those applications.

Of the applications that had Risk errors, several were identified as having risks that were incorrectly or partially mitigated, and some risks were not identified by the immigration officer (IO).

Specifically, in two applications the IO noted that because the

applications had passed through the Accreditation and Job Check stage, the identified risks were deemed mitigated. This is an incorrect and inaccurate way of mitigating risk, and highlights that not all risks are being mitigated in accordance with instructions and standard operating procedures. Nine applications in total had risks identified with the employer.

The Q&A team found that three of the applications had risks with the Licensed Immigration Advisor (LIA). It is a known limitation of ADEPT that alerts and warnings on LIAs do not show on ADEPT¹⁴ however, IOs are directed to check AMS. One of the three active alerts is related to supporting non-genuine job offers to Chinese migrants in the construction industry. Q&A have informed the Risk and Verification Central team of these findings, and the National Manager R&V will be included in the report distribution list in future.

Additionally, 18 applications (30%) were marked down for not providing a job description. A job description should be provided as part of the offer of employment in order for INZ to determine compliance with WA4.10.1(a) and the existing General Instruction. The latest Visa Pak (VP 550)¹⁵ provides updated guidance, noting that IOs are only required to check the job description if a 'job check validation activity' is required by ADEPT. As a result, Q&A expect to see the quality of AEWV to improve in 2023/24 Q1, as job descriptions are no longer required for all applications.

AEWV QUALITY CONTROL

After the results seen in 2022/23 Q2, Q&A reached out to both Christchurch and Manukau to understand the level of AEWV QC reporting data that they can get from ADEPT. It highlighted a disconnect between QC and QA as both offices reported low rates of errors identified and rework required.

Q&A have begun discussions with both Practice Leads to try and address the apparent difference in approach. Full QA comments have been supplied to both processing sites, with initial feedback noting the QA comments as appropriate, but that QC in ADEPT means TAs and IOs are not necessarily prompted to check certain parts of the process.

It should be noted that while Q&A were initially consulted on the AEWV QC question set for ADEPT back in 2022, they were not involved in testing, and the question set went 'live' without Q&A involvement. Q&A were advised by the ADEPT Operations Team (AOT) on 12 September that the QC/RSQC question set was going live. Q&A responded to note the importance of ensuring the questions are weighted appropriately and asked to be involved in testing. On 14 September, Q&A were sent the revised question set; however, it was later noted that the question set was signed off for use in ADEPT a day earlier on 13 September 2022.

Discussions to date with site Practice Leads has highlighted that QC in ADEPT currently lacks meaningful data which could otherwise be used to help understand what parts of the process IOs may benefit from in terms of further training, which in turn could help drive better quality decisions. In addition, the scoring system and corresponding weightings lack logic, and there appears to be no threshold for rework. Q&A are concerned that the changes made to the QC process to facilitate a move onto ADEPT are of so great a magnitude that it no longer serves its primary purpose – to catch mistakes being made by IOs in time for a correction to be made. With the benefit of hindsight, noting the pressure to deliver AEWV at pace, if appropriate testing had occurred prior to go-live, it is likely many of these issues could have been identified and mitigated up front. Q&A will reach out to the AOT in coming weeks to discuss what is required to ensure the AEWV QC process is fit for purpose and user friendly (with appropriate insight and testing from relevant business units).

⁸ The previous quarterly result of 80.9% saw INZ Temporary Quality fall "statistically out of control". This refers to a data point that falls outside of the control limits of the chart, indicating that the process is not in statistical control.

⁹ The temporary QA sample size for 2022/23 Q3 was 478. The confidence interval is +/- 4.5 at 95% level of confidence. The confidence interval of 4.5 means that if we had sampled 100% of the temporary population (decided temp visas in Jan-Mar 2023) we would be 95% confident that the quality of the decisions would fall in between 85.5 (90-4.5) and 94.5 (90+4.5).

¹⁰ 'Extremely Poor' refers to assessments that scored below 75%.

¹¹ QC for hybrid applications was carried out in the QC Tool. QC moved to ADEPT on 13 September

¹² This could involve a number of immigration officers carrying out specified activities in the process.

¹³ Rationale makes up 10% of the overall QA score. Processes is worth 20%.

¹⁴ ADEPT Guide - NOTE (1) at section 4.4.2 - informs alerts and warnings do not trigger on Sponsoring organisations and LIAs and an IO will need to check AMS for warnings on these contact types.

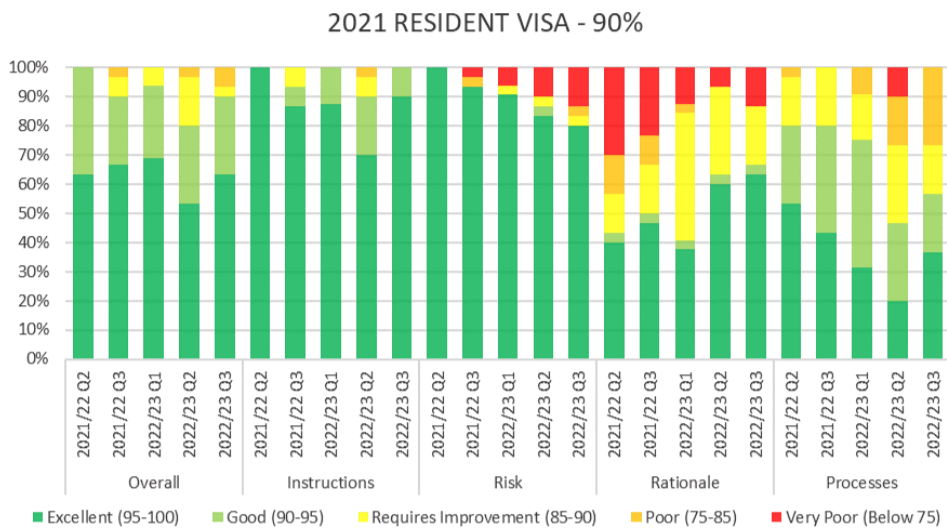
¹⁵ Issued 7 July 2023

APPENDIX 1 – RESIDENCE VISA QA RESULTS BY SAMPLE GROUP

The overall aggregate residence rating from 2022/23 Q3 is 87.1%. All processing offices have office-centric quality management reporting tools on SAS Visual Analytics that can be utilised to identify office trends through both QA and QC data.

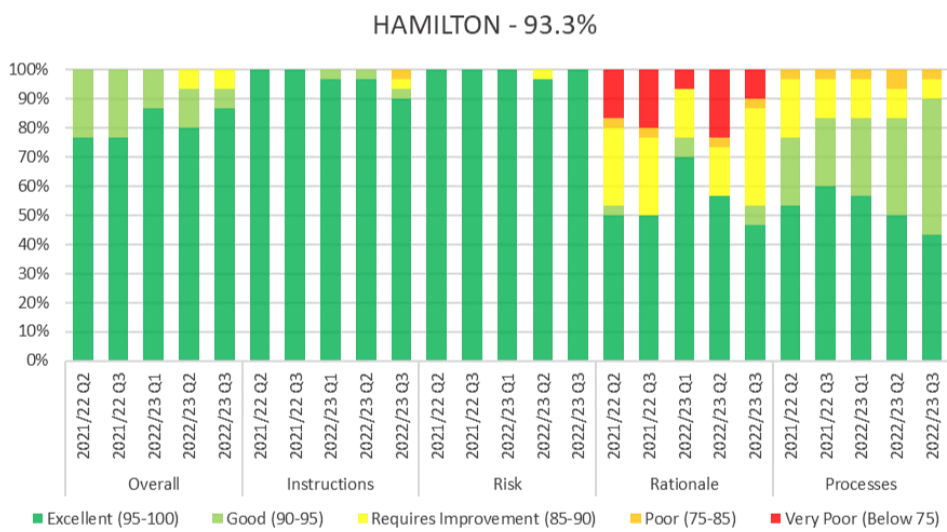
ADEPT 2021 RESIDENT VISA (2021RV)

This quarter is the second time that the Q&A team have assessed 2021RV applications assessed purely in ADEPT¹⁶. The Q&A team sample Phase 2 ADEPT decisions in the 'Skilled' or 'Scarce' categories. The 2021RV sample group increased to 90% this quarter, up 10 percentage points from the previous quarter.



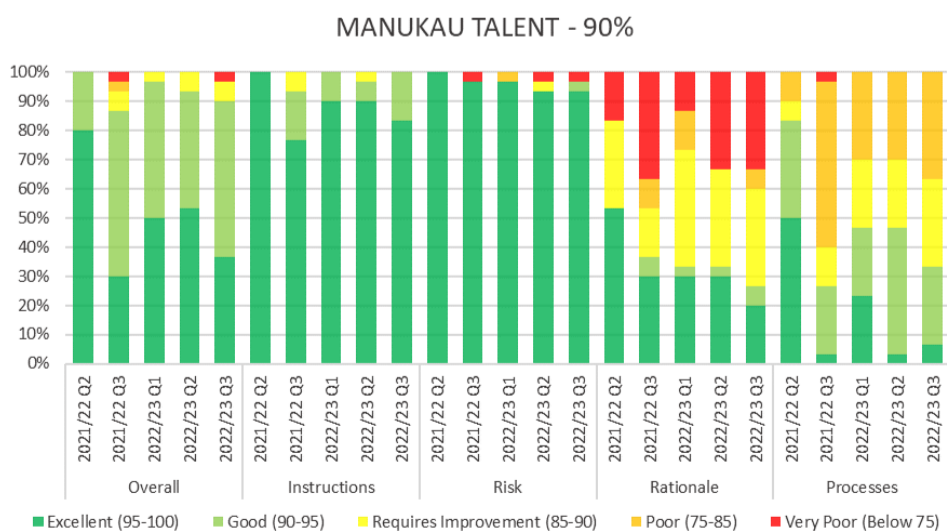
HAMILTON

Hamilton achieved 93.3% again this quarter. Risk and Processes increased while Instructions decreased slightly. One application was marked down because it was noted that there was no evidence to suggest health instructions had been met, and R5.66 was not met for an offshore application, as the eVisa was granted for two years from date of issue rather than two years from the date of first arrival.



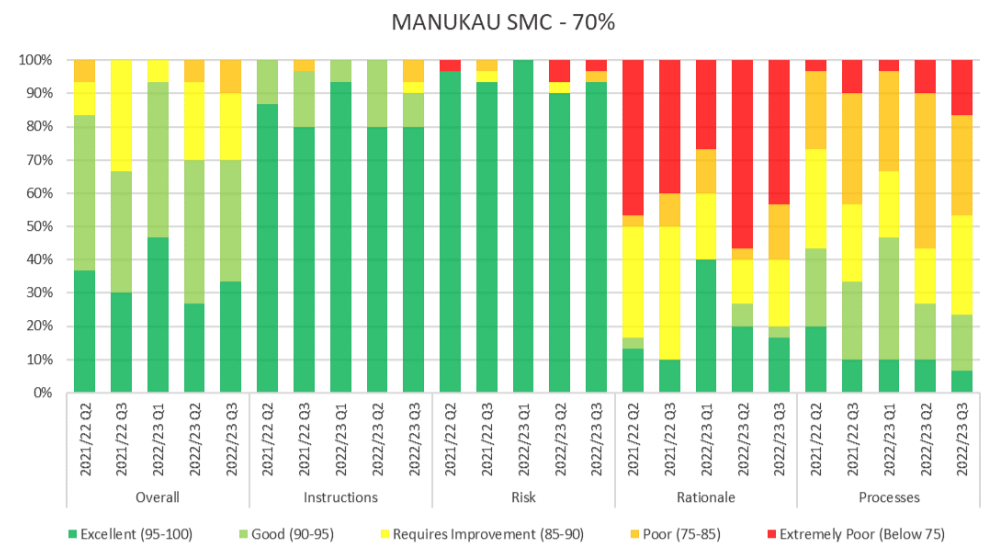
MANUKAU TALENT ACCREDITED EMPLOYER (RESIDENCE FROM WORK)

The Manukau Talent sample group decreased slightly from 2022/23 Q2 however, still achieved the quality target. 100% conformance in Instructions was observed however, all other domains decreased.



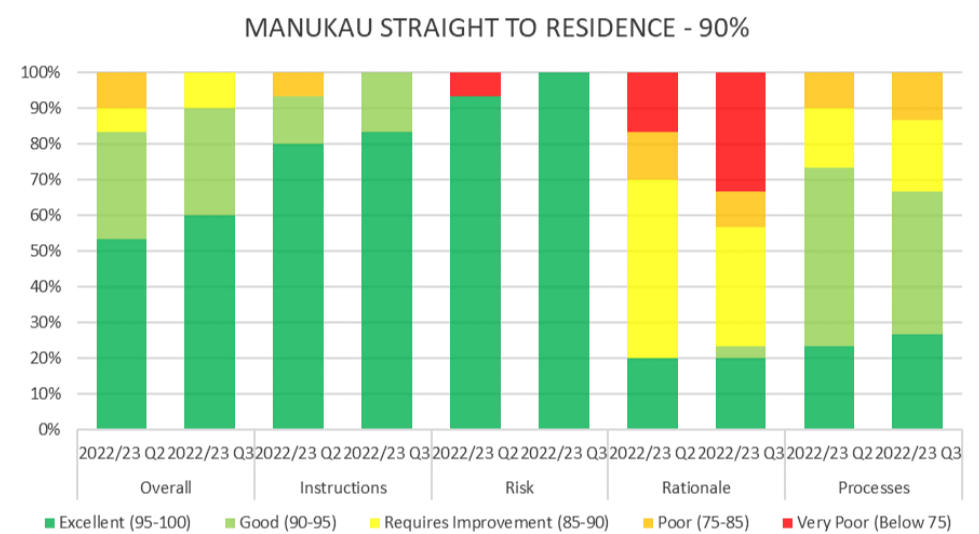
MANUKAU SKILLED MIGRANT CATEGORY (SMC)

The SMC sample group achieved 70% for a second consecutive quarter. A calibration session between the SMC Technical Advisors and Q&A team is scheduled for Wednesday 26 July 2023. Page 3 of the report contains more discussion on the sample group, as well as highlighting the promising interim quality results observed in the Plone SMC applications.



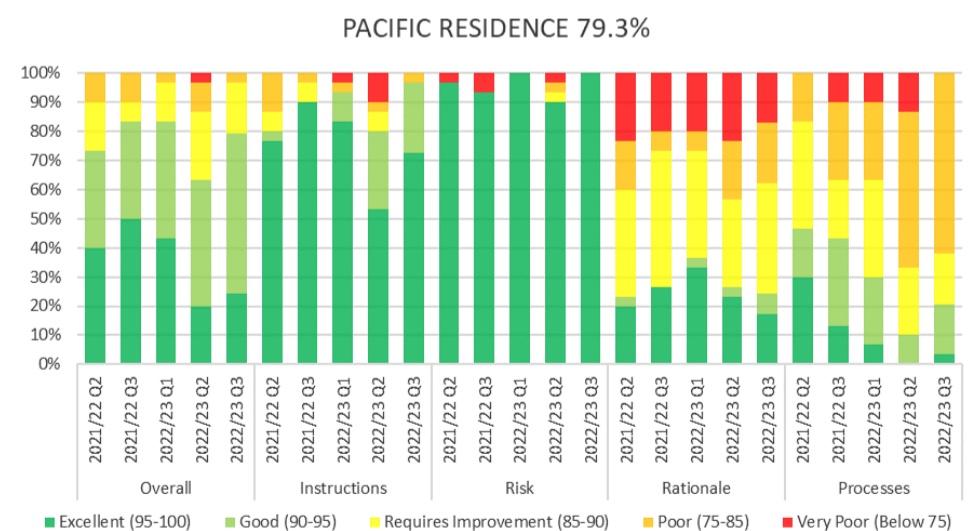
MANUKAU GREEN LIST – STRAIGHT TO RESIDENCE

The Green List – Straight to Residence sample group achieved the quality target of 90% this quarter. This is just the second quarter that Q&A have sampled the new Green List applications. 100% conformance was observed in both the Instructions and Risk domain.



PACIFIC RESIDENCE

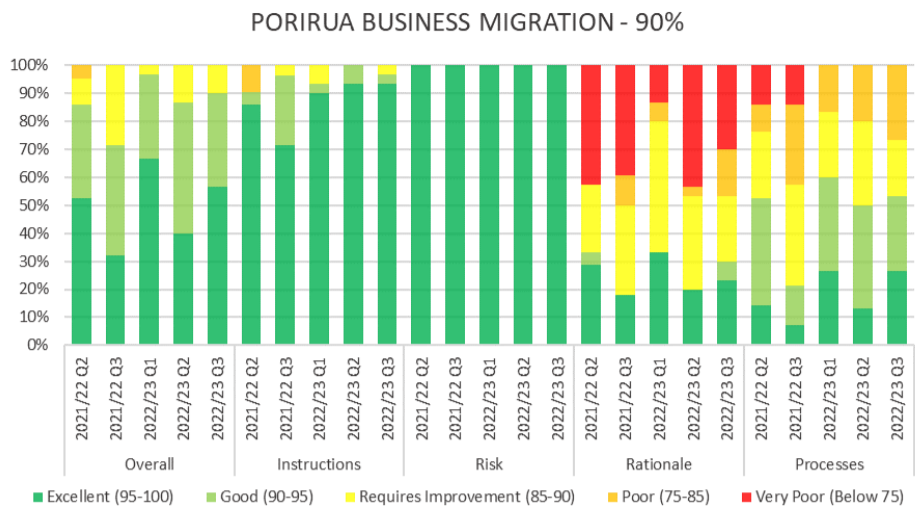
Pacific Residence increased this quarter to 79.3% from 65.5% in 2022/23 Q2. Large increases were observed in the Instructions and Risk domain. As highlighted on page 3 of the report, it is hoped that results for the Pacific will continue to increase, with any insights and learnings gained from the recent calibration session between the Technical Advisors and the Q&A team.



PORIRUA BUSINESS MIGRATION

¹⁶ Previously, 2021RV applications were processed on AMS/IGMS (Phase 1 & 1.5).

The Business Migration sample group achieved 90% this quarter. Increases were observed in the Rationale and Processes domain. The sample comprised 10 Investor 1, 10 Investor 2 and 10 Parent Retirement.



PORIRUA SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT TEAM (SAT)

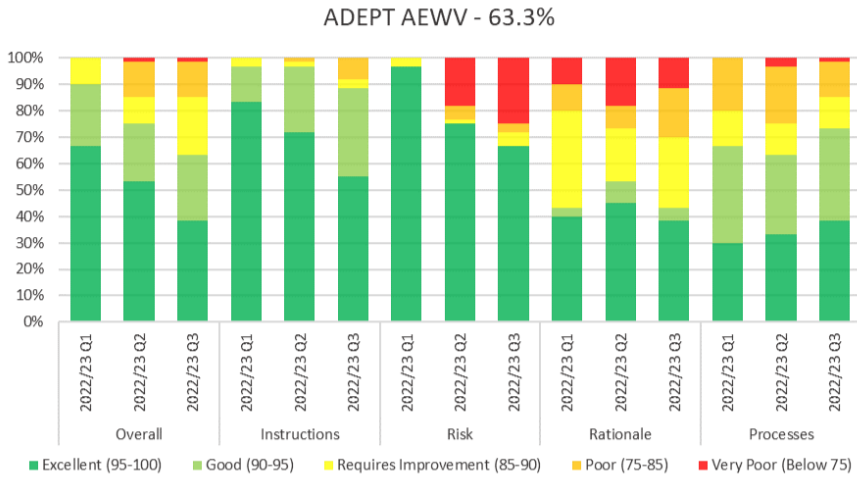
Q&A were only able to sample 15 assessments instead of 30, as the SAT did not make sufficient decisions for sampling purposes. Therefore, analysis has not been conducted for the SAT this quarter. This is highlighted further on page 3 of the report.

APPENDIX 2 – TEMPORARY VISA QA RESULTS BY SAMPLE GROUP

In 2022/23 Q3, 83.3% of the temporary QA sample scored 'accurate' (i.e., 'Excellent' or 'Good').

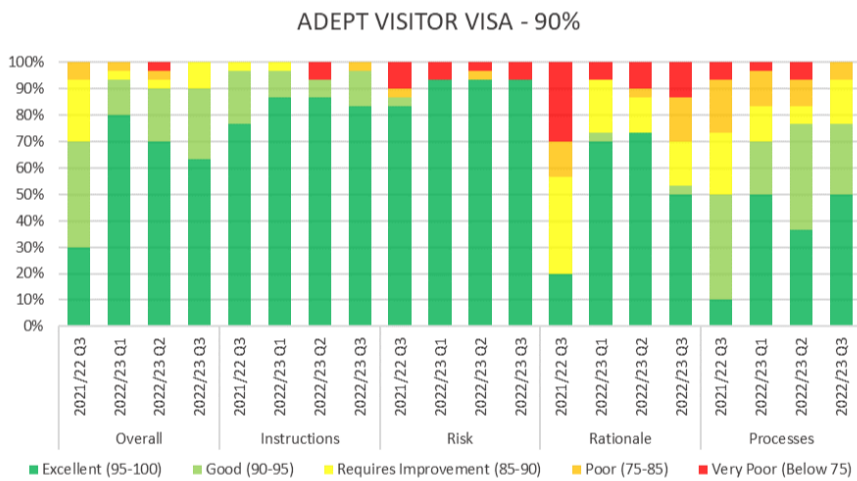
ADEPT ACCREDITED EMPLOYER WORK VISA (AEVV)

The ADEPT AEVV sample scores have continued to decrease, achieving 63.3% this quarter. The AEVV product is not site specific, so feedback has been sent to both Manukau and Christchurch. Further analysis on the results of this sample group is on page 4 of the report.



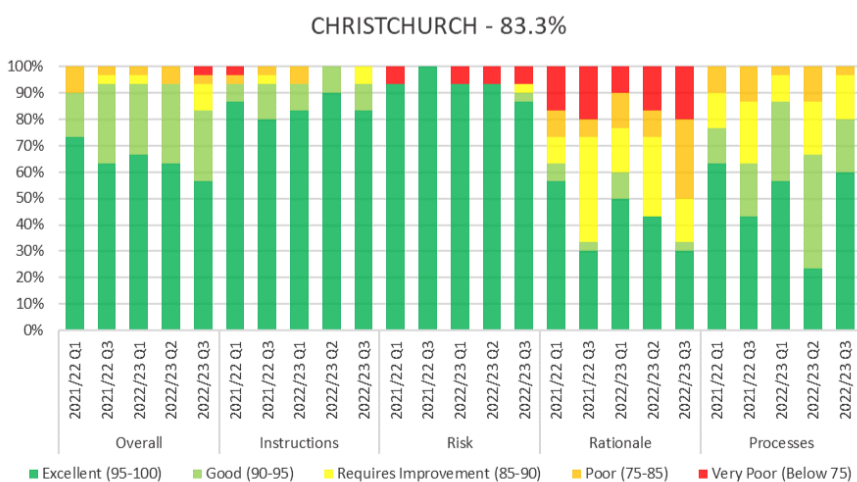
ADEPT VISITOR VISA

The ADEPT Visitor Visa sample group has achieved 90% for the second consecutive quarter. Although the Instructions domain increased, one application was marked down because Q&A determined the application incorrectly established health therefore, A4.15.(a) was not met. Rationale decreased due to some assessment summaries being inaccurate and incomplete. Risk and Processes maintained the same rating as the previous quarter.



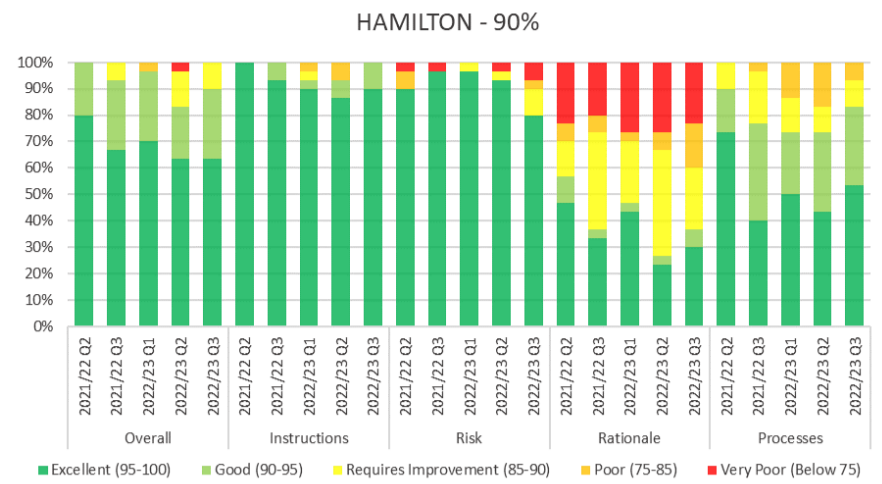
CHRISTCHURCH

The Christchurch sample decreased 10 percentage points to 83.3% this quarter. Errors were observed in the Instructions and Risk domain; however, Processes did improve. The sample comprised of various types of visas including eight Partner of a Worker, seven Dependent of a Worker, seven Specific Purpose, five Variation of Conditions, two China Special Work and one Approved in Principle application.



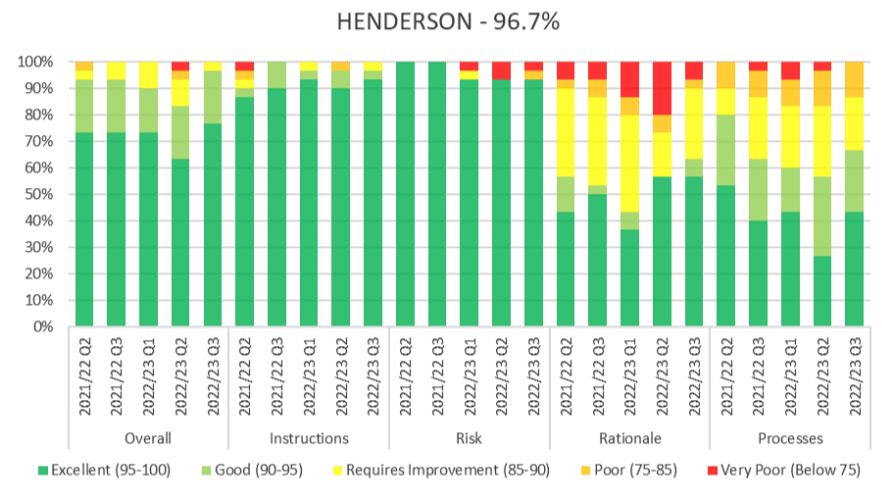
HAMILTON

The Hamilton sample group achieved 90% this quarter. A large decrease was observed in the Risk domain however, all other domains increased.



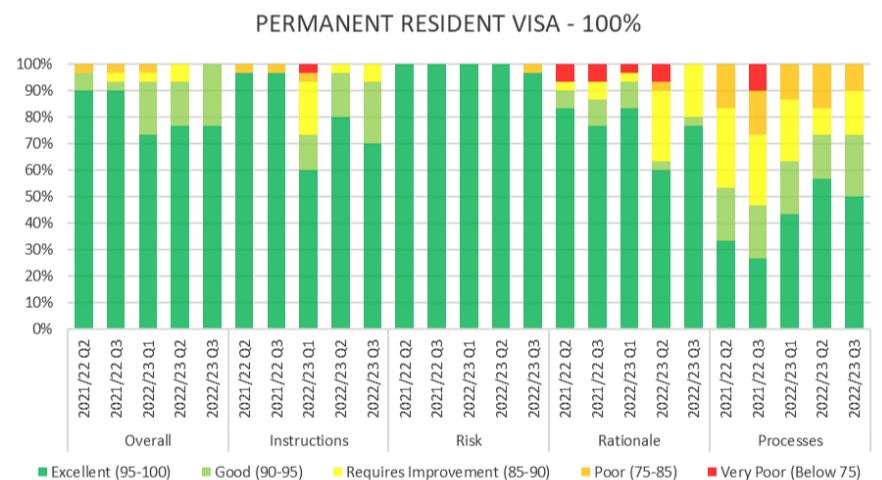
HENDERSON

Henderson increased 13.4 percentage points this quarter to achieve 96.7%. The sample comprised of Visitor Visas; 26 General, three Business and one Parent and Grandparent application. This is a highly commendable result considering Henderson are championing numerous new initiatives such as the General Instructions and Low Touch/Fast Decision initiative.



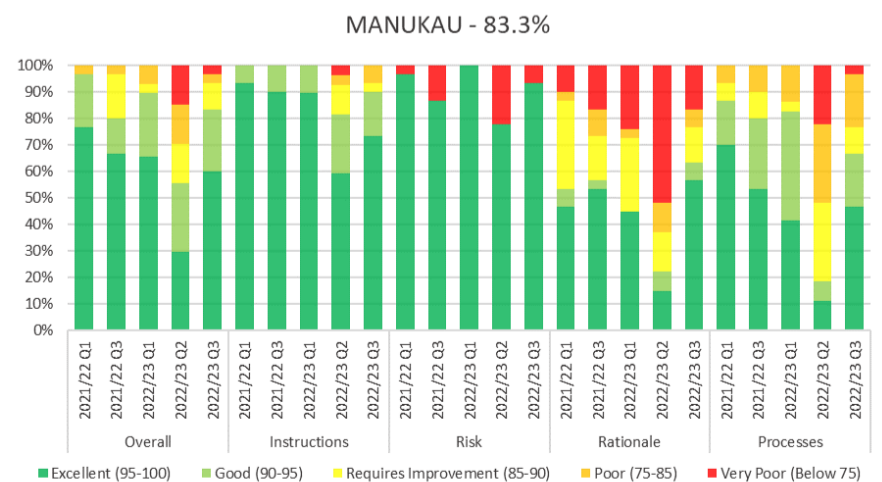
PERMANENT RESIDENT VISA (PRV)

The PRV sample group achieved 100% this quarter.



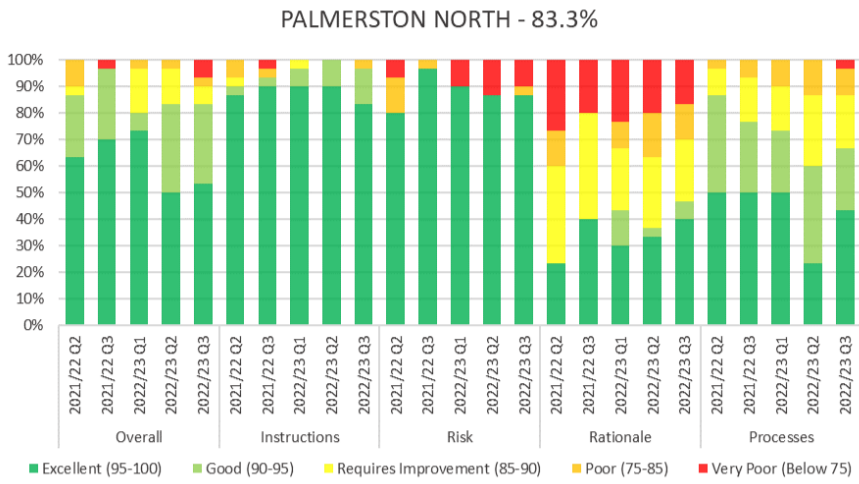
MANUKAU

Manukau temporary achieved 83.3% this quarter which is a 27.7 percentage point increase on last quarter. This quarter, the sample comprised of 14 Talent Work to Residence, seven Visitor, five Dependent, three Partner of a Worker and one Variation of Conditions visas.



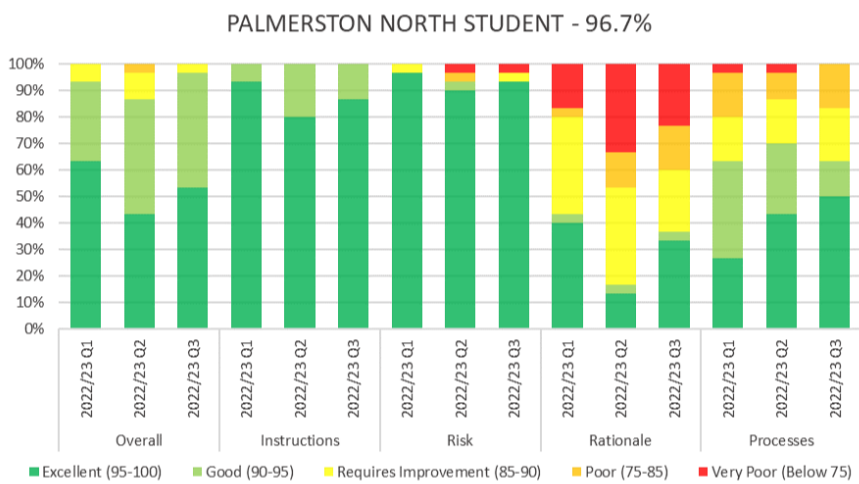
PALMERSTON NORTH

The Palmerston North sample group maintained 83.3% from the previous quarter. The Instructions domain decreased; however, all other domains increased. The sample comprised of various types of visas including eight Post Study, seven Dependent of a Worker, three Partner of a Worker/Student and three Visitor Guardian visas. The remaining nine samples were other types of student visas, such as Exchange Student, Student Pathway and Scholarship holder.



PALMERSTON NORTH STUDENT

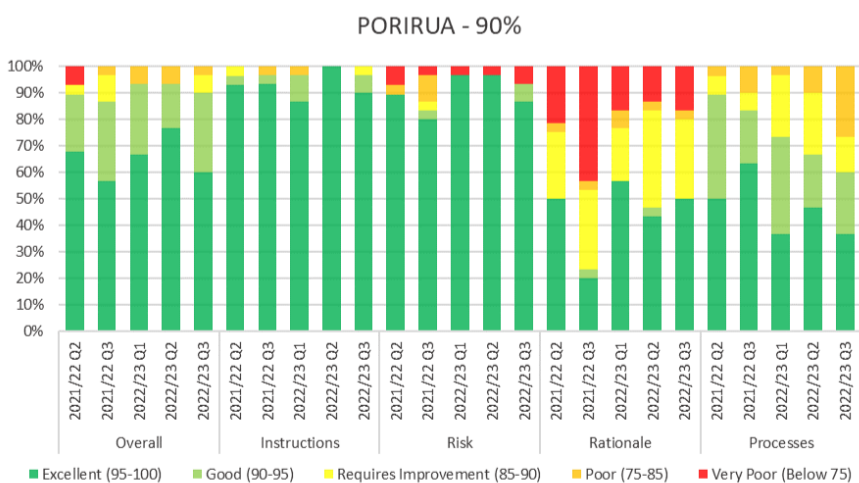
The Palmerston North Student sample increased to 96.7% this quarter. This is a great result considering this quarter is just the third time that Q&A have assessed this 'full-fee paying student only' sample group.



PORIRUA

It should be noted that all three sample groups from the Porirua office achieved 90% this quarter.

The Porirua sample group decreased slightly this quarter but still achieved 90%. While the Rationale domain increased slightly, decreases were observed in all other domains. The sample comprised of 17 Supplementary Seasonal Employment, 12 Visitor and one Partnership based work visa.



PORIRUA STUDENT

This is the first quarter that Q&A have sampled a 'full-fee paying student only' sample group, with an overall result of 90%. This is a great quality result as the student product is relatively new to Porirua.

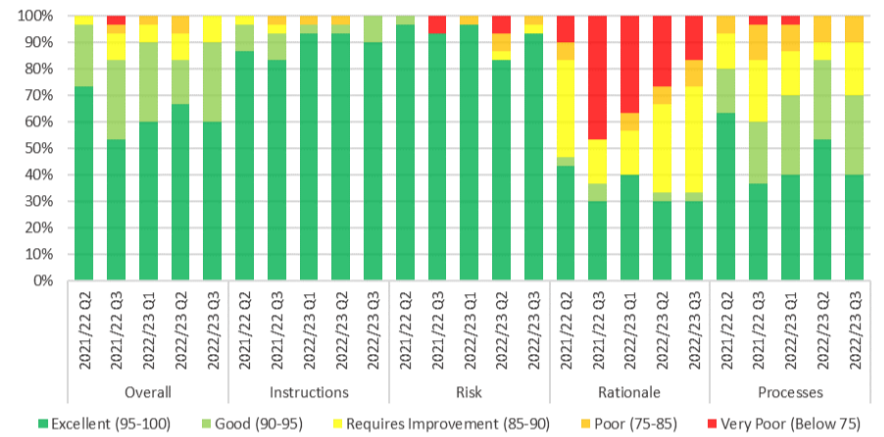
PORIRUA STUDENT - 90%



PORIRUA SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT TEAM (SAT)

This quarter the SAT sample group increased to 90%. 100% conformance with Instructions was observed, as well as an increase in the Risk domain quality rating. The sample comprised of nine Asylum Seeker, seven Student, five Partner/Dependent of a Worker, two Migrant Exploitation and one Visitor visa.

PORIRUA SAT - 90%



OFFSHORE

APIA

The Apia sample group decreased slightly to 53.6% this quarter from 57.7%. Feedback was provided to the Pacific Practice Lead in regard to four Specific Purpose visas that all failed to meet the 90% threshold because it was identified that they were raised and assessed under the incorrect instructions. The sample comprised of 17 Visitor, seven Partnership and four Specific Purpose visas.

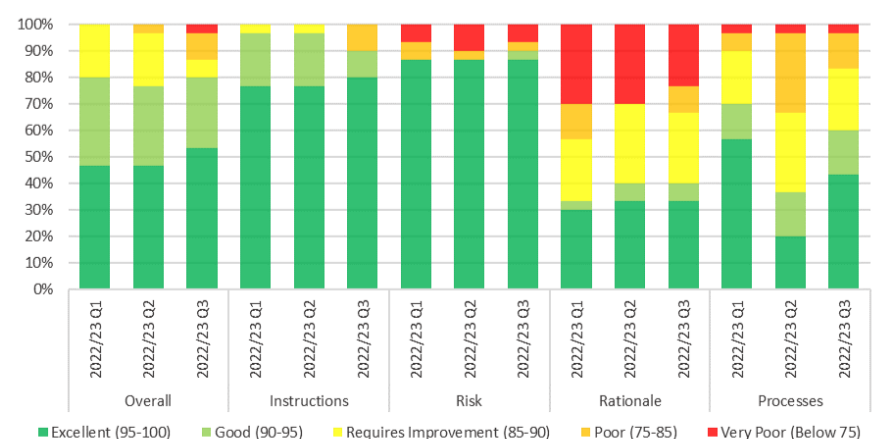
APIA - 53.6%



NUKU'ALOFA

The Nuku'alofa sample group increased to 80% this quarter. Improvements were noted in the Risk and Processes domain. The sample comprised of 24 Visitor and six Partnership work visas.

NUKU'ALOFA - 80%



SUVA

Suva decreased 10 percentage points this quarter to 76.7%. Although there was an increase in the Instructions and Processes domain, significant decreases were observed in the Risk and Rationale domains. The sample comprised of 16 Visitor, 12 Partner of a Worker/Partnership, one Dependent of a Student, and one Post-Study work visa.

