**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

## MEMO

| | |
|---|---|
| **DATE** | 19 October 2023 |
| **TO** | Immigration Leadership Team |
| | Chief Operating Officer Immigration Leadership Team |
| **PREPARED BY** | Maddy Nisbet, Senior Business Analyst, Assurance Branch |
| **FROM** | Steve Cantlon, Manager Quality and Assurance, Assurance Branch |
| **APPROVED BY** | Katy MacLeod, General Manager (Acting), Assurance Branch |
| **SUBJECT** | **VISA DECISION QUALITY RATINGS REPORT – APRIL - JUNE 2023** |

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- **Note** the Immigration New Zealand (INZ) visa decision quality assurance (QA) results for the April-June 2023 quarter (2022/23 Q4).

    **Noted**

- **Note** that INZ Residence has increased to 93.6% for the 2022/23 Q4.

    **Noted**

- **Note** that INZ Temporary has increased to 89.5% for the 2022/23 Q4.

    **Noted**

- **Note** that INZ's overall visa decision quality ratings for the 2022/23 Financial Year are 89.2% for residence and 85.6% for temporary.

    **Noted**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Residence**

In the April-June 2023 quarter (2022/23 Q4), the residence quality rating increased to 93.6% from 87.1% last quarter. Increases were observed in most residence sample groups. The Quality and Assurance (Q&A) team has observed increased variance in the aggregate residence Quality Assurance (QA) ratings recently. Further commentary is on page three.

A significant increase was seen in the Pacific Residence quality results, which improved from 79.3% to 90%. The improved Pacific Residence result coincides with a noticeable rise in the rework rate resulting from the pre-decision Quality Control (QC) checks[1]. It shows that the QC checks performed by the Pacific Technical Advisors (TAs) during this quarter were more effective in identifying errors

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[1] A calibration session was held between the Pacific Technical Advisors (TAs) and members of the Q&A team in April 2023. In this session Q&A ran a demonstration of the QC Tool and explained what each question means and how to mark it. This likely contributed to increased QC rework rate.

before final decisions were made. As more errors are rectified through QC, post-decision QA results will improve.

As discussed in the previous quarterly report, the quality rating for Manukau Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) was expected to rise due to applications now being on Plone[2], after the reopening of SMC in November 2022. This quarter, SMC increased to 83.3%, which while not meeting the 90% quality target, is still a significant improvement given the previous two quarters were rated at 70%.

This quarter marks the last time that the Manukau Talent (Residence from Work) visas will be tested by the Q&A team due to decreasing decision numbers. The new Family Parent category being processed by Christchurch/Ōtautahi will be assurance tested by Q&A from 2023/24 Q1 onwards.

**Temporary**

In 2022/23 Q4 the temporary quality rating increased from 83.3% to 89.5%. Ten of the 15 temporary sample groups met the 90% target.

The ADEPT Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) sample group increased to 81.7% this quarter, after the low 63.3% achieved in 2022/23 Q3.

The previous quarterly report highlighted the misalignment between what TAs are prompted to check at QC stage compared to what is measured at QA. Members of the Q&A team visited Manukau and Henderson offices to observe QC processes within ADEPT and noted that the current state AEWV QC question set is not effective. Further work needs to occur in this area, and the Q&A team intends to again request that this work be prioritised and scheduled as part of the continuous improvement plan for ADEPT.

**Full Financial Year**

Overall, INZ's residence quality rating for the 2022/23 Financial Year (an MBIE Estimates measure) is 89.2%. This is 2.4% higher than the average of overall residence ratings from the 2021/22 financial year.

The temporary quality rating for the 2022/23 financial year was 85.6%, down 4.9% from the previous financial year.

More detailed residence and temporary quality analyses are on pages three and four. Analysis of the complete financial year is also included on these pages.

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[2] As a result of thorough work done by the Service Design branch, it was noted that the case summary and updated SMC SOPs are both very clear and easy to follow which has resulted in good quality decisions being made.

# QA Insights from the April-June 2023 Quarter (2022/23 Q4)

## RESIDENCE OVERALL QUALITY

In the 2022/2023 Q4, the aggregate residence quality rating increased to 93.6%[3] (see p-Chart in Figure 1[4]). The quality rating has continued to increase from last quarter, driven by increases in most of the residence sample groups.

Residence quality results by sample group and quality domain are shown in Appendix 1 on pages five and six.
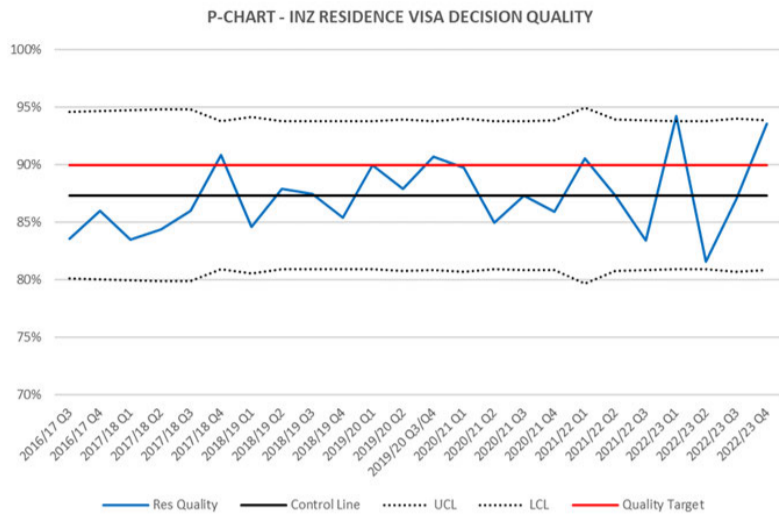


P-CHART - INZ RESIDENCE VISA DECISION QUALITY

*Figure 1*

Figure 1 notes the increased variance in the residence quality rating since 2021/22 Q2. This is likely due to frequently changing the residence sample groups to ensure assurance over new visa categories. For example, in 2021/22 Q2 sample groups were pivoted from Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) and Family Partnership to cover AMS 2021 Resident Visa (2021RV) and Afghan Resettlement. In 2022/23 Q2, 2021RV was switched to ADEPT 2021RV and Afghan Resettlement was switched for Manukau Skilled Residence[5]. In 2023/24 Q1 (which is currently being sampled), 2021 Resident Visa (2021RV) and Manukau Talent have been dropped due to decreasing numbers[6]. SMC has been doubled to two sample groups (with one likely being repurposed for new SMC/WTR in 2024) and Christchurch/Ōtautahi Parent is now being sampled. While unchanged residence sample groups would be ideal, it is important that the Q&A team are flexible in ensuring that any new residence products have assurance oversight.

## RESIDENCE QUALITY VARIATION BY SAMPLE GROUP

Figure 2 displays the quality results of the residence sample groups and highlights the percentage point movements between 2022/23 Q3 and 2022/23 Q4. Seven sample groups achieved the quality rating of 90% compared to six in the previous quarter.

Significant movements were observed in three of the sample groups; 10 percentage point increase for Manukau Straight to Residence, 10.7 for Pacific Residence and 13.3 for SMC.
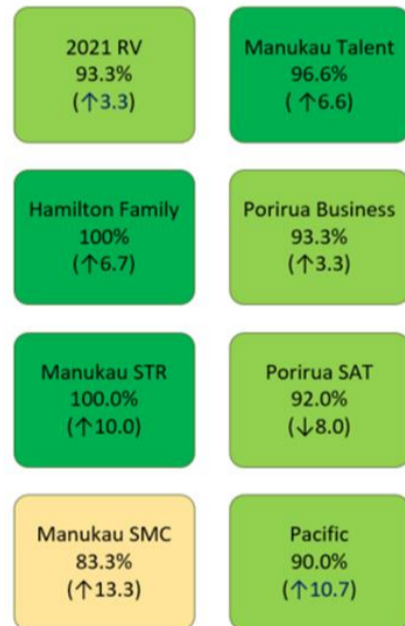


| 2021 RV 93.3% (↑3.3) | Manukau Talent 96.6% (↑6.6) |
| Hamilton Family 100% (↑6.7) | Porirua Business 93.3% (↑3.3) |
| Manukau STR 100.0% (↑10.0) | Porirua SAT 92.0% (↓8.0) |
| Manukau SMC 83.3% (↑13.3) | Pacific 90.0% (↑10.7) |

*Figure 2*

## PACIFIC RESIDENCE

The Pacific Residence sample rating has continued to increase, achieving 90% this quarter. This is a significant result after the 65.5% rating achieved in 2022/23 Q2. The Instructions domain is the greatest area of concern as it alone makes up 55% of an overall QA assessment score. This quarter, Pacific Residence achieved 100% in this domain.

Learnings from the calibration session that was held between the Pacific Technical Advisors (TAs) and members of the Q&A team in April 2023 appear to have been well implemented in the three Pacific branches, noting the consecutive quarterly QA increases.
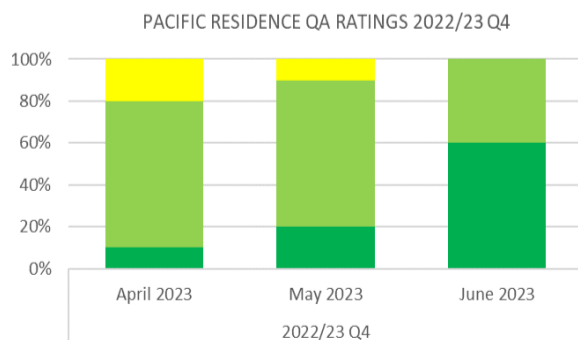


PACIFIC RESIDENCE QA RATINGS 2022/23 Q4

*Figure 3*

Figure 3 displays the improved QA results in applications that were decided *after* the April calibration session, in May and June.

Figure 4 notes the sharp rise in Quality Control (QC) markdowns in the Processes domain for residence QCs between April and May 2023.

The frequency of QC markdowns has been decreasing since June 2023 after the large number of errors identified in May 2023, however, this could be due to other factors such as IOs becoming more familiar with identifying Processes issues and rectifying them prior to QCs being completed.

In previous QA reports, the relationship between the level of effort being invested by TAs when undertaking the pre-decision QC checks, and the later post decision QA results has been highlighted. So, while these results for Pacific Residence are promising, it is crucial to ensure that QC processes are maintained.
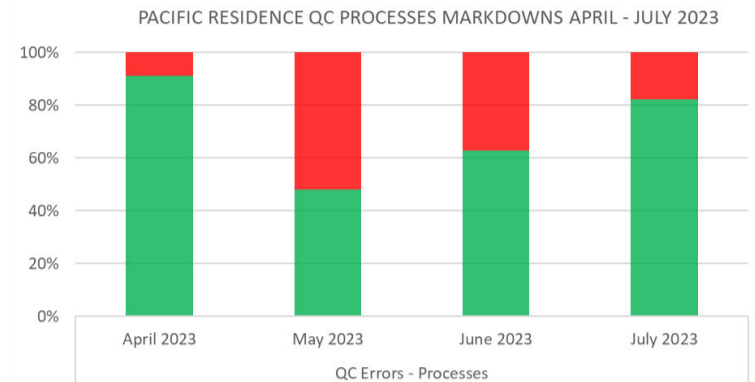


PACIFIC RESIDENCE QC PROCESSES MARKDOWNS APRIL - JULY 2023

QC Errors - Processes

*Figure 4*

## MANUKAU RESIDENCE

The Manukau SMC sample group increased to 83.3% after achieving 70% in the previous two quarters. Significant increases were observed in the Processes and Rationale domains, which was expected after the initial findings noted in the 2022/23 Q3 report. Figure 5 displays the final results for the two domains.

As noted in figure 5, fewer errors were identified in the Processes domain. In particular, the *Contact Tab* and *Communications* semi domains. Additionally, the *Original Sighted* semi domain increased to 90% after achieving 36.7% in 2022/23 Q3.

The Q&A team worked collaboratively with the Manukau office to develop a revised QC question set for the revised Skilled Migrant Category (SMC 2023) and a second revised question set for the three new skilled residence categories (Green List, Transport Sector, Care Workforce). Following the question sets going live in the QC Tool, members of the Q&A team visited Manukau in early October to run a calibration session on the new policies with the Residence TA teams.
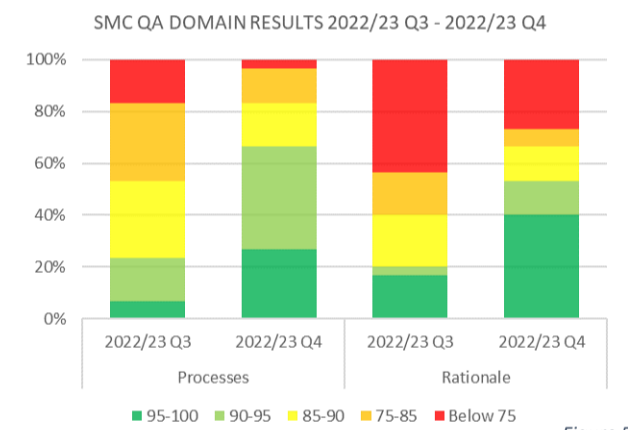


SMC QA DOMAIN RESULTS 2022/23 Q3 - 2022/23 Q4

*Figure 5*

The Q&A team will continue to provide support through a "fast follow" QA activity[7], and the visa categories will likely become part of regular QA testing in 2024.

## 2022-23 FINANCIAL YEAR QA RESULTS

INZ's overall visa decision quality rating for the 2022/23 financial year (FY) for the residence category was 89.2%. Figure 6 below illustrates the average quality ratings for each sample group in the FY22/23. Of the nine residence sample groups, six achieved or exceeded the quality target of 90% in the 2022-23 FY. Only three sample groups fell below the INZ residence overall for the financial year (Manukau SMC, Pacific and 2021 Resident Visa).
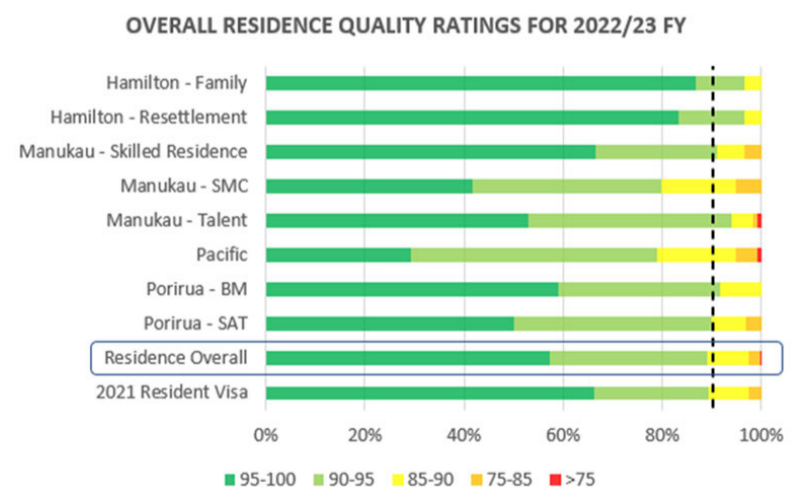


OVERALL RESIDENCE QUALITY RATINGS FOR 2022/23 FY

*Figure 6*

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[3] The residence QA sample size for 2022/23 Q4 was 234. The confidence interval is +/- 6.3 at 95% level of confidence. The confidence interval of 6.3 means that if Q&A had sampled 100% of the residence population (decided resident visas in Apr-Jun 2023) we would be 95% confident that the quality of the decision would fall in between 83.7 (90-6.3) and 96.3 (90+6.3).

[4] A p-Chart is used to show how a process (i.e., quality of visa processing) changes over time. It shows if the process is stable and predictable and is used to monitor the effects of process improvement theories.

[5] This was due to the category phasing out.

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

[7] Q&A will provide ad-hoc assurance over the first 10 decisions on these new applications.

**TEMPORARY OVERALL QUALITY**

The aggregate temporary quality rating for 2022/23 Q4 is 89.5% (see p-Chart of INZ Temporary Visa Decision Quality Rating in Figure 7). This significant increase in quality rating for temporary applications was primarily driven by increased ratings in the majority of sample groups. Of the 15 sample groups, 10 achieved or exceeded the 90% quality threshold.

The p-Chart in Figure 7 illustrates the quality ratings for temporary over the last six years[8]. Temporary quality ratings by sample group and quality domain are illustrated at Appendix 2 on pages seven to nine.
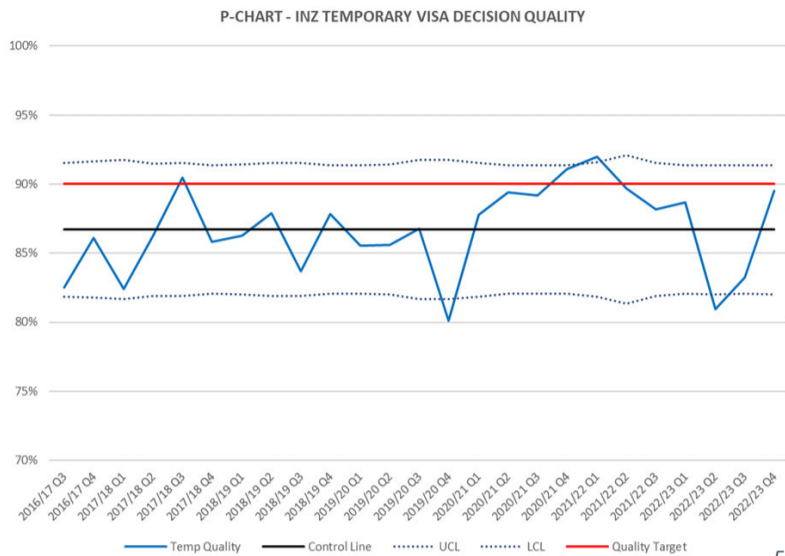


*Figure 7*

**TEMPORARY QUALITY VARIATION BY SAMPLE GROUP**

Figure 8 displays the quality results of the 15 temporary sample groups and highlights the percentage point movements between 2022/23 Q3 and 2022/23 Q4. Ten sample groups maintained or improved on last quarter's quality ratings. Apia significantly increased by 19.7 percentage points to 73.3% after achieving 53.6% last quarter. ADEPT Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) increased by 18.4 percentage points to 81.7%.

Nuku'alofa decreased this quarter, achieving an 'extremely poor' quality rating (i.e., being assessed as below 75% overall). The sample group decreased 13.3 percentage points to 66.7%. Five of the 30 applications were identified as having errors in the Risk domain, as the Immigration Officers (IOs) were found to not have identified the triggered risk rules, therefore the risks were not verified or mitigated appropriately.
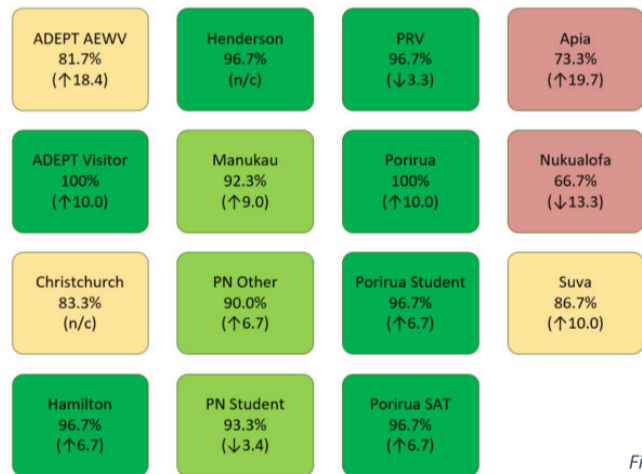


*Figure 8*

**ADEPT UPDATE**

*Visitor Visa*

The ADEPT Visitor Visa (VV) sample comprised of 28 VV General and 2 VV Business applications. The QA result increased to 100% this quarter, with 17 of the 30 applications achieving a perfect 100%. All domains achieved their highest ratings since QA on ADEPT VV began in 2021/22 Q3. All applications adhered to the relevant immigration instructions, while the QA ratings for Rationale and Processes increased to 83.3% and 86.7%.

It should be noted that the majority of these VVs were processed in accordance with the General Instruction (GI) and therefore, Q&A's assessments have been based on the GI and information provided on the application form only. However, it was identified in five of the applications that had the IOs been directed to review documents, the visa outcome would have likely been different. These five applications were identified as having provided fraudulent documentation with their visa application through post decision verification. Three had already had their visa cancelled and the applicants were all offloaded from flights to Aotearoa

New Zealand. The other two applications had AMS warnings raised to advise Border Operations to refuse boarding.

*Accredited Employer Work Visa*

The ADEPT AEWV sample group rating increased to 81.7% this quarter. While still below the 90% quality target, this is a significant improvement on the previous quarterly result of 63.3%.
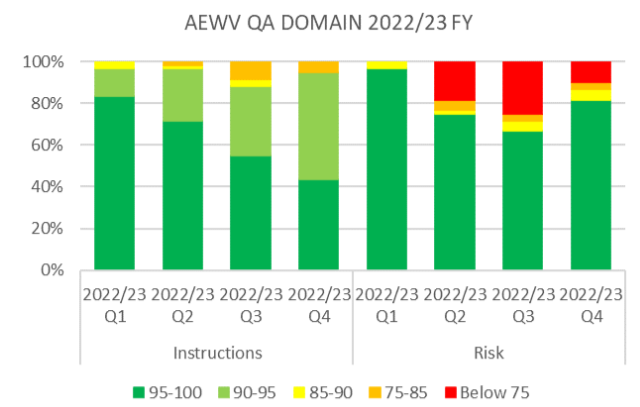


*Figure 9*

This quarter the Instructions and Risk domain QA ratings rebounded from the poor result in 2022/23 Q3 (Figure 9). Of the 60 applications sampled this quarter, Q&A found 11 (18.3%) had Risk errors and three (5%) had errors identified in the Instructions domain.

Additionally, 21 applications (35%) were marked down for not providing a job description, an increase on what was reported in the previous quarter. However, the introduction of Visa Pak 550 states that IOs are now only required to check for a job description if a job check validation activity is required by ADEPT. The Q&A team anticipate that the QA results for this sample group should continue to increase, due to both IOs becoming more familiar with the visa category, and the introduction of Visa Pak 550 in July 2023.

The 2022/23 Q3 report highlighted the apparent disconnect between QC and QA. The Q&A team have since visited both Manukau and Henderson processing offices to observe ADEPT processing and the ADEPT AEWV QC process, where it is clear that QC within ADEPT is not effective. The 'random sampling' component of ADEPT does not appear to be working as intended and means the offices cannot be certain they are following the QC sampling Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This has meant that Practice Leads (PLs) and TAs have resorted to maintaining excel spreadsheets to ensure the QC requirements are met. It should be noted that the .Net Quality Control Tool was rolled out in 2018 to remove the reliance on excel spreadsheets for manual QC reporting.

Q&A will continue working with Visa Operations to ensure that the AEWV QC process can be fit for purpose and user friendly. If QC activities are to resume in ADEPT for the VV product, it is crucial that improvement work is also done in this area[9].

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**2022-23 FINANCIAL YEAR QA RESULTS**

INZ's temporary quality rating for the 2022/23 FY is 85.6%.

Figure 10 provides a breakdown of temporary quality ratings by office. Of the 17 sample groups taken across temporary, eight met or exceeded the quality target, including ADEPT VV, Hamilton/Kirikiriroa, Henderson, INZ PRV, Palmerston North/Papaioea and all three sample groups from Porirua office.

Nine sample groups did not achieve 90% in the last FY. It should be noted that two of these sample groups, the Manukau and Christchurch/Ōtautahi Essential Skills (ES) is no longer sampled by Q&A due to the closure of the ES category.
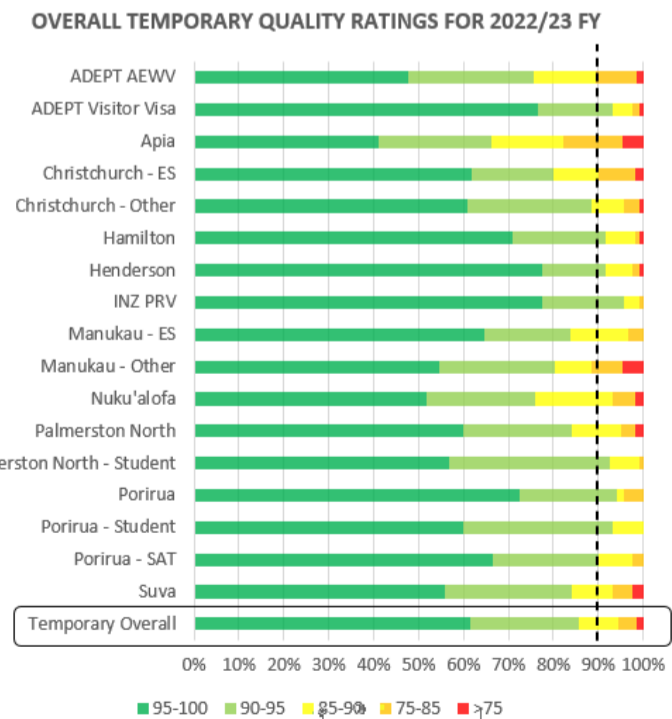


*Figure 10*

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# APPENDIX 1 – RESIDENCE VISA QA RESULTS BY SAMPLE GROUP

The overall aggregate residence rating for 2022/23 Q4 is 93.6%. 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)

The 2021RV sample group achieved 93.3% for a second consecutive quarter. This quarter is the third time that the Q&A team have assessed 2021RV applications assessed purely in ADEPT. Due to decreasing numbers of applications left to process, this is the last quarter that 2021RV will be sampled. 2021RV had been sampled for six quarters, achieving 90% five times.



2021 RESIDENT VISA - 93.3%
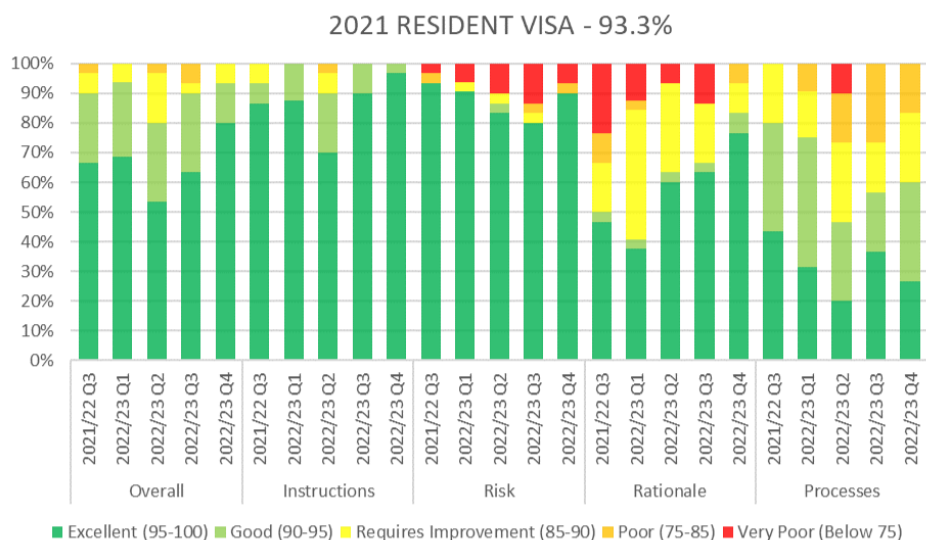
## HAMILTON/KIRIKIRIROA

Hamilton/Kirikiriroa achieved an excellent QA result of 100% this quarter. Of the 30 applications sampled, 28 applications scored in the 95-100% (Excellent) range. Errors in the Processes domain increased marginally this quarter, mainly due to data entry errors such as an incomplete family tab.



HAMILTON - 100%
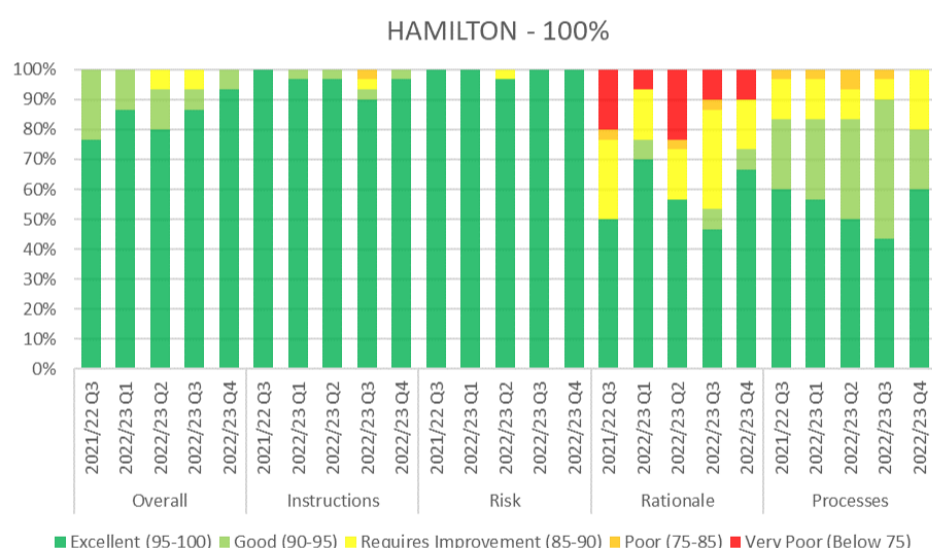
## MANUKAU GREEN LIST – STRAIGHT TO RESIDENCE

The Green List – Straight to Residence sample group achieved 100% this quarter. Improvements were noted in the Rationale and Processes domain, while Instructions and Risk maintained 100%.



MANUKAU STRAIGHT TO RESIDENCE - 100%
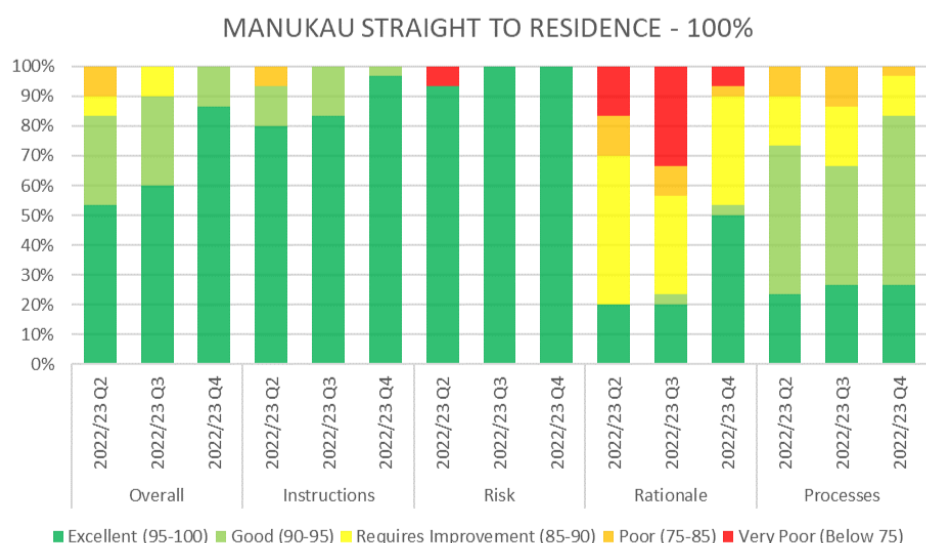
## MANUKAU SKILLED MIGRANT CATEGORY (SMC)

The SMC sample group increased to 83.3% which is an increase of 13.3 percentage points on the previous quarter. The Instructions, Rationale and Processes domains all improved this quarter. 14 of the 30 applications (47%) had markdowns in Rationale, compared to 24 (80%) in the previous quarter. A calibration session between the Q&A team and SMC TAs was held in July 2023 and so it is hoped QA results will continue to improve. Additionally, as a result of applications now being submitted on Plone, significant improvements have been observed in the Processes and Rationale domain.



MANUKAU SMC - 83.3%
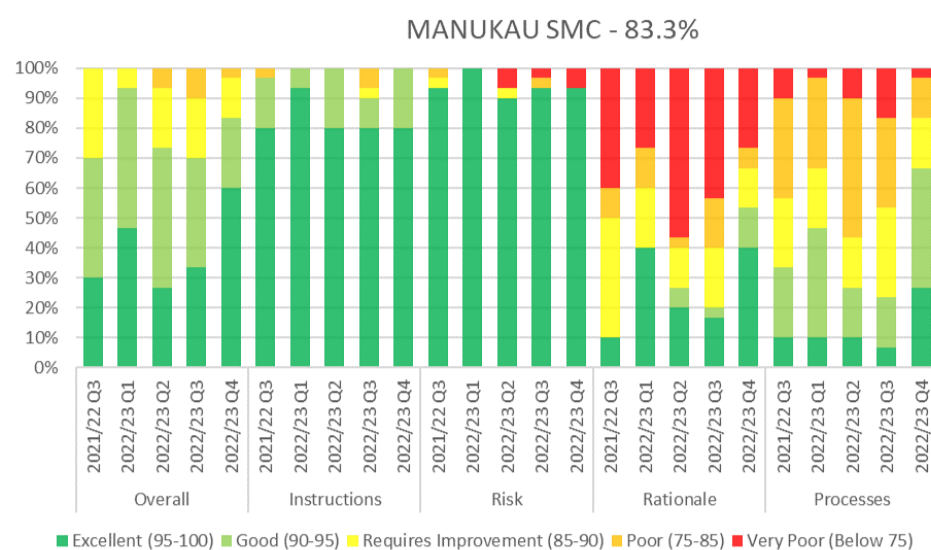
## MANUKAU TALENT ACCREDITED EMPLOYER (RESIDENCE FROM WORK)

The Manukau Talent sample group increased marginally from 2022/23 Q3, to 96.7% this quarter. This is the last quarter that Q&A are sampling Manukau Talent applications due to decreasing numbers of applications left to process.



MANUKAU TALENT - 96.7%
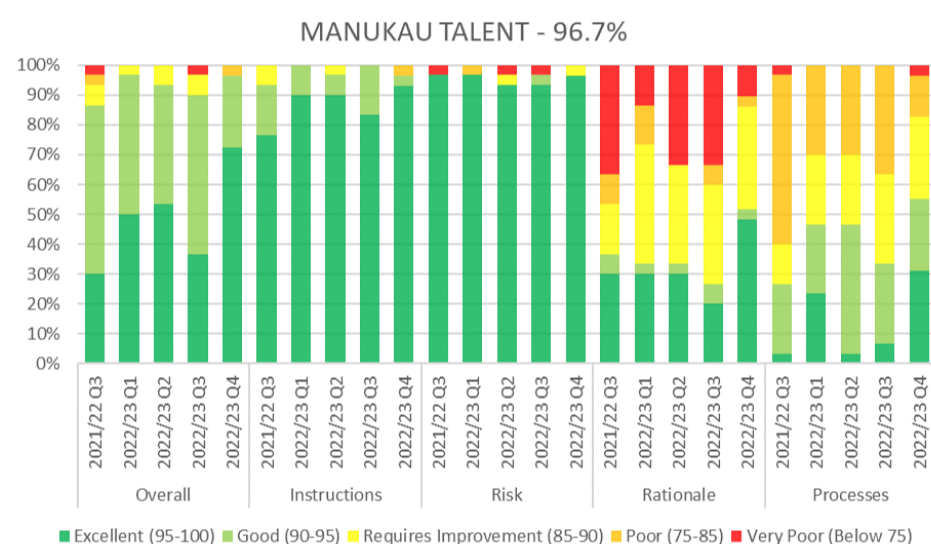
## PORIRUA BUSINESS MIGRATION

The Business Migration sample has met the QA rating for a second consecutive quarter, achieving 93.3%. Increases were observed in the Rationale and Processes domain, while Risk and Instructions achieved 100%. The sample group comprised 12 Investor 1 Category, nine Investor 2 Category, seven Parent Retirement and one Entrepreneur Category Visas. The Q&A team will soon be completing a "fast follow" QA activity[10] for the new Active Investor Plus residence applications that Porirua Business are beginning to decide.



PORIRUA BUSINESS - 93.3%
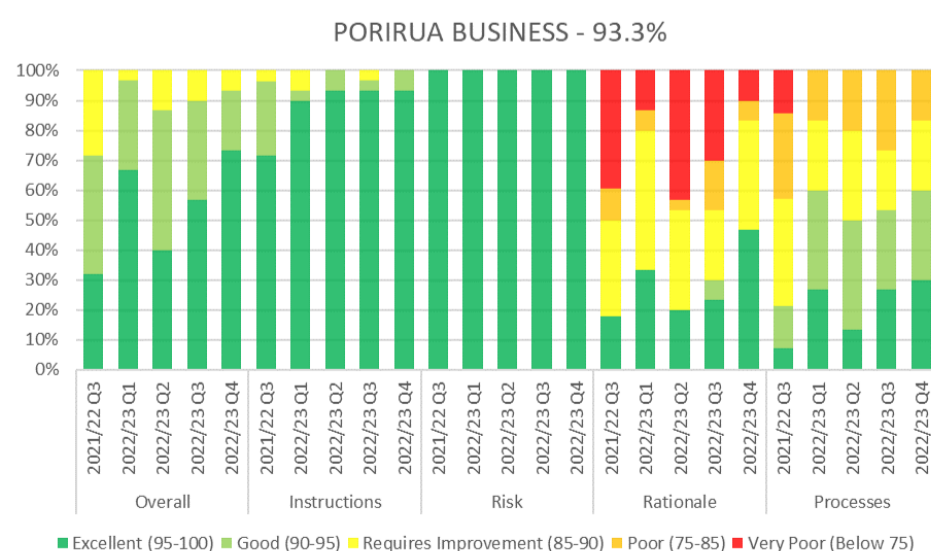
[10] Six Active Investor Plus applications have been completed since the category went live on 19 September 2022. Q&A will provide ad-hoc assurance over two randomly selected applications. Results of this should be with Porirua management in November 2023.

*PORIRUA SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT TEAM (SAT)*

This quarter the SAT sample achieved 100% conformance in both the Instructions and Risk domains. Improvements were also seen in the Rationale and Processes domain. While overall there is a decrease of eight percentage points, it should be noted that last quarter only 15 applications were able to be sampled.

The Q&A team were able to sample 25 applications this quarter[11].

PORIRUA SAT - 92%



Excellent (95-100)  Good (90-95)  Requires Improvement (85-90)  Poor (75-85)  Very Poor (Below 75)
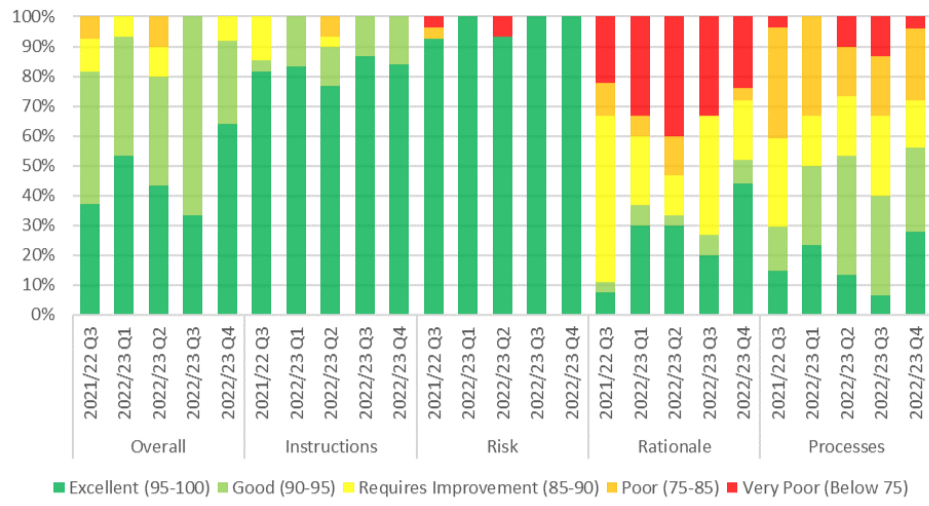
## OFFSHORE

*PACIFIC RESIDENCE*

Pacific Residence achieved 90% this quarter. The last time the sample group met the target was in 2021/22 Q1. It should be noted that the Pacific PL has been engaging with the Q&A team on a regular basis. Further analysis on the results is on page three.

PACIFIC RESIDENCE - 90%



Excellent (95-100)  Good (90-95)  Requires Improvement (85-90)  Poor (75-85)  Very Poor (Below 75)

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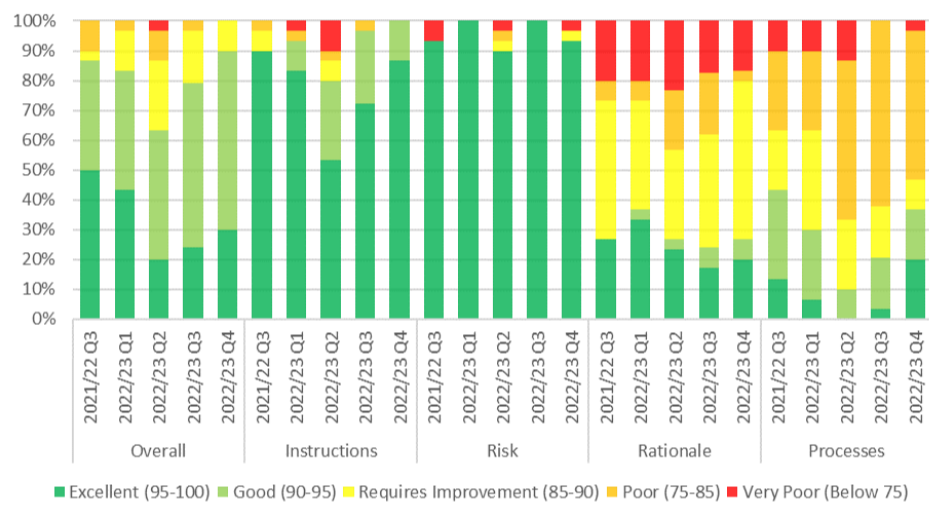
[11] As noted in the 2022/23 Q3 report, Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) applications are no longer processed by the SAT, which has meant the SAT have not made sufficient decisions to ensure a full QA sample.

# APPENDIX 2 – TEMPORARY VISA QA RESULTS BY SAMPLE GROUP

### ADEPT ACCREDITED EMPLOYER WORK VISA (AEWV)

The ADEPT AEWV achieved 81.7% this quarter which is a significant improvement on the last quarter. Improvements were seen in the instructions and Risk domain. The AEWV product is not site specific, so feedback and QA comments will be sent to both Manukau and Christchurch/Ōtautahi. Further analysis on the results of this sample group is on page four of the report.



ADEPT AEWV - 81.7%
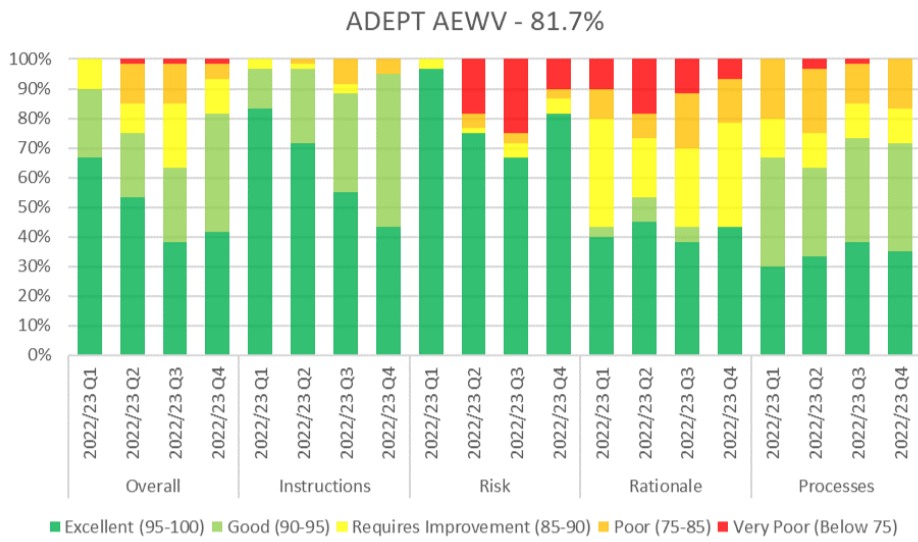
### ADEPT VISITOR VISA

The ADEPT Visitor Visa (VV) sample group has achieved 100% this quarter. This is the third consecutive quarter that the sample has met the INZ quality target. The Instructions domain scored 100% while all other domains saw an improvement.



ADEPT VISITOR - 100%
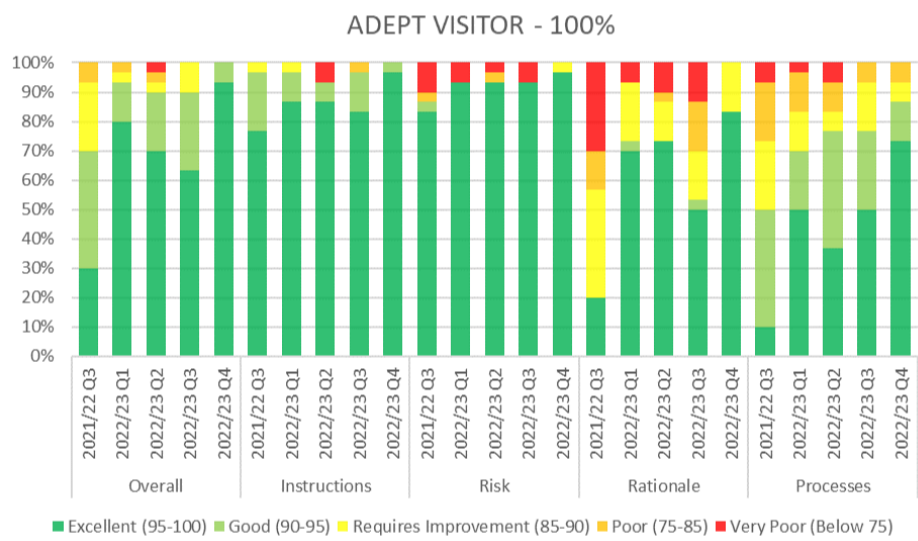
### CHRISTCHURCH/ŌTAUTAHI

The Christchurch/Ōtautahi sample has scored 83.3% for the second consecutive quarter. Improvements were seen in the Risk and Rationale domains. The Instructions domain maintained the same rating and the processes domain decreased. Common errors in the Processes domain include the Contact and tab Family tab not being completed correctly, or duplicate AMS identities were identified and not linked appropriately.



CHRISTCHURCH - 83.3%
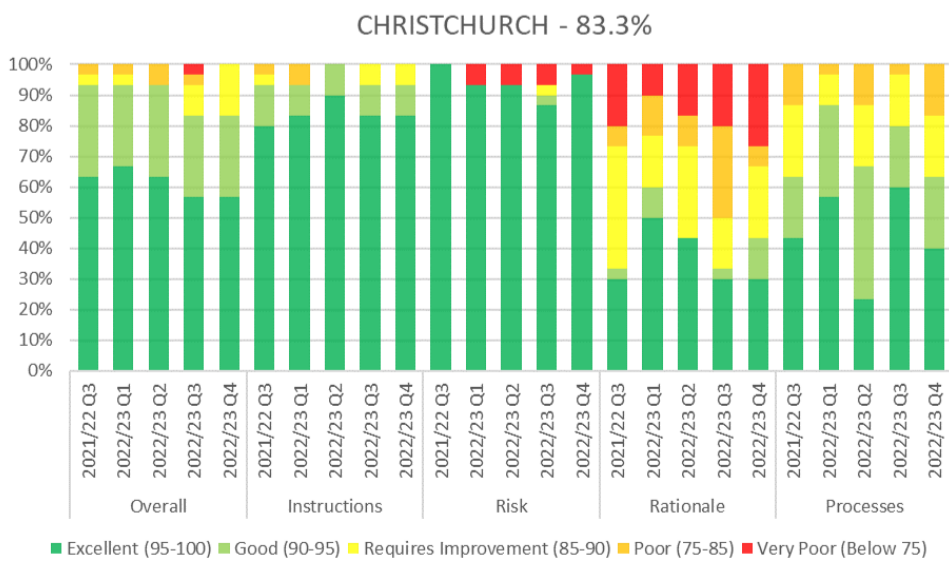
### HAMILTON/KIRIKIRIROA

The Hamilton/Kirikiriroa sample achieved 96.7% this quarter which an increase from last quarter. The Risk and Rationale domains increased. The one application that didn't meet 90% failed to identify a risk, which also impacted rationale.



HAMILTON - 96.7%
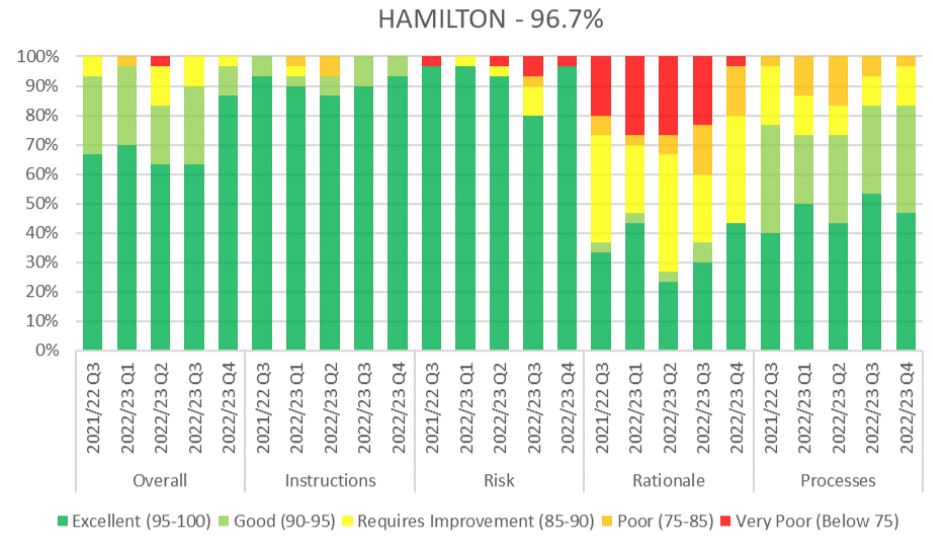
### HENDERSON

The Henderson sample achieved 96.7% for a second consecutive quarter. The Risk and Processes domains saw an improvement. 100% adherence to Instructions was noted however Rationale decreased slightly due to an increase in Rationale - Complete errors. The sample comprised of 30 Visitor Visas of which 24 were General Visitor Visas. The remainder were an assortment of Business, Crew Joining Vessels, and FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 visas.
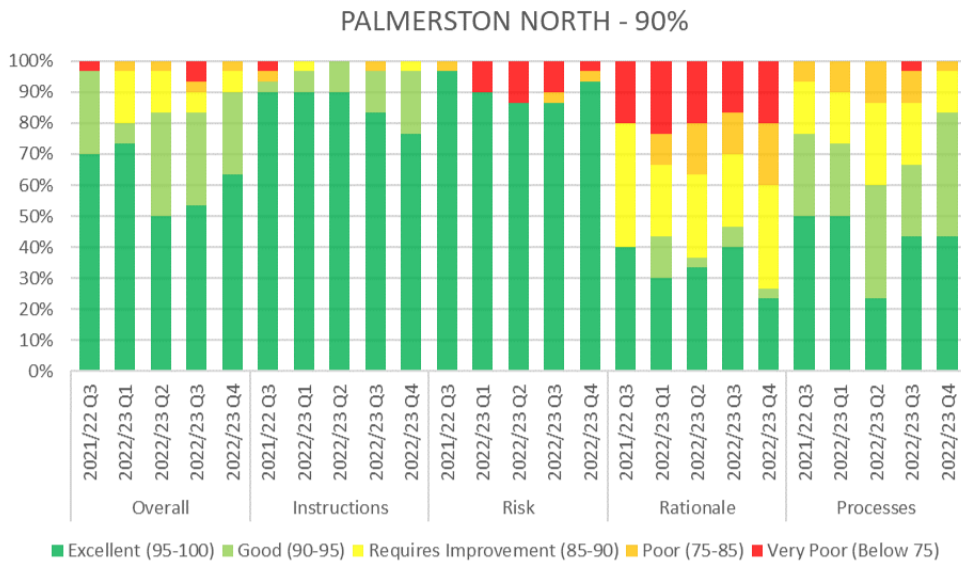


HENDERSON - 96.7%
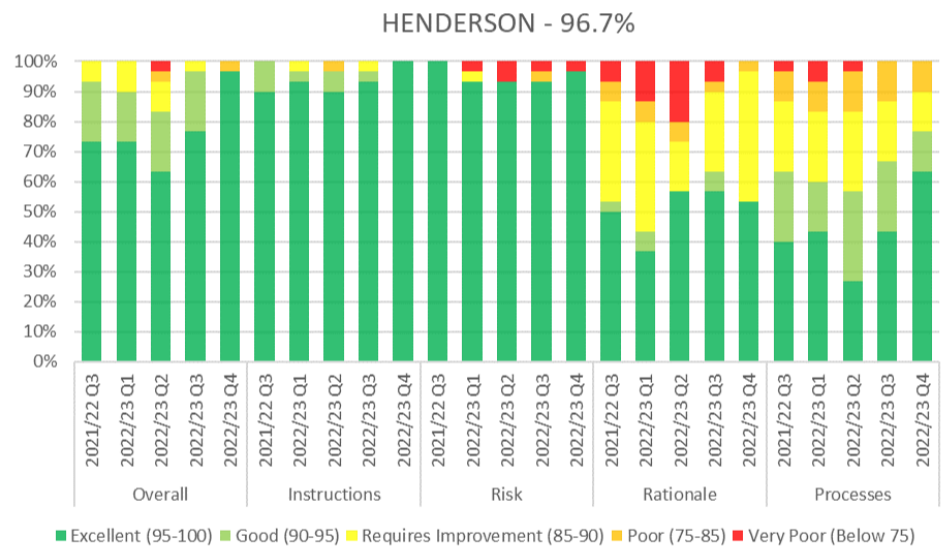
### MANUKAU

Manukau achieved 92.3% this quarter. This is the first time that Manukau temporary has achieved the 90% quality target since 2021/22 Q1. The Instruction and Processes domains saw an improvement while the Rationale and Risk domains decreased. Errors in the Risk domain include risk mitigation not being complete and explanation of risk treatments inaccurate and illogical.
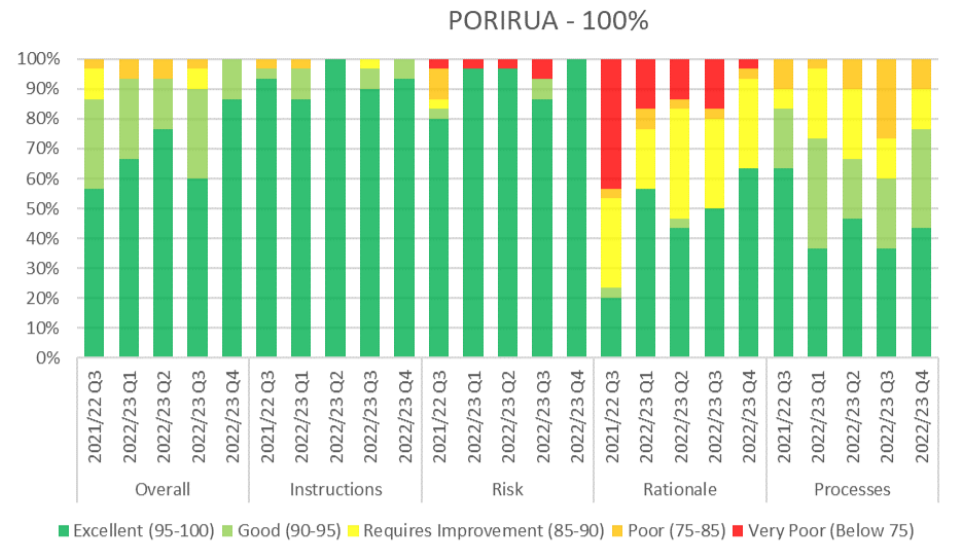


MANUKAU - 92.3%
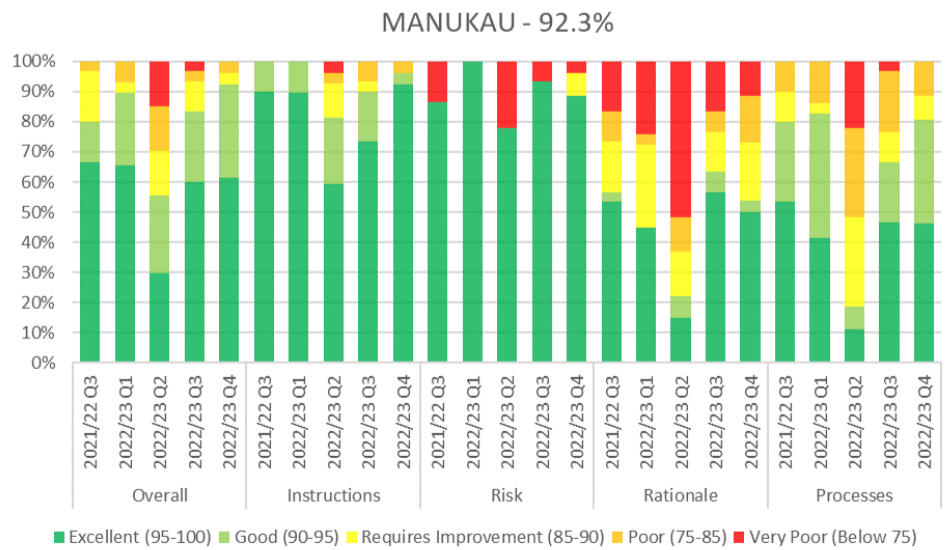
## PALMERSTON NORTH/PAPAIOEA

Palmerston North/ Papaioea achieved 90% this quarter. The sample comprised of various types of visas including Variation of Conditions, Post Study, Partner of Worker/Student, Visitor Guardian, Exchange, and Pathway Student.

Note that the 'Exchange', 'Pathway' and 'Scholarship holder' student visas have been redirected into the Palmerston North/Papaioea Student and Porirua Student sample from 2023/24 Q1 onwards.
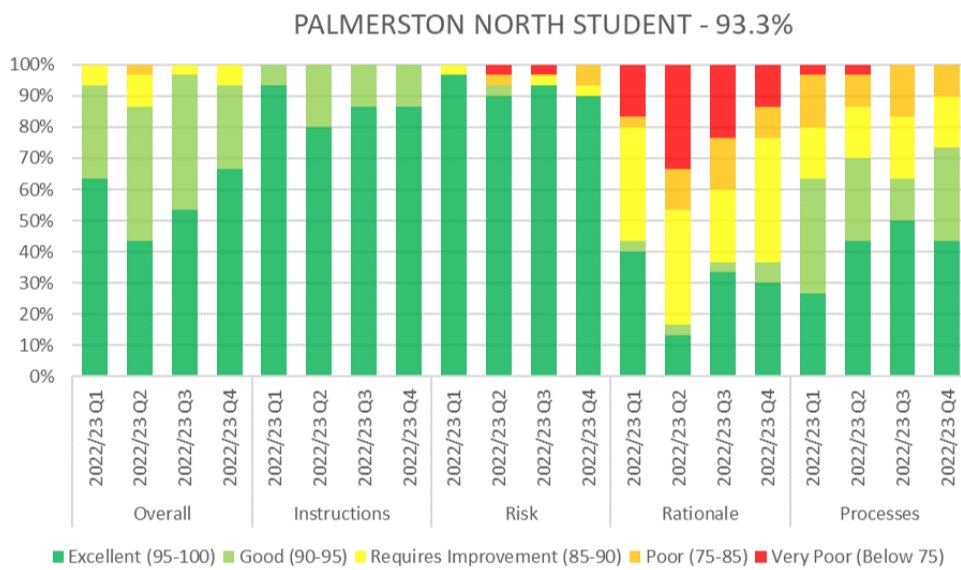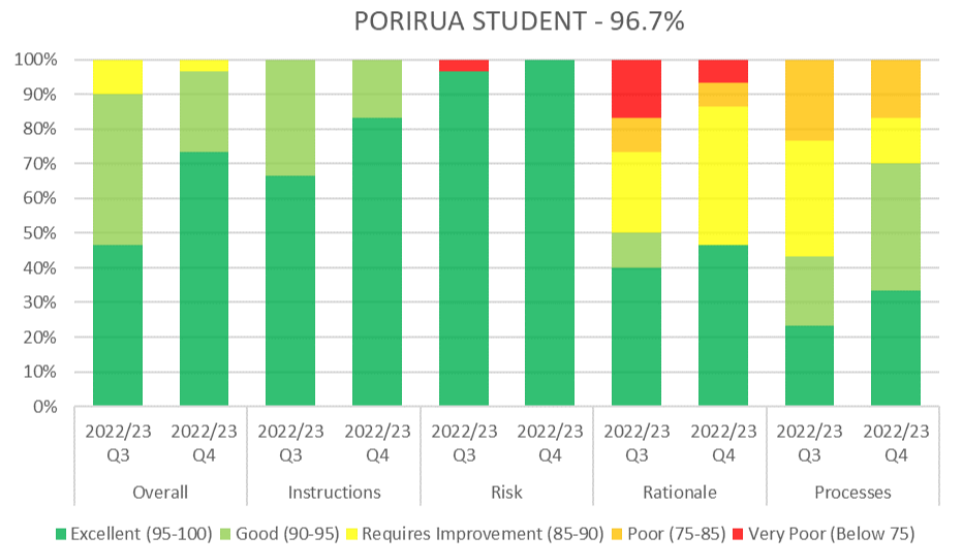


## PALMERSTON NORTH/PAPAIOEA STUDENT

The sample group has achieved 93.33% which is a slight decrease from the previous quarter. The Instructions domain achieved 100% for the fourth consecutive quarter.



## PERMANENT RESIDENT VISA (PRV)

The PRV sample group continue to have a good rating with the PRV sample achieving 96.7% this quarter. The one application that failed to meet 90% had process errors, such as the Contact tab not being updated and rationale being inaccurate.



## PORIRUA

The Porirua sample achieved 100% this quarter which is an increase of 10 percentage points on last quarter. The sample comprised of 18 Visitor visas, 10 Supplementary Seasonal Employment Visas and 2 Partner of a Student Work Visas.
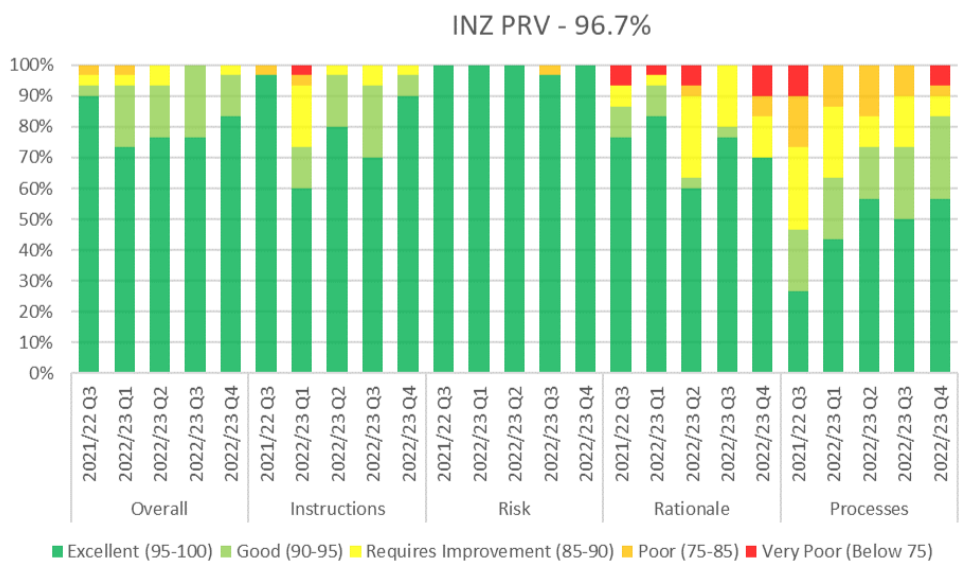


## PORIRUA STUDENT

This is the second quarter that Q&A have sampled Porirua Student, with an overall result of 96.7%. Instructions and Risk achieved 100% while Processes increased to 70%. Rationale decreased marginally, mainly due to an increase of errors in Rationale – Accuracy and Rationale – Completeness.



## PORIRUA SPECIAL ASSESSMENT TEAM (SAT)

This quarter the SAT team achieved 96.7%, which is an increase of 6.7 percentage points on last quarter. Instructions, Risk and Processes all improved this quarter however, Rationale decreased due to errors recording information accurately.
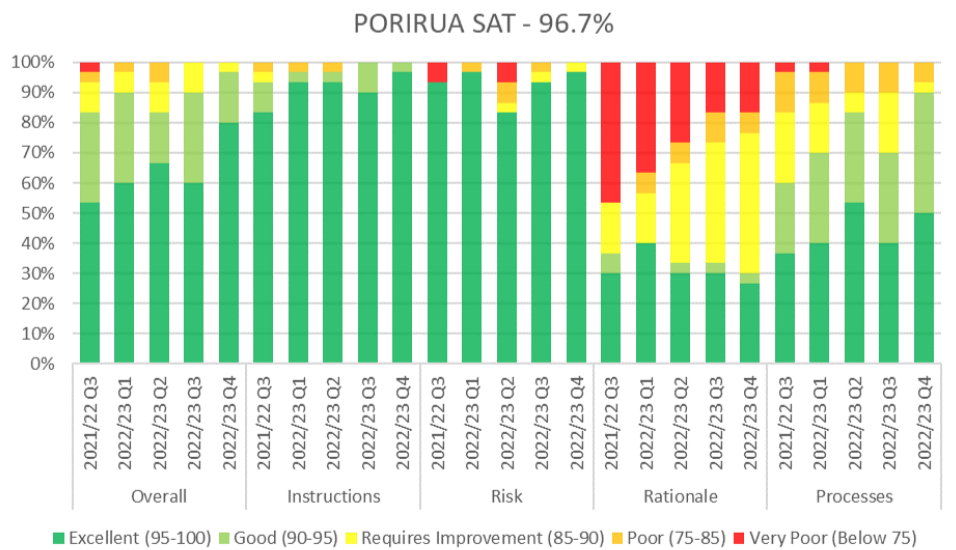
**OFFSHORE**

*APIA*

The Apia sample group scored 73.3% which is an improvement of 19.7% from the score of 53.6% the previous quarter. The Instructions, Processes and Rationale domains all improved; however, the risk domain experienced a marginal decrease. Markdowns in this area include IOs not clearly identifying triggered risk rules therefore, not mitigating them before proceeding with the application.



APIA - 73.3%
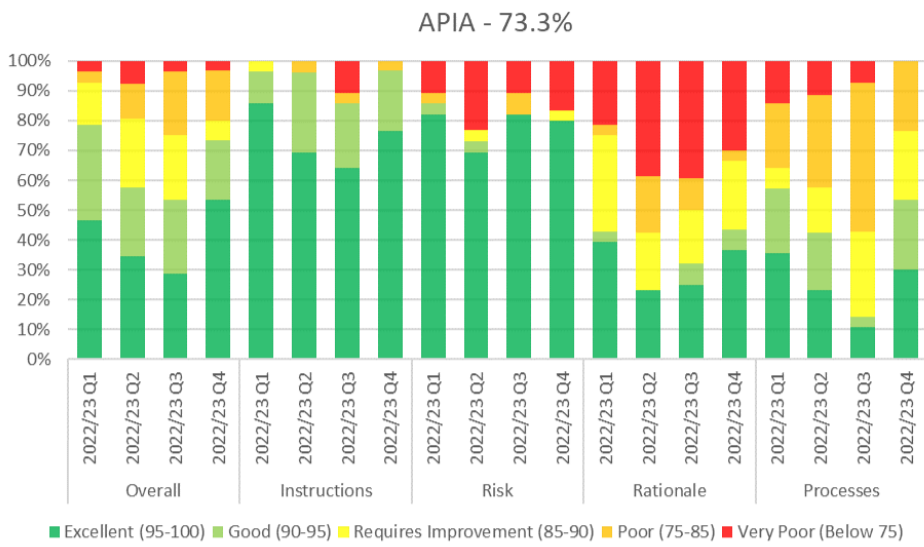
*NUKU'ALOFA*

The Nuku'alofa sample group decreased to 66.7%. The Instructions domain saw an improvement however, all other domains decreased. Page four provides some commentary on the Risk errors.



NUKU'ALOFA - 66.7%
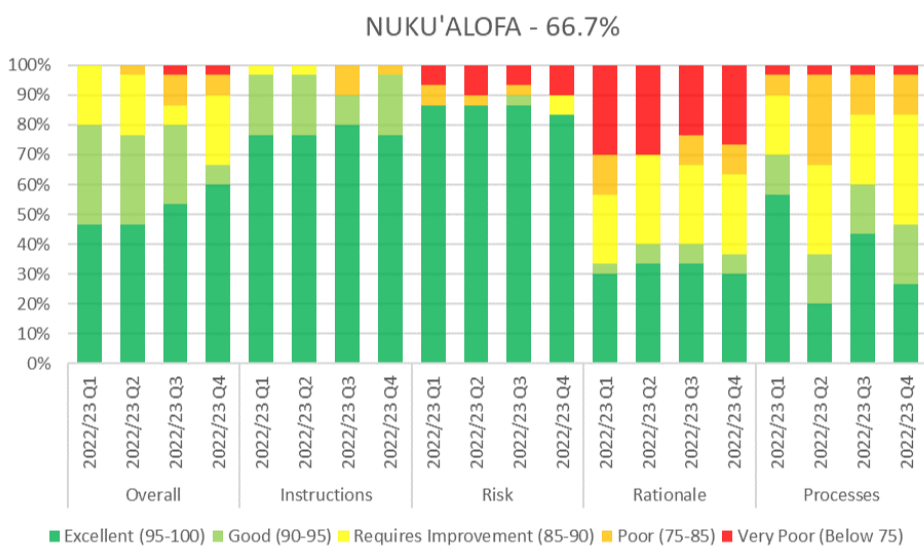
**SUVA**

Suva increased 10 percentage points to 86.7% this quarter. While improvements were seen in the Instructions, Risk and Rationale domains, Processes decreased due to errors identified in the Data Entry sub domain. Nine applications were marked down for not correctly updating the Visa details in the Immigration Health System (IHS) which is required by SOP 'Update the visa details in a health case in IHS'.



SUVA - 86.7%