



MEMO

DATE	20 December 2022
TO	Immigration Leadership Team BVO 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 – JULY – SEPTEMBER 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- **Note** the INZ visa decision quality assurance (QA) results for the Jul-Sep 2022 (2022/23 Q1) quarter **Noted**
- **Note** that the INZ Residence result has achieved 94.2% **Noted**
- **Note** that this quarter is the second time ADEPT based applications have been sampled by Quality and Assurance (Q&A), with Visitor Visas achieving 93.3% and Accredited Employer Work Visa achieving 90% **Noted**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Residence:

In the 2022/23 Q1 quarter, the aggregate residence quality rating increased significantly from 83.4% to 94.2%. This is the highest rating residence achieved by INZ. The increase can be attributed to the fact that seven of the eight sample groups met or exceeded the 90% quality threshold. A significant increase was observed for Manukau SMC this quarter; this appears to correlate with strengthened QC practices being undertaken by the office.

This quarter marks the third and last time that the Afghan Emergency Resettlement Permanent Resident Visas will be tested by the Q&A team. Analysis on the results is on page 3.

Temporary:

In the 2022/23 Q1 quarter, the aggregate temporary quality rating marginally increased to 88.7%. Of the 16 sample groups, nine achieved or exceeded the 90% quality target. This is the last quarter that Essential Skills from Manukau was measured by the Q&A team due to the visa category phasing out and being replaced by the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV). The upcoming Oct-Dec 2022

(2022/23 Q2) quarter will be the last time the Essential Skills visa category will be sampled (Christchurch).

AEWV was sampled for the first time this quarter, achieving 90%. A good result but a high number of errors were identified in the Contact Tab relating to the employer. It is noted that this quarters sample contained hybrid work visa applications (processed in both ADEPT and AMS) therefore, it is expected that in 2022/23 Q2 errors will decline as the applications will be processed purely in ADEPT where the employer will be linked with a single NZBN.

A few changes were made to the temporary sample categories this quarter, with Palmerston North being split into Student (Full Fee Paying) and Other (a mixture of Student, Work and Visitor Visas) and the single Pacific sample being split into Apia, Nuku'alofa, and Suva. This allows office management to receive better QA insights by site and product. Regular monitoring of QC practices and QA results through the reporting tools will enable the identification of office and product-specific quality issues which can then be addressed via training.

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

QA Insights from the Jul-Sep 2022 Quarter

RESIDENCE OVERALL QUALITY

The aggregate residence quality rating for 2022/23 Q1 increased from 83.4% to 94.2%¹ (see p-Chart of INZ Residence Visa Decision Quality in Figure 1²).

The increase in the overall rating for residence is due to excellent results seen in most of the sample groups. Of the eight sample groups, seven achieved or exceeded the 90% quality threshold. The remaining sample group maintained their quality rating from the previous quarter.

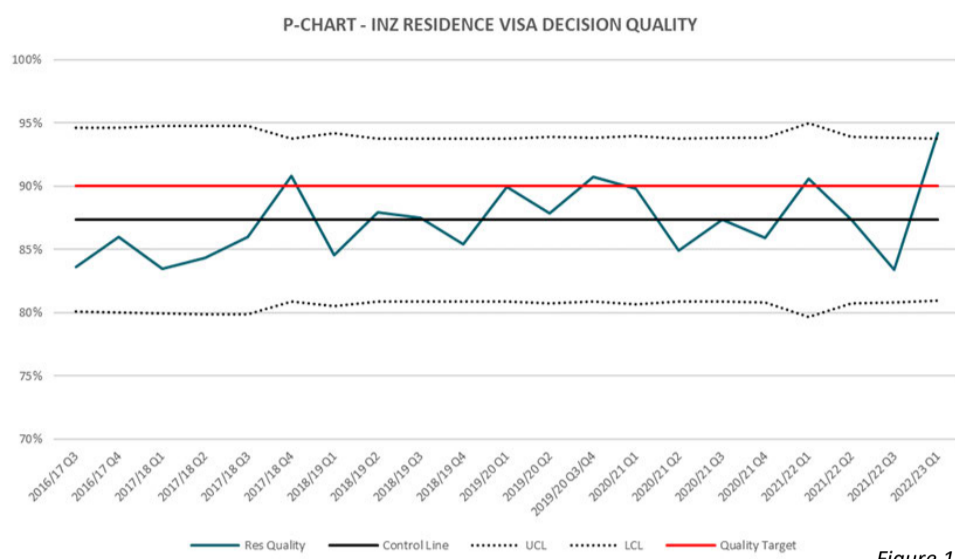


Figure 1

Due to the significant increase in the aggregate residence rating, residence quality appears to be sitting beyond the upper control line. This means that the quality of residence decisions may no longer be in control as the score is not within the UCL and LCL³. The control limits of p-Charts are determined by historical data and based on historical quality assurance (QA) data for residence, the average aggregate is 87.2%.

While it is promising to see overall residence sample groups achieve good QA scores, results for the upcoming 2022/23 Q2 should be observed before any conclusions can be drawn.

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

RESIDENCE QUALITY VARIATION BY SAMPLE GROUPS

Figure 2 displays the quality results of the eight sample groups and highlights the percentage point movements between 2021/22 Q3 and 2022/23 Q1. Porirua Business and Manukau SMC achieved their highest quality ratings ever, 96.7% and 93.3% respectively. Hamilton maintained their excellent rating of 100% for the third consecutive quarter.

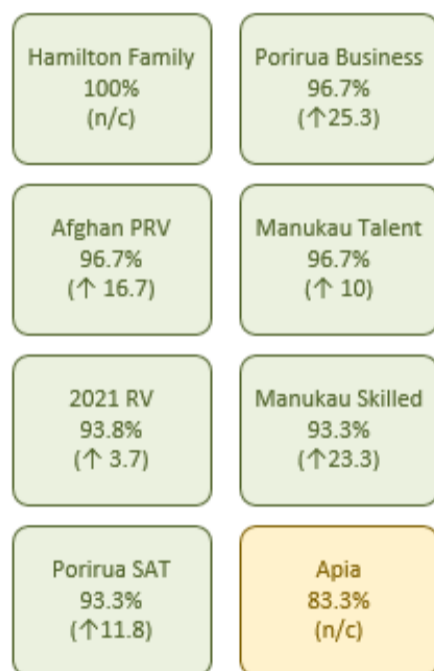


Figure 2

LIMITED SAMPLING 2021/22 Q4

The Quality and Assurance (Q&A) team did not take a full sample of QA assessments for the Apr-Jun (2021/22 Q4) quarter. Following a period of resource constraints and instability, a decision was made to only sample certain visa types to enable the Q&A team to get back into a position to provide more timely quality assurance reporting⁴.

Staff retention issues, Covid-19 lockdowns and additional pieces of QA work caused significant delays in releasing the quality quarterly reports over the last few years. Due to this, findings cascaded to BVO offices were becoming increasingly less relevant, especially as INZ navigated a period of change. This meant delays in reporting regarding ADEPT processing and any new, or reintroduced, visa products.

The visa types that were tested for 2021/22 Q4 were Critical Purpose Visitor, Critical Purpose VOC Student, Critical Purpose VOC Work, Permanent Resident Visa, Post-Study, Student Full Fee Paying and Essential Skills Work Visa. 2021

¹ The residence QA sample size for the quarter is 242. The confidence interval is +/- 6.22% at 95% level of confidence.

² A p-chart is used to show how a process changes over time (i.e., quality of visa decision making). It shows if the process is stable and predictable and is used to monitor the effects of process improvement theories.

³ The LCL (Lower Control Line) are defined as +/- 3 standard deviations from the quality target and should capture 99.7% of the quality assessments when the system is operating correctly. The control limits show the amount of variation that is expected in the quality of visa decision making.

Resident Visa has also been sampled – applications decided under the ‘Settled Criteria’ are being tested by the Risk and Assurance Team to ensure the instructions have been met⁵.

The testing of these applications will be completed by 30 June 2023 to enable FY21/22 figures to be re-stated in the 2022/23 FY quality report.

QC AND QA CORRELATION

The Q&A team continue to see strong correlations between effective quality control processes and the post-decision QA results. The results seen in most of the Residence sample groups this quarter confirm that 100% pre-decision QC is a crucial component in ensuring good outcomes at QA. Manukau SMC is used as an example in this section.

While comparisons can't be made with the QA data from 2021/22 Q4 as it was skipped, QC data can be used to try and understand why the results at QA this quarter have significantly improved. For example, the QC error rate for Rationale in Manukau SMC has been increasing since 2021/22 Q3. The teal column in Figure 3 below notes that in 2021/22 Q3 the error rate was just 7.7%. This increased to 13.8% in 2021/22 Q4 then again to 33.7% in 2022/23 Q1. The higher error rate at QC indicates that Technical Advisors are noting and marking down errors, requesting rework and identifying training gaps. This results in fewer errors noted at QA as they have been identified and rectified at the QC stage (see blue column – QA Rationale error rate decreased from 90% in 2021/22 Q3 to 60% in 2022/21 Q1).

As a result of the effective quality control practices in Manukau, the overall QA result for SMC has increased from 70% to 93.3% which is the best result the sample group has achieved (black dotted line).

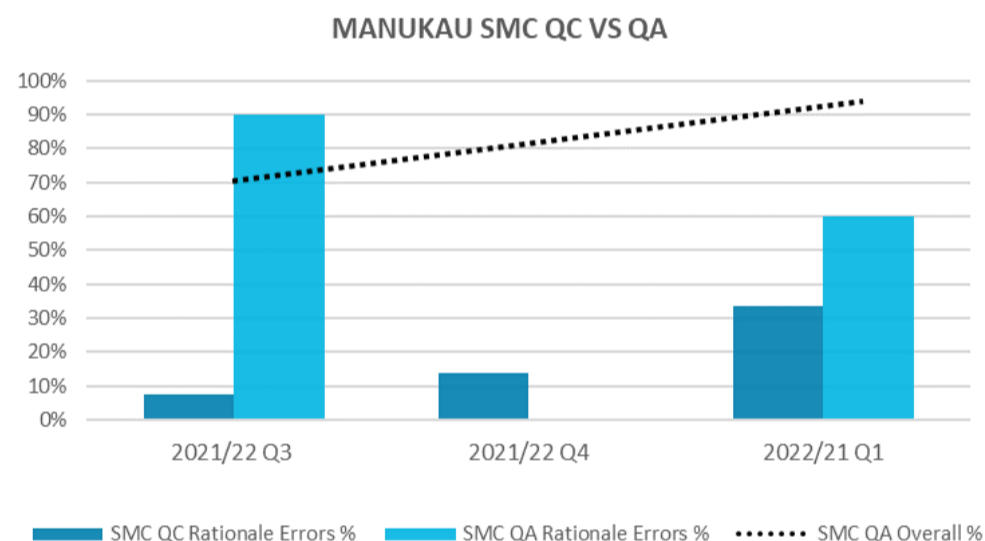


Figure 3

SAMPLE CHANGES

The Q&A team began sampling applications from the Afghan Emergency Resettlement Category (Afghan PRV) which was created in October 2021 to facilitate the evacuation of Afghan citizens with links to New Zealand from Afghanistan. The team have sampled these applications for three consecutive quarters, this quarter marking the last time that Afghan PRVs will be sampled due to the category phasing out.

This quarter the sample group achieved 96.7% which is the first time the sample achieved the quality target. 25 of the 30 applications scored in between 95-100%, compared to just four applications in 2021/22 Q3. Some highlights of the latest QA results include the Risk domain achieving over 90%, Processes increasing by 46.6 percentage points and the Instructions domain once again achieving 100% (see Appendix graph on page 3).

The Afghan PRV sample will be replaced by the new Green List Straight to Residence applications from Manukau. In addition, the 2021 RV sample group has now switched from Phase 1/1.5 in IGMS/AMS to Phase 2 in ADEPT.

⁴ This decision was endorsed by the Deputy Secretary Immigration and discussed with MBIE Finance & Performance and Audit NZ.

⁵ In June 2022, a decision was taken to simplify the ADEPT 2021 Resident Visa Quality Process. As part of this paper, it was agreed that applications approved under the ‘Settled Criteria’ would be excluded from QC, and that the Assurance Branch would undertake a review of these decisions post-decision.

TEMPORARY OVERALL QUALITY

The aggregate temporary quality rating for 2022/23 Q1 is 88.7%, just below the current INZ quality target of 90%. This is a marginal increase on the 2021/22 Q3 result of 88.4%. The p-chart in Figure 4 illustrates the quality ratings for temporary visas over the last 5 years⁶. Temporary quality has steadily increased and remained close to the quality target since the 2019/20 Q4 result.

Temporary quality ratings by sample group and quality domains are examined in Appendix 2 on pages 7 to 9.

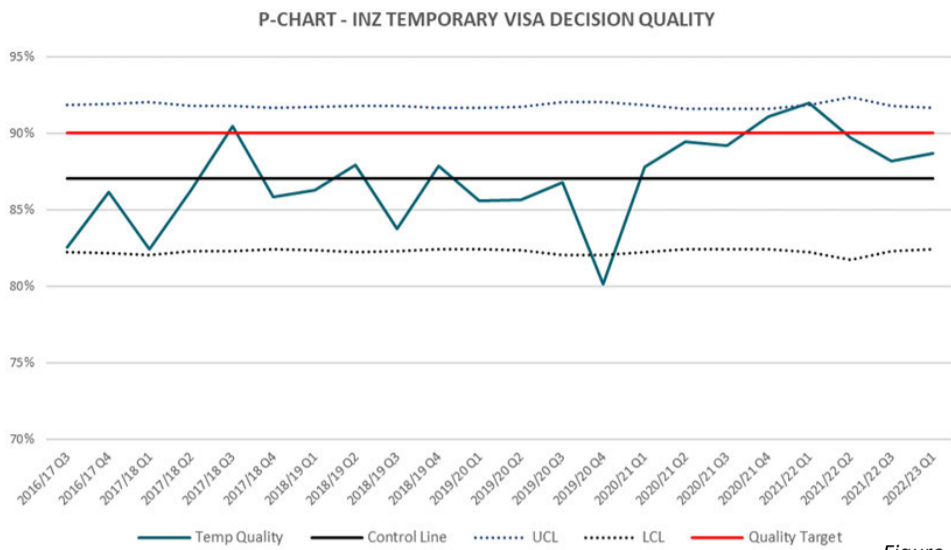


Figure 4

TEMPORARY QUALITY VARIATION BY SAMPLE GROUPS

Of the 16 temporary sample groups nine maintained or improved on the previous quarter's quality ratings, namely ADEPT Visitor Visa, Christchurch Essential Skills, Porirua, and the Specialist Assessment Team (Figure 5)⁷. The ADEPT Visitor Visa sample group improved to 93.3% from 66.7% in 2021/22 Q3.

There were some sample group changes made to the Temporary QA category this quarter⁸. The combined Pacific sample which was made up of 30 applications from Apia, Nuku'alofa and Suva is now split into three different sample groups (30 applications from each of the three offices) which replaced the three Critical Purpose sample groups⁹. By splitting up the three offices, it allows the Pacific management to understand where their focus is needed most.

Palmerston North (PN) has also been split into two sample groups: PN 'Student' (Full Fee Paying) and PN 'Other' (a mixture of other student, work and visitor visas processed by PN). The 'Student' sample group achieved 93.3% this quarter, while the 'Other' sample scored 80%, with five of the 30 sampled failing to pass the 90% target.

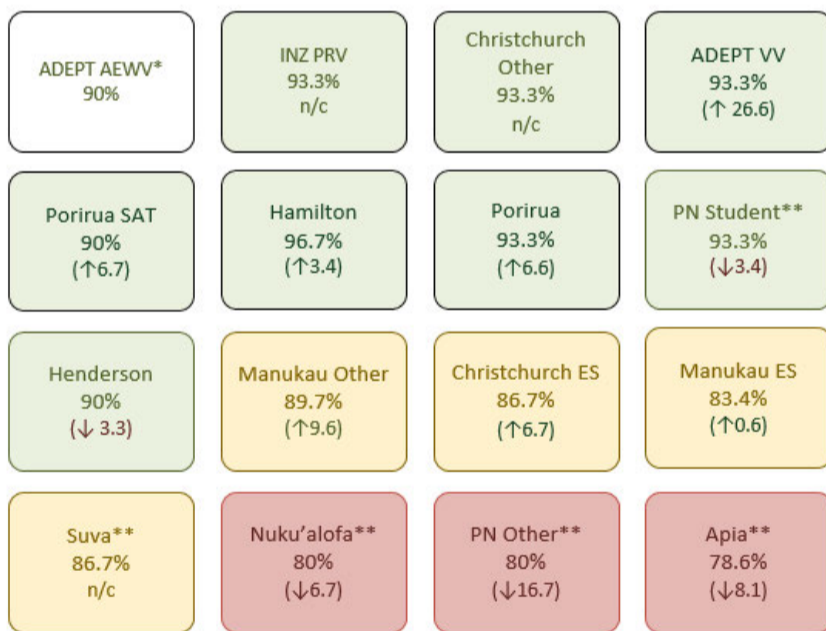


Figure 5

ADEPT UPDATE

Visitor Visa

The ADEPT Visitor Visa sample comprised 28 Visitor Visa General and two COVID-19 Short Term visas. The QA result increased from 66.7% to 93.3% this quarter. Due to the poor result last quarter, a list of system errors identified during QA was sent to the ADEPT Operations Team who have since confirmed they're working through the list to identify what has already been rectified and what requires further work.

⁶ The temporary QA sample size for the quarter is 478. The confidence interval is +/-4.45% at 95% level of confidence.

⁷ * ADEPT AEWV is a new sample group this quarter. ** Sample groups split up from being combined previously.

This quarter's result indicates that many of the system issues seen in the first sample of applications back in January – March 2022 have been remedied.

In the 2021/22 Q3 report, it was noted that of the 30 assessments sampled, 29 had at least one error in the Communications semi-domain. This quarter, only nine assessments were identified as having Communication errors (Figure 6). These errors are in relation to the eVisas, mainly the duration of the eVisa not adhering to the guidance of [VisaPak 524](#).

In addition, a large decrease in Rationale-Completeness errors was noted (Figure 7). The 2021/22 Q3 report noted significant Rationale errors, mainly due to the lack of SOPs requiring an immigration officer (IO) to document a rationale (such as explaining how the secondary applicants can be included when there is no assessment of partnership, no rationale in General Notes and/or the relevant activity not being triggered by ADEPT). It appears that IO's are now documenting the reasons behind their decision, which has resulted in an improved QA score this quarter.

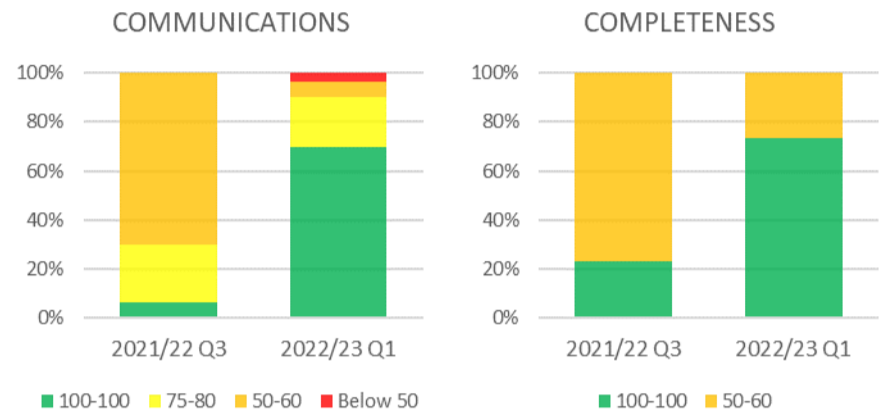


Figure 6

Figure 7

Accredited Employer Work Visa

Accredited Employer Work Visa went live on ADEPT from 4 July 2022 therefore this is the first time Q&A has sampled the category, achieving 90%. The 2022/23 Q1 sample contains hybrid applications which refers to work visa applications that are processed in both ADEPT and AMS ([Visa Pak 527](#)). Although the sample group achieved the quality target this quarter, more than half of the assessments had errors with the Contact Tab. In the 30 applications, 16 were marked down for either the wrong employer being added, duplicate identities for the employer/licensed immigration advisor (LIA) not being linked or no employer being added to the contact tab. As the next sample of AEWV applications should predominately be processed only on ADEPT, Q&A expect that these errors should stop occurring.

SAMPLE GROUP CHANGES –ESSENTIAL SKILLS MANUKAU

This quarter marks the last time that there will be quality assurance over Essential Skills applications (ES) processed in Manukau office. Due to low processing numbers, resources have pivoted towards AEWV instead. The Q&A team will continue to take a sample of ES applications from Christchurch for 2022/23 Q2.

The Q&A team have been assessing ES applications from Manukau since the Apr-Jun 2019 quarter (2018/19 Q4) which means there are 13 quarters worth of data available to analyse. Figure 8 below notes the results over this time. The sample group achieved the 90% quality target twice.

The 66.7% result seen in 2019/20 Q4 was attributed to a significant increase in Risk and Processes related errors identified at QA. Specific feedback was provided to the office and along with a new Visa Assessment Tool being rolled out, QA results from July 2020 onwards began to increase.

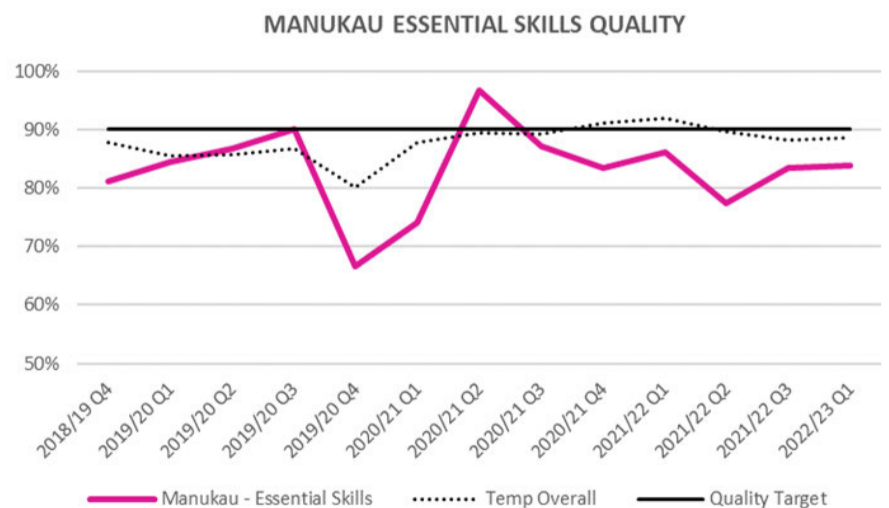


Figure 8

⁸ The results of the new sample groups below have been compared to the sample groups they were previously combined with. E.g., Apia scored 78.6% this quarter however the combined Pacific Temp sample group achieved 86.7% in 2021/22 Q3.

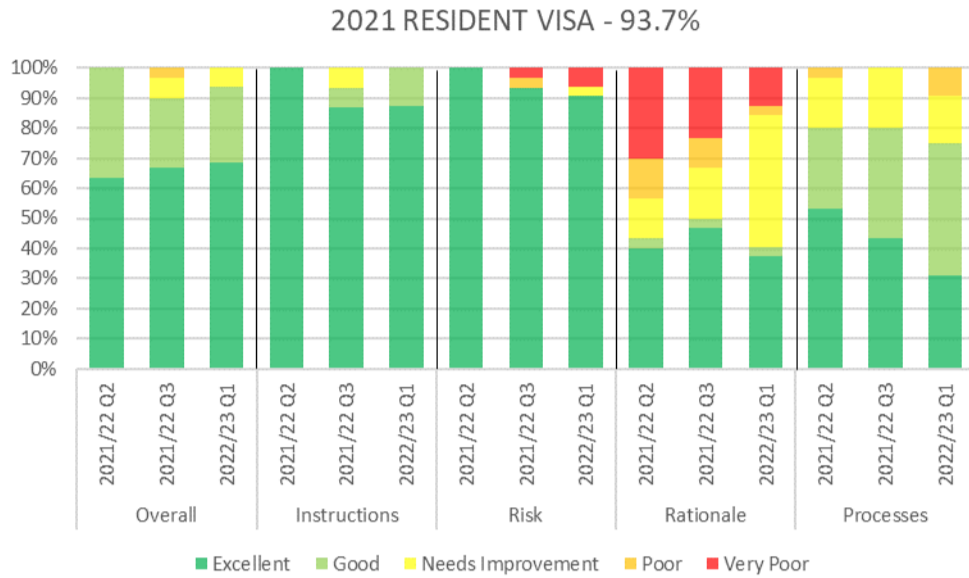
⁹ Quality assurance over the Border EOI process and Critical Purpose applications ceased in 2021/22 Q4 due to both processes being closed.

APPENDIX 1 – RESIDENCE VISA QA RESULTS BY SITE

The overall aggregate residence rating from 2022/23 Q1 is 94.2%. All onshore offices have office-centric quality management reporting tools on SAS Visual Analytics that can be utilised to identify office trends.

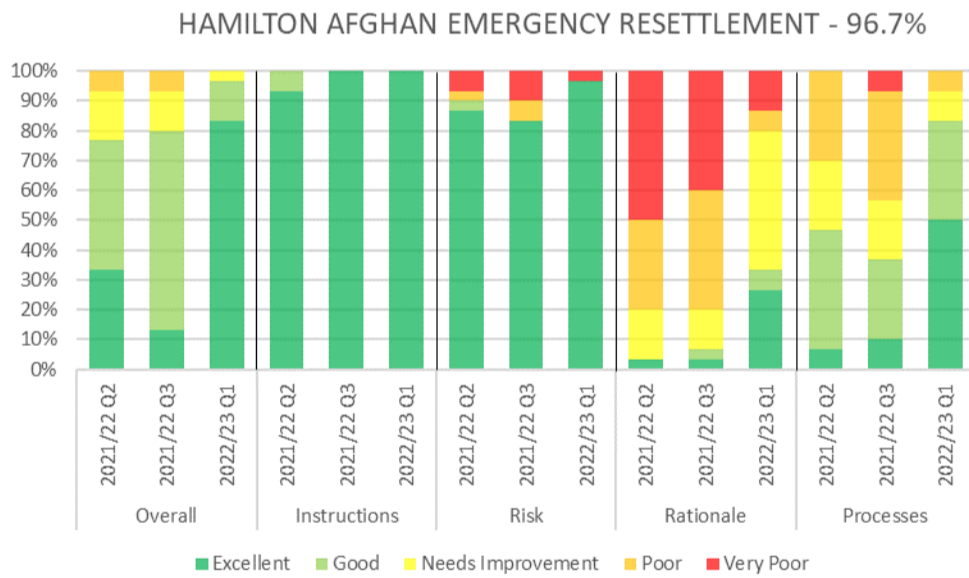
2021 Resident Visa (Phase 1 & 1.5)

The 2021RV sample group achieved 100% conformance to immigration instructions this quarter, but a slight increase in risk errors was identified. This is the last sample of Phase 1 & 1.5 decisions that will be taken by the Q&A team. From October onwards the 2021 Resident Visa sample group will comprise of only Phase 2 ADEPT decisions in the 'Skilled' or 'Scarce' categories.



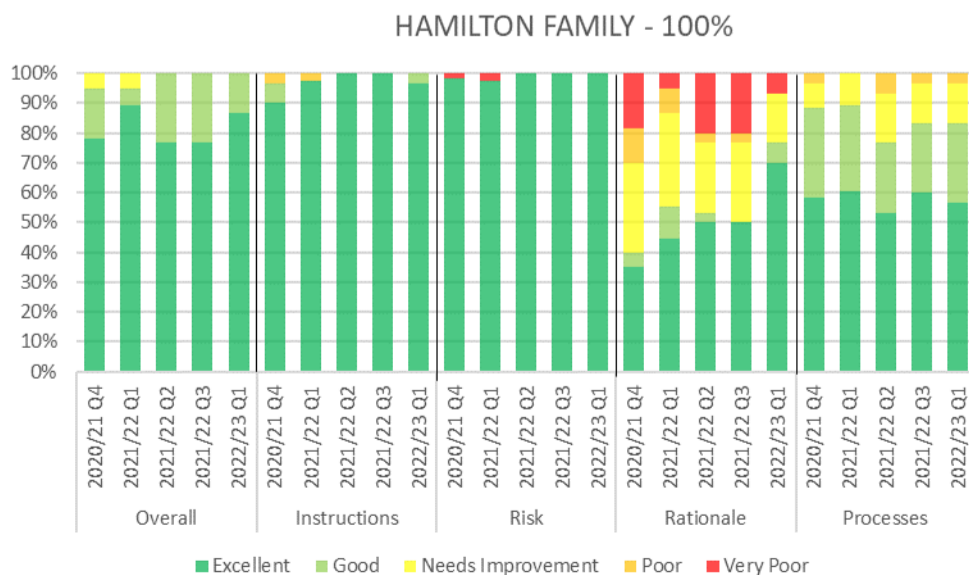
Afghan Emergency Resettlement

This quarter saw the Afghan Emergency Resettlement sample group achieve the quality target for the first time since testing began in 2021/22 Q2. Adherence to immigration instructions remained at 100% and all other domains increased, most notably in Processes. This is the last time that a sample of these applications will be taken due to low application numbers.



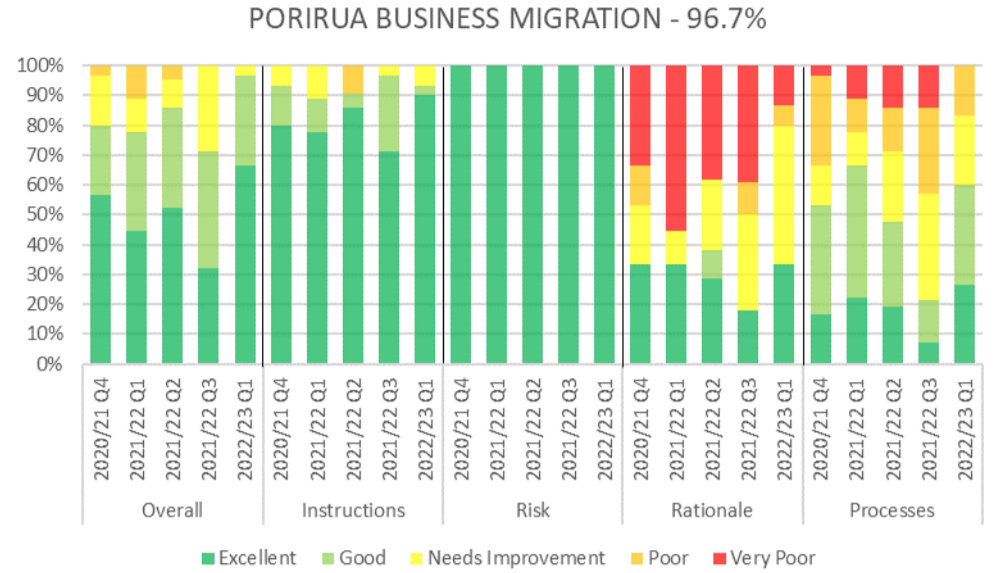
Hamilton

Hamilton continues to maintain an excellent quality rating with all residence applications achieving over 90%, including 26 of the 30 applications scoring in the 95-100% range.



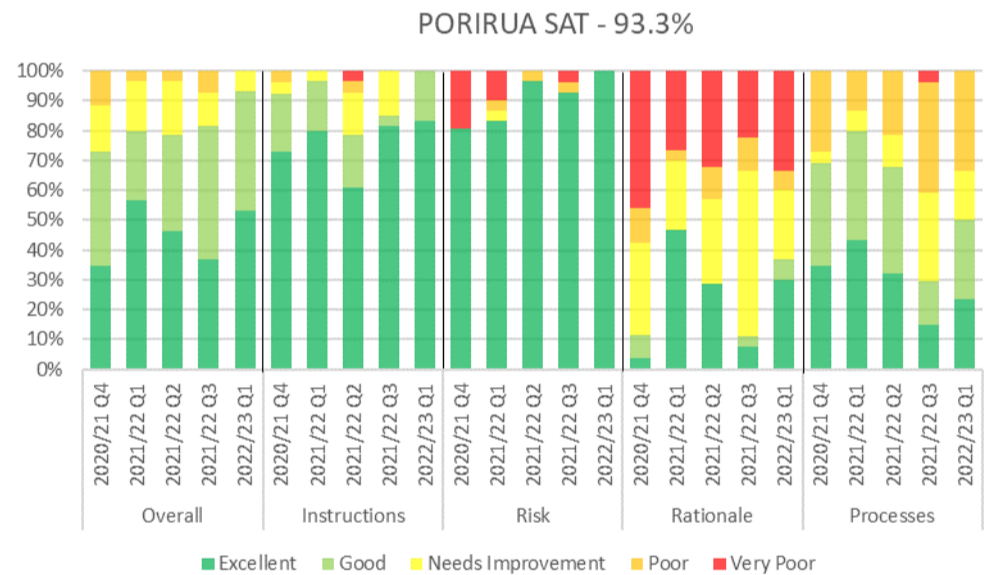
Porirua Business Migration

The Business Migration sample is made up of 23 Investor, 2 Entrepreneur and 5 Parent Retirement categories. The sample group increased by over 25 percentage points this quarter to achieve its highest ever QA rating of 96.7%. A significant increase in the Processes domain was identified.



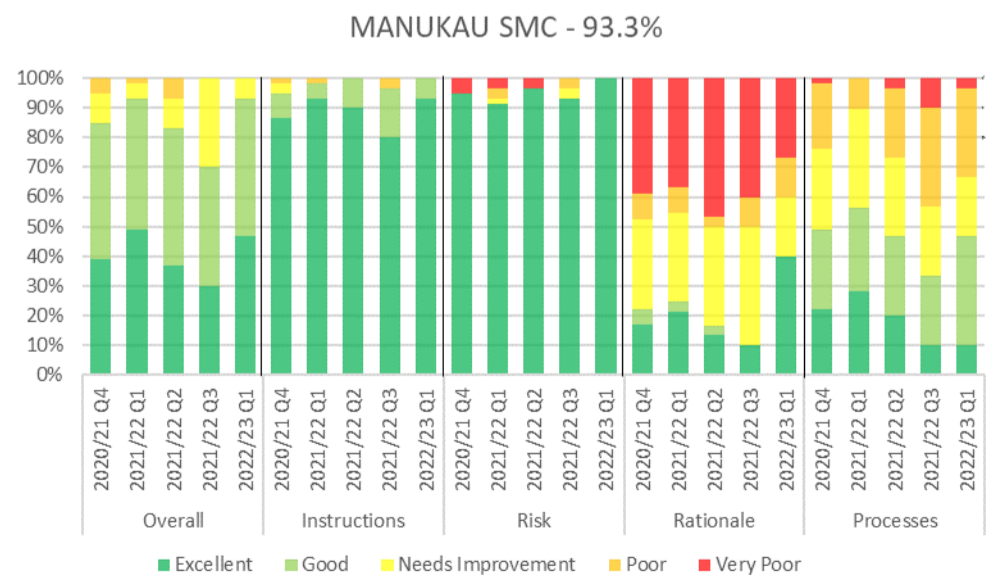
Porirua Specialist Assessment Team

This quarter saw the SAT sample achieve 100% conformance in both Instructions and Risk. Improvements were also seen in the Rationale and Processes domain. The overall result of 93.3% marks the highest QA outcome for SAT. The excellent results seen by both Business Migration and SAT is a testament to the great work done by the Practice Lead and Technical Advisors in addressing issues identified by the Q&A team.



Manukau SMC

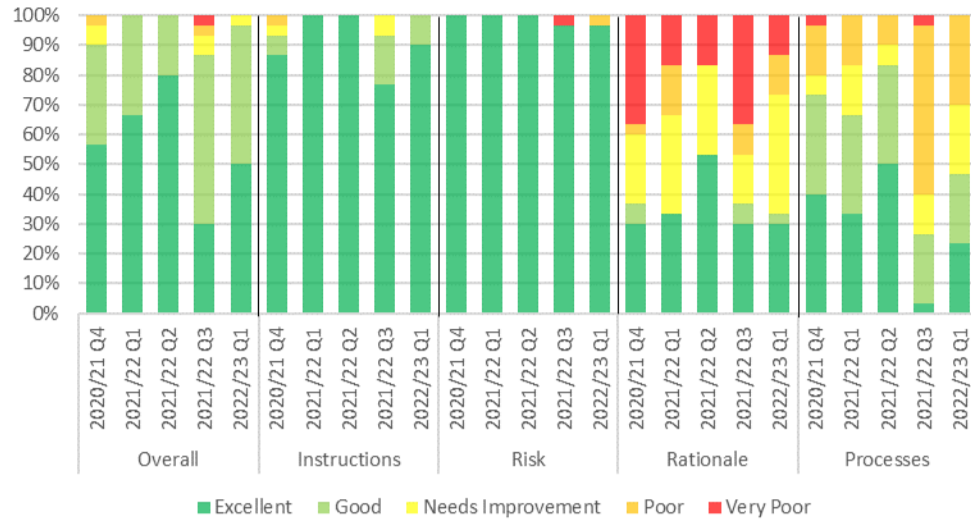
The SMC sample group increased by over 20 percentage points this quarter which is amongst the highest QA result this grouping has achieved. Instructions and Risk scored 100% and a significant increase was seen in the Rationale domain. More insight on this is included on page 3.



Manukau Talent

Manukau Talent achieved over 90% after falling below the quality target last quarter for the first time. Conformance with Instructions is back at 100%.

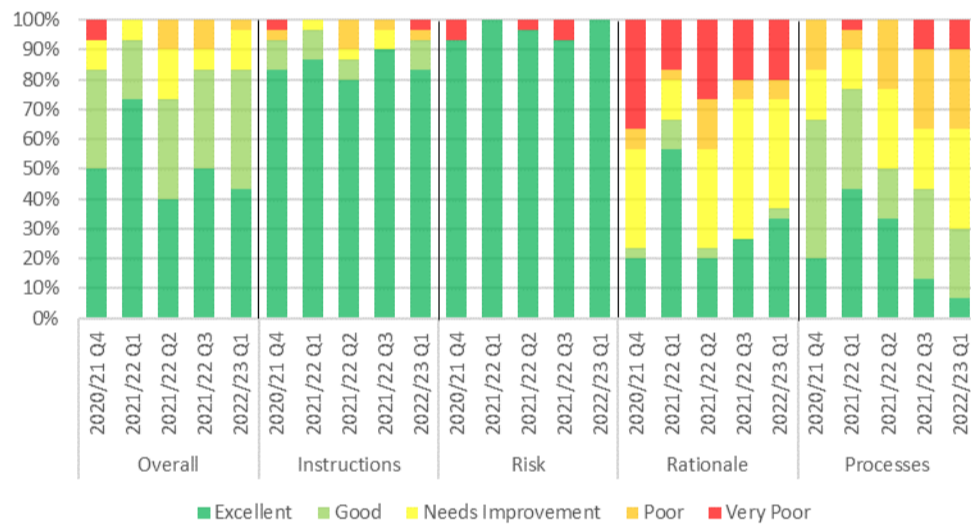
MANUKAU TALENT - 96.7%



Pacific Residence

The Pacific Residence sample was made up of 20 Dependent Child and Partnership applications and 10 PAC. The overall QA result is the same as last quarter, 83.3%. Adherence to Risk verification and mitigation processes achieved 100% and small increases were seen in the Instructions and Rationale space however, errors identified in the Processes domain continue to increase.

PACIFIC RESIDENCE - 83.3%



APPENDIX 2 – TEMPORARY VISA QA RESULTS BY SAMPLE GROUP

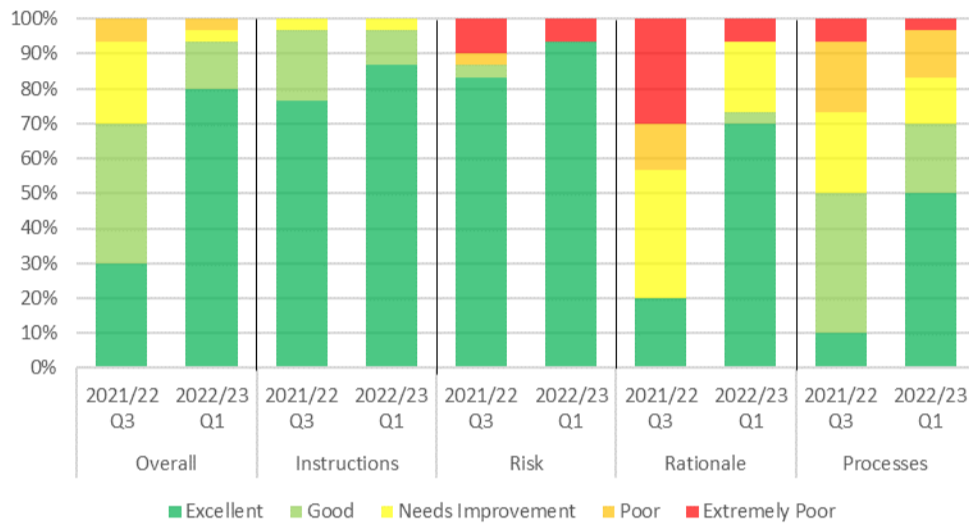
In 2022/23 Q1, 88.7% of the temporary QA sample scored 'accurate' (i.e., 'Excellent' or 'Good').

ADEPT Visitor

The ADEPT Visitor sample comprises of 28 Visitor Visa General and two COVID-19 Short Term visas. The overall result this quarter is 93.3% which is an increase of over 20 percentage points. 10 of the 30 applications scored a perfect 100%.

A significant increase has been observed in the Rationale domain. 21 applications had no errors identified in the Rationale, compared to just six applications last quarter. As noted in the previous quarterly report, the poor scores noted for this sample group included system errors not just human errors. As the ADEPT system has improved and users become more comfortable and competent using the system it was expected that QA scores would increase.

ADEPT VISITOR - 93.3%

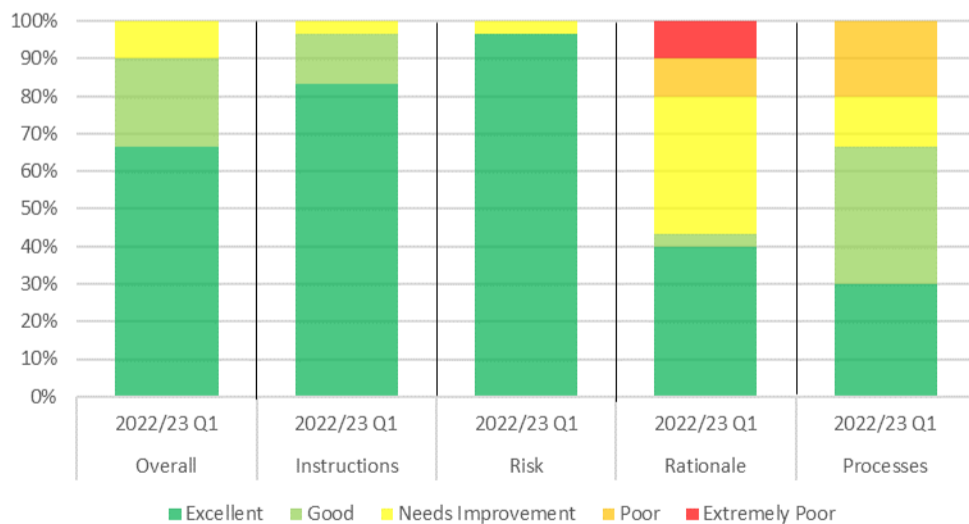


ADEPT Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)

This is the first quarter that the Q&A team reviewed the new Accredited Employer work visa applications, with an overall result of 90%. As these applications were from July-September, all were part of the 'hybrid application approach'. A hybrid application refers to a Work Visa application that is processed in both AMS and ADEPT.

As noted on page 4 of the report, 16 of the 30 assessments were marked down for errors in the AMS contact tab. In some instances, it was noted that the NZBN declared on the application form would return multiple client numbers on AMS. Ensuring that the correct AMS identity for employers and LIAs is an important step as errors can cause oversights or incomplete assessments. For example, if an employer is not linked properly in AMS and it was later found that there was an alert/warning on another identity, there may be potential risks left unmitigated.

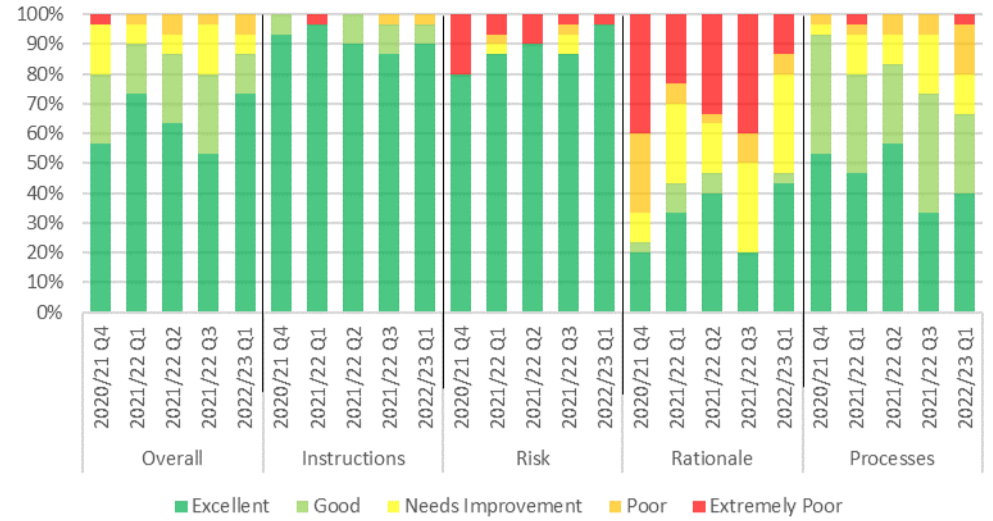
ADEPT AEWV - 90%



Christchurch Essential Skills

The Christchurch Essential Skills sample has increased to 86.7% this quarter, with improvements noted in all domains other than Processes. The number of Processes related errors has been steadily increasing over the last three quarters. Due to Essential Skills applications still pending in Christchurch office, the Q&A team will review a final sample in 2022/23 Q2. In the New Year this sample group will be repurposed towards an ADEPT visa category.

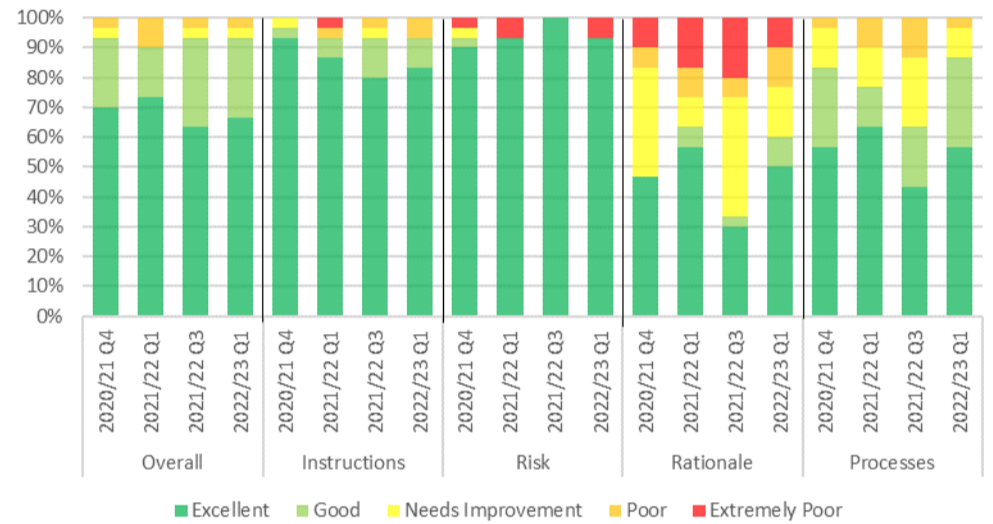
CHRISTCHURCH ESSENTIAL SKILLS - 86.7%



Christchurch Other

The Christchurch Other achieved 93.3% for a consecutive quarter. The sample comprised various categories of visas including 11 Variations of Conditions, four Specific Purpose or Event work visas and four Recognised Antarctic Programme visitor visas. The remaining 11 applications includes Dependent of a Worker and Partner of a Worker.

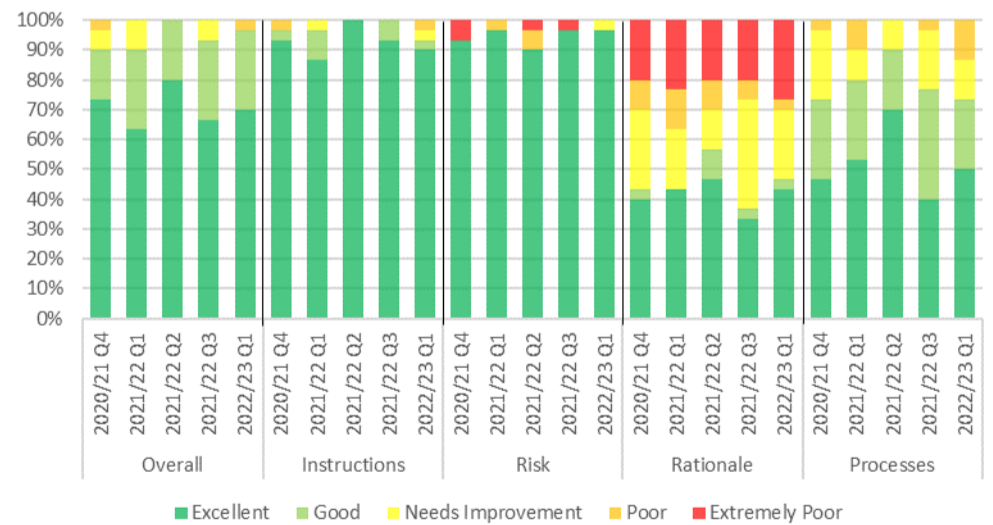
CHRISTCHURCH OTHER - 93.3%



Hamilton

Another good result out of the Hamilton office this quarter. Improvements were seen in the Risk and Rationale space; however, one application was marked down under Instructions as Character instructions could not be met. It appears the Police Check provided was for the applicant's sibling instead of the applicant themselves.

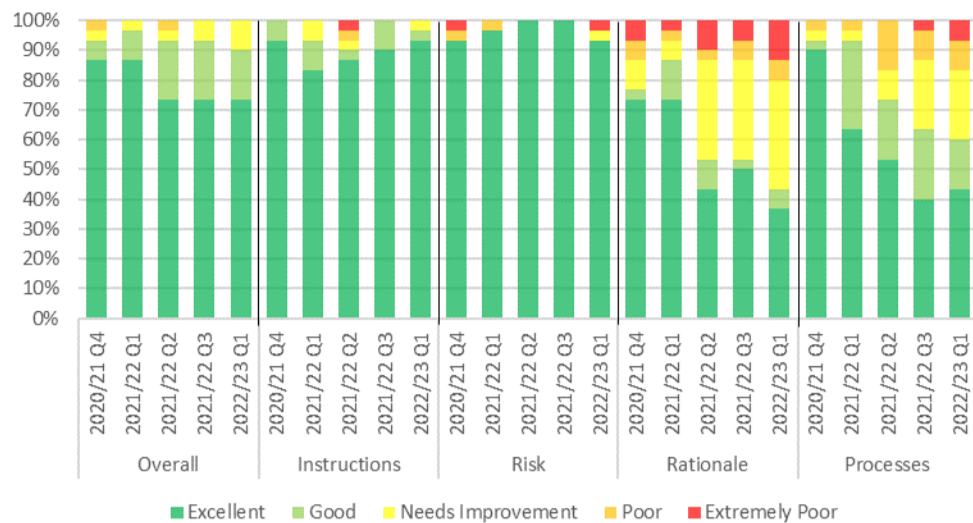
HAMILTON - 96.7%



Henderson

The Henderson sample comprised 17 Visitor Visas, 8 Student Visas, 1 Partner of a Worker and 4 Foreign Mission & Military Visas. A slight decrease was observed in every domain this quarter, however they still achieved 90%.

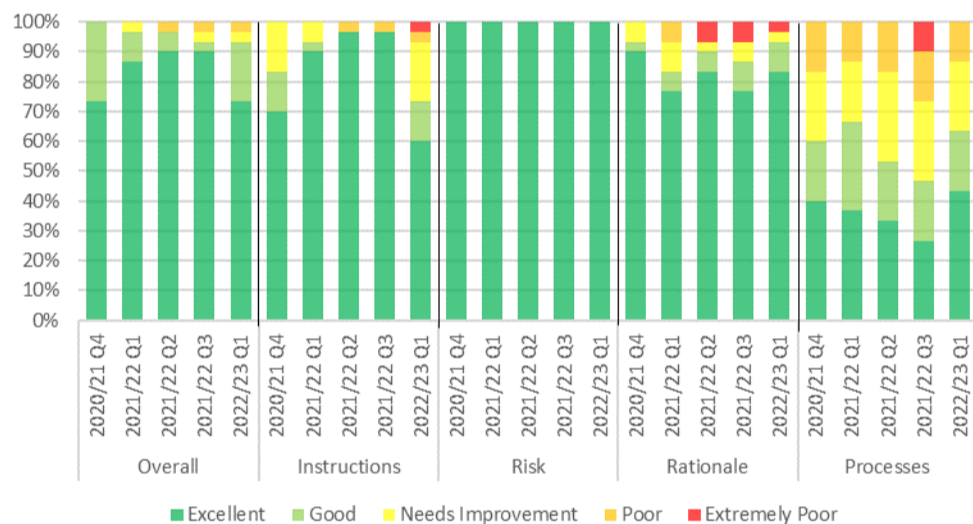
HENDERSON - 90%



Permanent Resident Visa (PRV)

The PRV sample group has maintained their results this quarter. Processes has increased which was expected due to NaDO being proactive in ensuring scanned copies of passports are retained on the physical file. However, Instructions has significantly decreased this quarter due to R5.60(b) not being met in five applications. This instruction outlines the correct date that a visa is to be granted. Feedback will be provided to NaDO Practice Leads on how to remedy this error.

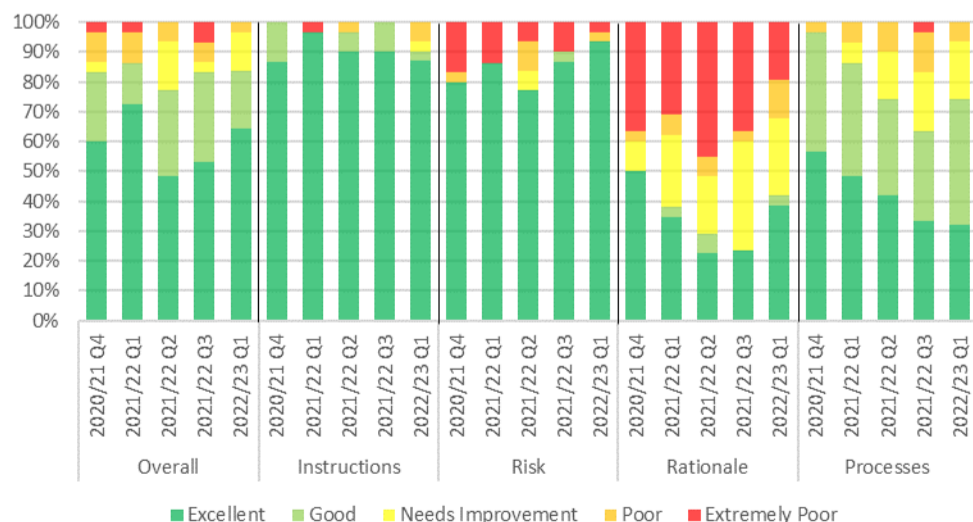
PRV - 93.3%



Manukau Essential Skills

Due to the closure of the Essential Skills category, this is the last time the Q&A team will sample the visa category for Manukau office. Page 3 provides further QA results on the visa category.

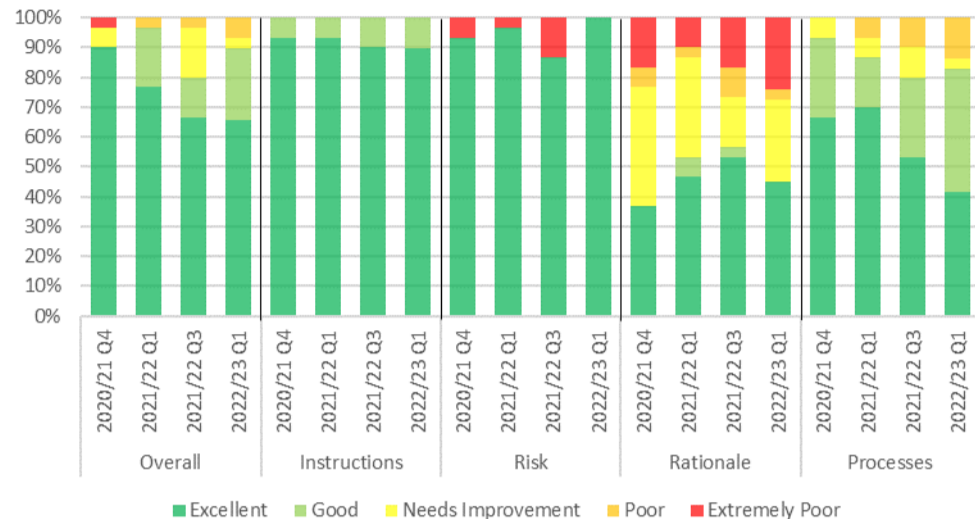
MANUKAU ESSENTIAL SKILLS - 83.8%



Manukau Other

This quarter the sample group comprises of 26 dependent/partner of a worker/student and three work to residence applications¹⁰. The previous report highlighted errors seen in the Risk domain, notably around the CRiSM risk triggers not being identified and/or mitigated therefore, it is pleasing to see the Risk domain at 100% and the sample group back up to almost 90%.

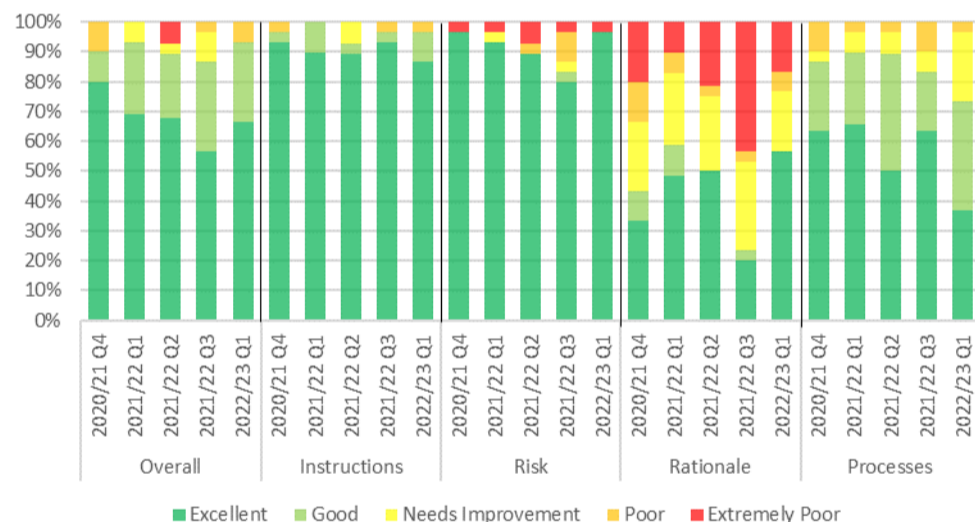
MANUKAU OTHER - 89.6%



Porirua

The Porirua sample comprises of 11 Partner/Dependent of a Worker, 12 Visitor Visas and seven Supplementary Seasonal Employment visas. This quarter the result increased to over 90% for the first time in 3 quarters. An increase in Risk was observed as well as a significant increase in Rationale, most notably in the Accuracy semi-domain.

PORIRUA - 93.3%

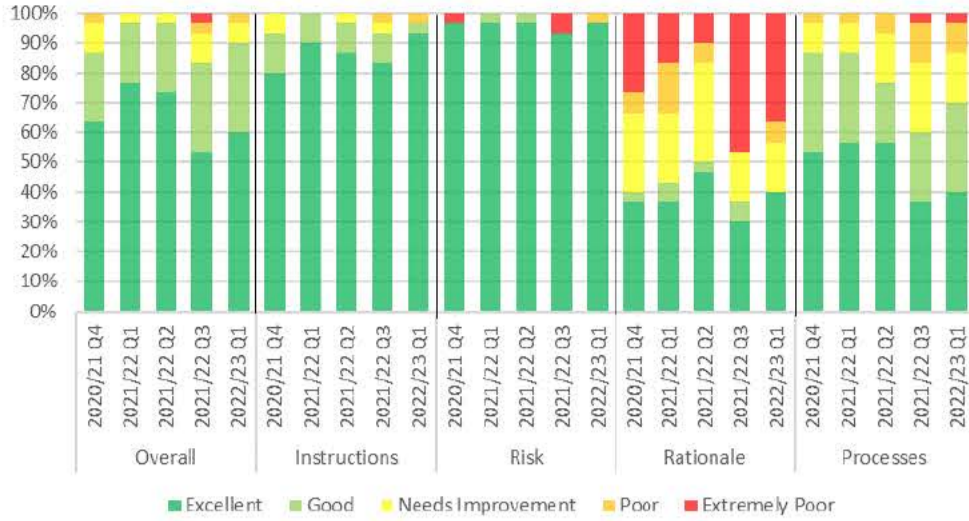


Porirua Specialist Assessment Team

The Specialist Assessment Team achieved 90% this quarter. The sample comprised 11 Asylum Seeker Work Visas, 7 Migrant Exploitation and a mix of 12 Student and Visitor visas. One application was marked down in the Risk domain due to IAC 16/01 not being adhered to regarding expired information warnings.

¹⁰ The Q&A team were unable to take a full sample of 30 for this sample group due to the team being unable to assess the temporary job seeker visas that are created for offshore Skilled Migrant Category residence applications.

PORIRUA - SAT - 90%



The Apia sample comprises of 24 Visitor Visas and 4 Work Visas¹¹. Of the 28 assessments sampled, 5 were marked down in Risk, mainly due to the CRISM warnings not being identified and mitigated. This also results in Rationale errors.

APIA - 78.6%



Palmerston North Student

As noted in the body of the report, the Palmerston North sample has been split into two sample groups; Palmerston North Student (graph below) and Other (graph further down). The Palmerston North Student sample, which contains only Full Fee Paying Student visas, achieved 93.3% this quarter.

PALMERSTON NORTH STUDENT - 93.3%



Nuku'alofa

The Nuku'alofa sample comprises of 27 Visitor Visa applications (26 VV General, 1 VV Patient Escort) and three Work Visas. Four applications were marked down in Risk, including one that accepted a high risk at face value without consultation with a Verification Officer.

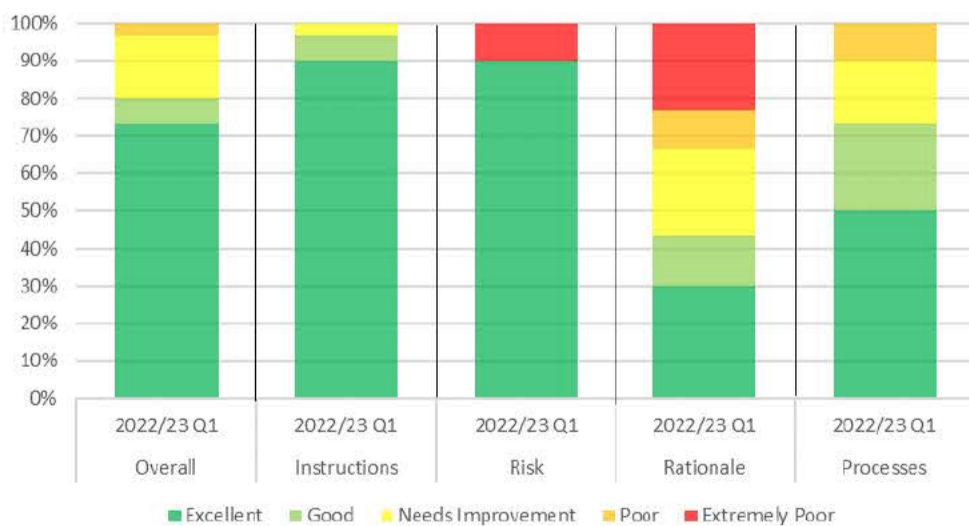
NUKU'ALOFA - 80%



Palmerston North Other

The Palmerston North Other sample group comprises a mixture of temporary applications processed by the office. Six applications failed to achieve the 90% quality target this quarter, with three applications failing in the identification, verification, and mitigation of risk.

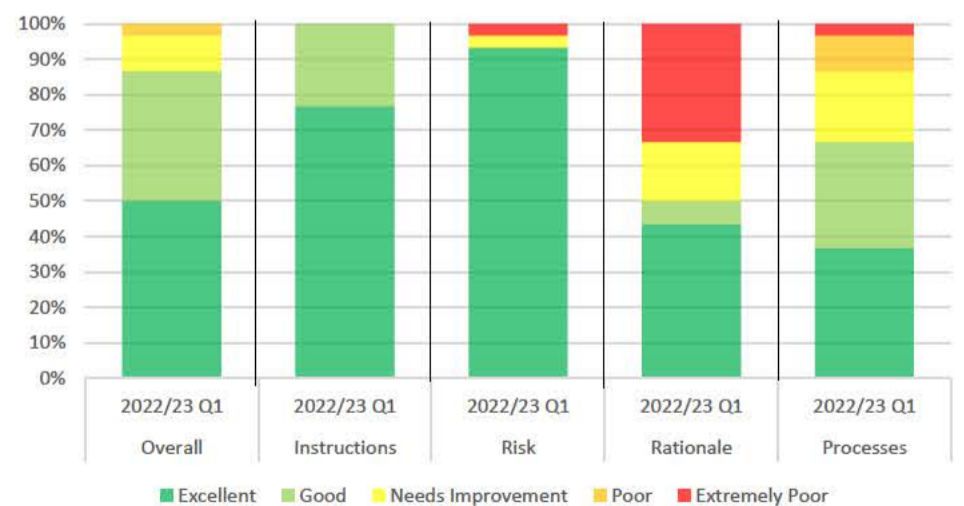
PALMERSTON NORTH OTHER - 80%



Suva

The Suva sample achieved 86.7% this quarter, matching the Pacific overall result from 2021/22 Q3. The sample comprised of 21 Visitor Visas (17 General, 2 Parent/Grandparent, 1 Business and 1 Dependent) and nine Work Visas (a mixture of Essential Skills and Post-study). While there was 100% conformance with Instructions, errors were seen in Risk, Rationale and Processes.

SUVA - 86.7%



Apia

This quarter the Pacific temporary sample group has been split into three separate sample groups, one for each of the Pacific processing offices. The overall QA result for the Pacific sample in 2021/22 Q3 was 86.7%. By splitting the Pacific sample into the three sample groups, it will allow the Practice Lead to focus on a specific branch and/or area of processing.

¹¹ A sample of 30 could not be taken by Apia office this quarter due to processing numbers not being high enough. 28 samples were assessed.