



- 4 FEB 2019

Aaron Chang
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Dear Mr Chang

Thank you for your email dated 26 November 2018 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information regarding reviews of decisions.

I will answer your questions in two parts. Part I is StudyLink information and relates to students. Part II is Work and Income information and relates to benefit recipients.

Part I StudyLink Information

1. *When a Review of Decision form is submitted via Connect, how long does it take to be visible to staff employed by the Ministry of Social Development.*

- Students are able to submit a Review of Decision form online using Connect.
- When a student submits a document this way, it can take up to 48 hours for the Connect system to log it against the student's account.
- The student can check in MyStudyLink – under "Documents Received" to see if they've been received.

2. *Policies, guidelines and training material regarding how staff should respond to a Review of Decision form.*

Training material and policies are available to all Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) staff on the Ministry's intranet. Staff are encouraged to refer to these resources when working with clients, including students, to ensure the correct assistance and advice are provided.

You can find legislation, policies, procedures and processes on StudyLink's website at: <https://www.studylink.govt.nz/about-studylink/services/student-allowance-review-of-decision.html>.

Further information, including training material, is contained in the attached documents:

- Report Writing Team Guide to Best Practice;
- Student Allowance Review hearing Co-ordinator's Information Pack and
- Student Allowance Review Panel Members' Information Pack.

You will note that the names of some individuals in the Guide to Best Practice document are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

3. *Policies, guidelines and training material regarding how a client who has submitted a Review of Decision form should be contacted regarding actions taken from the receipt of the form.*

StudyLink's standard is that an acknowledgement letter will be sent within 24 hours after receipt of the application for Review of Decision. The procedures and processes outlined in information provided through the above website link and attachments are then followed.

Part II Work and Income Information

1 When a Review of Decision form is submitted via Connect, how long does it take to be visible to staff employed by the Ministry of Social Development.

The Connect facility is not available for benefit recipients to apply for a Review of Decision.

2 Policies, guidelines and training material regarding how staff should respond to a Review of Decision form.

Training material and policies are available to all Ministry staff on the Ministry's intranet. Staff refer to these resources when working with clients to ensure the correct assistance and advice are provided.

You can find legislation, policies, procedures and processes on Work and Income's website at:

<https://workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/reviews-and-appeals/reviews-and-appeals.html>.

Further information, including training material, is contained in the attached documents:

- Reviews of Decisions – Report Writers Information Pack dated November 2018;
- Benefits Review Committee – Co-ordinators Information Pack dated November 2018 and
- Benefits Review Committee Panel Members Information Pack.

3 Policies, guidelines and training material regarding how a client who has submitted a Review of Decision form should be contacted regarding actions taken from the receipt of the form.

Work and Income's standard is that an acknowledgement letter will be sent within 24 hours after receipt of the application for Review of Decision. The procedures and processes outlined in information provided through the above website link and attachments are then followed.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or you may prefer to telephone the Ombudsman's office on 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services