

REVIEW TO RISK MATRIX

Baseline Reviews

These checks must be adhered to 100% on a daily basis; where operational demands result in ECMs being unable to conduct all of these reviews, then must be informed and a local log should be held to record the notification and any remedial activity agreed with Central Operations. Baseline Reviews will remain the same throughout the year and should be regarded as a 'business as usual' requirement; Half yearly reviews will be conducted by Central Operations with operational areas. RAG rating of cases should be reviewed on a quarterly basis as a minimum **or** when there is significant political/economic/social change within a country/region.

Tactical Operational Reviews

These checks are undertaken to focus on a specific element of the decision making process (for example endorsements) and/or improve decision quality, ensuring that rules are being applied correctly and should be completed on 100% of cases until the Operations Manager (OM) is satisfied that this has meet the required standard within the DMC. When the OM is satisfied and can evidence that decisions are robust and appropriate, which is recorded in a decision log, Central Operations must be informed and any further checks on these cases can form part of the random sampling to ensure decision quality/integrity. Where this process identifies individual ECOs as requiring development the OM can remove the requirement for further checks from the Tactical Operational Reviews ensuring that the ECO receives the support required through the performance development processes. Those applications subject to Tactical Operational Reviews can added to by the OM, Regional Manager, Regional Director and Network Operations where it has been identified that there is a cause for concern. This allows DMCs the flexibility to add streams of work, such as Amber cases, where they have identified a known risk and wish these cases to be subjected to either ECM Approval or a Full Quality Assurance Review.

ECM Approval.

In these circumstances the ECO will be referring a case to the ECM for their approval on the proposed course of action. The ECM must read the documents that identify the requirement for ECM Approval - for example:

- The full IDENT/HO report
- The DER/DVR

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- The GSR interview
- The VIMA (if appropriate).

The ECM is not required to view any further documents or the VAF as part of the approval process. The ECM should enter their notes in the ECM Approval box, where this box is not available (pending Proviso2 update) the ECM Review Other option should be selected and the narrative on the type of approval should be entered in the note window. In order to reduce operational impact, ECM approval should ideally be completed at the same time as the referral for approval by the ECO to the ECM.

Full Quality Assurance (FQA) Review:

The FQA Review will look at the decision itself and the quality of the justification of the course of action – the issue notes or refusal notice. The reviewer must review the full application after the ECO has made the decision. This includes:

- The VIMA;
- The VAF;
- Any supporting evidence;
- The ECO issue notes/refusal notice;
- Endorsements – correct dates, additional endorsements, and conditions.

The decision to uphold either an issue or a refusal must identify that the mandatory checks have been undertaken in line with the Operating Mandate and that they have reviewed the content of the VIMA, along with the Travel Document & ID check and CRS results.

The review of a refusal decision covers these areas; the review of the mandatory checks; the decision; the quality of the refusal notice.

The reviewer should enter their notes in the ECM Review box.

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| BASELINE REVIEWS | Issue | Refusal | Comments |
|--|--------------|--------------|--|
| IDENT or Crosscheck Hit | ECM Approval | ECM Approval | ECM required to view the full report at the time of ECO referral in order to grant ECM Approval |
| GGFR Application of para. 320 2(b)(c)(d); 7 (a)(b); 11; 18A; 18B; 19 and App FM/V equivalents | ECM Approval | ECM Approval | To ensure that these are being applied correctly. The 'fatal error' and standard wordings for these paragraphs negate requirement for full ECM Review. |
| New ECO (decision makers) or one on PIP | Full Review | Full Review | Length of oversight depends on performance of the ECO. This covers LTECO, STECO (FPO/FTA) and BA ECO. This supersedes the review requirements in BA ECO SOPs. Full review required to support further actions this can progress to ECM approval /dip sampling to reflect performance change. |
| Applications where validity has been restricted by an ECO | ECM Approval | | To ensure that the restriction is appropriate as outlined in the Visitor policy guidance. |
| Unaccompanied minors | ECM Approval | | Risk based – the starting point is for ECM Approval. DMC can evidence to Central Operations why no ECM approval is required (e.g. REDACTED nationals where an exemption for cultural norms has been agreed) to deviate from this or why a full ECM review is required - sign off from the centre required. |

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| BASELINE REVIEWS | Issue | Refusal | Comments |
|---|--------------|--------------|--|
| Quarterly quality assurance file sampling of decisions in all streams of work that an ECO assesses. | Full Review | Full Review | This should cover all streams that the ECO assesses and as such may take place over differing days. |
| Cases streamed as red | ECM Approval | | If the streaming tool is refined and utilised appropriately the number of cases should be reduced. |
| Cases streamed as green (previously defined 'super green' where GVRs data scores are negligible) where no enrichment/adverse information has been received (e.g. MIDA) | | ECM Approval | Green cases should normally fall to be issued; if streaming tool is being refined and utilised appropriately the number of cases that are refused should be minimal. |
| Family Reunion | ECM Approval | ECM Approval | To ensure that the correct decision has been made based on the information provided. The majority of these cases already require ECM Approval to issue on a UFF. |
| All other cases resulting in the issue of ILE | Full Review | | Very few applicants should be issued with ILE. To ensure that these are correctly issued a full ECM Review is required; this will identify incorrect application of the rules or endorsement errors. |
| Super Priority Visa | | Full Review | Due to the quick turn around time and the expense of this route a full ECM review is required to ensure the quality of the decision and refusal notice. |

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| BASELINE REVIEWS | Issue | Refusal | Comments |
|---|--------------|-------------|--|
| Daily Random Integrity and quality assurance check | Full Review | Full Review | This should cover all categories that are assessed within the DMC - to include cases that are issued and refused. These checks should be in proportion to the number of cases assessed in each category. |
| High Profile Case ** | ECM Approval | Full Review | If an ECO receives an application which they believe may be high profile they must firstly seek advice from their ECM who should also alert the Operations Manager. |

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| TACTICAL OPERATIONAL REVIEWS – THESE MUST BE UNDERTAKEN UNTIL THE DMC IS SATISFIED AND HAS REPORTED TO NETWORK OPS THAT DECISIONS ARE TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD. | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--|
| | Issue | Refusal | Comments |
| All refusals where Human Rights are explicitly or implicitly raised: ie where ECO must decide on appropriate Right of Appeal. | | ECM Approval | To ensure that the appeal rights are being apportioned appropriately and to assure understanding of HR obligations. |
| Tier 4 applications refused on genuine student rule (GSR) grounds only | | ECM Approval | To ensure that credibility of the applicant has been tested and that the interview & refusal notice reflects this. |
| Refusal using country conditions paragraph(s) in isolation | | ECM Approval | To ensure that this is being applied in a proportionate manner |
| Categories with recent Rule changes | Full Review | Full Review | To ensure that the new rules are being applied correctly. |
| Recent history of refusal | ECM Approval | | To ensure decision quality. Was the previous refusal appropriate? Is the decision to issue based on the balance of probabilities taking into account the previous reasons for refusal |
| Diplomatic dependent visas where the applicant is not the spouse/biological child and/or is an adult child, or will turn 18 during the posting | Full Review | Full Review | Feedback from DIMOU has identified an excessive number of cases that are being issued that do not qualify. They have also identified cases where diplomats are being refused rather than the case withdrawn. |

**** ‘High Profile case’** – where making a decision to either issue or refuse has a ‘risk’ attached and the potential to cause reputational damage to HMG.