



UK Visas  
& Immigration

Freedom of Information  
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Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for your enquiry of 16 April. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I apologise for the delay.

### Information Requested

*Could you please provide the statistics for Standard Visit Visa, student visa, skilled worker visa Applications from January 2018 to February 2021 at your visa centres in Iraq, Muscat & UAE only - answering the following:*

- Q1. Total Number of Visitor visa, student visa, skilled worker visa Application made at each application centre.*
- Q2. Total Number of Visitor visa, student visa, skilled worker visa refused at each application centre*
- Q3. Total Number of Visitor visa, student visa, skilled worker visa Application granted at each application centre.*

*Also, could you please provide the statistics for Standard Visit Visa Applications from 02 January 2018 to 10 February 2021 at your visa centres in Islamabad & New Delhi & UAE only for Afghan Nationals specifically answering the following questions.*

- Q5. Total Number of Iraqi and Iranian Nationals made application for student visa, skilled worker visa at each application centre.*
- Q6. Total Number of Iraqi and Iranian Nationals had their student visa, skilled worker visa application refused at each application centre.*
- Q7. Total Number of Iraqi and Iranian Nationals had their student visa, skilled worker visa application granted at each application centre.*

## Response

The information you have requested is not being disclosed, pursuant to the exemption under Section 31(1)(e) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 31(1)(e) allows us to exempt information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice Law Enforcement - the operation of immigration controls.

This exemption requires us to consider whether, in every respect the public interest in maintaining the exemption stated above, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Arguments for and against disclosure in terms of the public interest, with the reasons for our conclusion, are set out in the Annex below.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to: [foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk), quoting reference FOI2024/03716. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

A link to the Home Office Information Rights Privacy Notice can be found in the following link. This explains how we process your personal information:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-rights-privacy-notice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-rights-privacy-notice)

Yours faithfully

J Jones  
Customer Operations Support Services

We value your feedback, please use the link below to access a brief anonymous survey to help us improve our service to you:  
[www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/108105TAZNG](http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/108105TAZNG)

## **Annex – The Public Interest Test**

Some of the exemptions in the FOI Act, referred to as ‘qualified exemptions,’ are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in favour of withholding the information, or the considerations for and against the requirement to say whether the information requested is held or not. We must carry out a PIT where we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The ‘public interest’ is not the same as what interests the public. In carrying out a PIT, we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. The ‘right to know’ must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOI Act is ‘applicant blind.’ This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone, including those who might represent a threat to the UK.

### **Considerations in favour of disclosure**

The disclosure of the information requested would provide the public with information regarding visa numbers for specific nationalities at targeted processing centres. The information provided would show the Home Office being open and transparent providing all the information being requested. The information would support trust of the Home Office and support the public who are keen to see the information and data shared. Due to the level of scrutiny involved in foreign nationals obtaining legitimate visas to work, study and visit the UK, this would provide the public with a greater level of assurance of what is happening within the visa processing systems.

### **Considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption**

We are unclear as to how this information may be used if it were to be released into the public domain, heightening the risk to those directly and indirectly involved.

The release of this information may prejudice the public’s perception and understanding of those nationalities and locations where visas have been granted or refused. The exemption supports protecting information that would or would be likely to interfere with immigration controls. Releasing this information could risk prejudicing processing systems and future investigations.

There is a strong public interest in preventing and detecting crime and non-compliance with immigration rules. UKVI need to maintain effective control of migration and our borders. Disclosure of the requested information could hinder this activity.

## **Conclusion**

We have therefore concluded that the public interest lies in favour of maintaining the exemption.

The reasons for the levels of detail concerning visa applications for certain nationalities at specific locations is withheld under this exemption as it gives insight into UKVI operations and may be used to attempt to target potential weaknesses in the visa processing system.

By releasing this information, it may prejudice future operations and investigations by revealing information on how UKVI operate.