



FACT SHEET

Publication of visa and citizenship processing times from 13 March 2017

From 13 March 2017, the Department will begin publishing current global visa and citizenship processing times on its website www.border.gov.au. The processing times will be updated monthly, providing clients with an up-to-date, indicative timeframe of the time taken to process 75 per cent of a particular product, at a point in time. The publication of processing times will replace the currently published service standards.

As part of the Department's ongoing efforts to improve client information, the publishing of current global processing times is intended to give clients more meaningful information about the visa or citizenship product of their choice. It will also improve the transparency of the Department's processing operations, as it offers timeframes which reflect current caseloads and processing pressures.

From 13 March 2017, global visa and citizenship processing times will be available for most subclasses, and can be viewed on the product page, and the [Visa Finder](#).

The publication of current processing times has been requested by stakeholders as a means of improving client information.

The Department will continue to report against the current service standards until the end of the 2016-17 programme year. From 1 July 2017 the Department's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained in the Corporate Plan, Portfolio Budget Statements and Annual Report will move from reporting against service standards to a more outcome/impact approach in line with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Act 2013*. The Department is actively contributing to the development of the new KPIs to ensure that our high levels of public accountability are maintained.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are 'current global visa and citizenship processing times'?

Current global visa and citizenship processing times give an indicative estimate of how long it is taking to process a particular visa subclass, stream, or citizenship application globally. The processing time commences from the date that a complete application is lodged, up until the visa or citizenship is granted. For two-stage temporary to permanent visas, such as a Partner visa, processing times for the permanent component apply from the day the applicant becomes eligible for permanent residency.

Two processing times will be displayed for most subclasses, indicating how long it takes to finalise 75 per cent and 90 per cent of applications globally.

Note that applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis, and that actual processing times may vary due to individual circumstances including:

- whether the applicant has lodged a complete application including all necessary supporting documents
- how promptly the applicant responds to any requests for additional information
- how long it takes to perform required checks
- how long it takes to receive additional information from external parties, particularly in relation to health, character, national security, and Assurance of Support requirements
- the number of places available in the migration programme (for permanent migration visas)
- surges in demand and peak periods.

What are service standards?

The Department originally established a service standards framework as an external accountability mechanism and measure of performance. The existing service standards are the timeframe within which the Department *aims* to decide the majority of applications (75 per cent of visa applications, and 80 per cent of citizenship applications). It does not necessarily reflect actual processing times. In contrast, processing times indicate the time *actually taken* to process 75 or 80 per cent of visa or citizenship applications.

Service standards to date have differentiated by location (onshore/offshore) and risk level (high/low risk). This approach no longer reflects the current reality of business processes, emerging risks, and the transition to a global processing model.

When will the new arrangements take effect?

On 13 March 2017, we will commence publishing current global processing times on the Department's website. These times will be updated during the middle of every month.

Why are these changes being implemented?

These changes will support the ongoing effort to improve client information and develop globally consistent processing operations. To date, the published service standards and some processing times featured interchangeably on the Department's website, with service standards often being mistaken for actual processing times. To provide a single source of consistent information we will publish processing times to

provide clients with a current and more accurate indication of how long it will take to process a typical visa or citizenship application.

Who will benefit from these changes?

Clients seeking information prior to lodging an application will benefit from the published processing times. Processing times will be updated monthly, which will provide clients with up-to-date information at the time they are considering lodging an application. It will also more accurately reflect fluctuating programme pressures and peaks.

The publication of global processing times will be consistent, transparent and useful, and is expected to be well received by clients, as well as the Tourism industry, business community and other government agencies.

Where will new processing times be displayed?

New processing times will be published on the Department's official website www.border.gov.au, under individual visa product pages, the [Visa Finder](#), and will be referenced in [ImmiAccount](#). Local websites at posts will not be updated with processing times; therefore clients will be re-directed to the Department's main page via a link.

Which subclasses will display new processing times? Will any be excluded?

The new processing times will be available for the majority of visa subclasses and citizenship types, but will exclude a few subclasses including those closed to new entrants, or capped and queued.

Capped and queued subclasses: There are a limited number of places available each year for Parent visas (subclass 103 and 804) and Other Family visas (subclass 114, 115, 116, 835, 836 and 838). Due to high demand and a small number of available places, processing times for Parent (non-contributory) visas are over 30 years.

Will all applications be finalised within the published processing times?

We cannot guarantee that all applications will be finalised within the published processing time, as it is indicative only. By displaying processing times for both 75 and 90 per cent of complete applications it is intended to capture the processing times for the majority of complete applications. It should be noted that circumstances specific to individual applications may have an effect on the actual processing time, which may take less, or more time to process than indicated.

For incomplete applications, will they be processed within the processing time?

Published processing times are based on complete applications at the time of lodgement. In the case of an incomplete application, this will lengthen the individual processing time due to the time taken to request further information from clients, and re-assess the application. The Department therefore strongly encourages clients to use the checklists provided to ensure that all required documents are provided at the time of application.

How will biometrics checks affect processing times?

The published global processing times include the time taken to complete biometrics checks, where applicable. Individual processing times may vary from the published processing times where clients do not promptly respond to requests from the Department to provide biometrics.

Without published service standards, how will the Department be held publicly accountable?

The Department will continue to report against the currently published service standards until the end of the 2016-17 programme year. From 1 July 2017, the Department's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained in the Corporate Plan, PBS and Annual Report will move from reporting against service standards to a more outcome/impact approach in line with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Act 2013*. The Department is actively contributing to the development of the new KPIs to ensure that our high levels of public accountability are maintained.

Processing times no longer differentiate by high/low risk applicants and lodgement location. Does the Department still categorise applications based on these risk ratings?

Service standards to date have differentiated by location (onshore/offshore) and risk level (high/low risk). This approach no longer reflects the current reality of business processes, emerging risks, and the transition to a global processing model. Therefore this differentiation will be removed.

Who do I contact for further information?

For further information on the changes to processing times, including the Department's contact details, see our website www.border.gov.au