

# Changes to General Skilled Migration from 1 September 2007

*By Atty. Imelda Argel, Bachelor of Laws (UP), Master of Laws (University of Sydney)*

Changes to the General Skilled Migration (GSM) programme which were recommended by the DIAC commissioned Evaluation Committee will take effect from 1 September 2007 rather than from 1 July 2007. Visa applicants who shall make an application for a skilled visa on or before 31 August 2007 will not be affected by the changes.

The main changes to GSM include:

- **an increase in the English language threshold for GSM visa applicants**  
The threshold level of English language proficiency will be raised from a IELTS passmark of 5 (vocational) to 6 (competent) on all four components.  
However, the passmark for applicants for trade occupations will remain at the current threshold of an IELTS score of 5.
- **reward for GSM visa applicants who have very good English language proficiency**  
Under the points test system, applicants who achieve English language scores above the threshold level, i.e. have scored a minimum of 7.0 in each of the four components, will be entitled to 25 points.
- **introduction of a new temporary work visa for graduates**  
International students who are unable to meet the new requirements for a permanent skilled visa will have an opportunity to apply for an 18 month Skilled-Graduate (subclass 485) to build on their skills and work experience. This visa will have unrestricted work rights and will therefore allow overseas students to gain skilled experience, improve their English skills or undertake a professional year of occupational training after completion of course requirements before applying for a General Skilled Migration visa. The changes aim to ensure that overseas students who decide to stay on in Australia after completing their studies have a much better chance of competing for jobs in their chosen occupation.
- **a simplification of the GSM visa structure**  
There are currently 15 GSM visa subclasses available to people onshore and offshore, who are wishing to apply to migrate to Australia. Under the new visa structure, this will be reduced to nine visa subclasses - four offshore and five onshore. This new structure aims to enable applicants to more easily identify the visa subclass best suited to their circumstances.

**greater emphasis on skilled work experience.**

To ensure skilled migrants have the skills Australian employers need, there will be closer links between study, work experience and nominated occupation. Thus, additional points will be allocated for 12 months skilled work experience in Australia instead of the previously 6 months requirement.

**In addition the same period of work experience can be used to claim entitlement to points for Australian work experience, specific work experience and MODL.**

Thus, if the applicant has worked in a MODL occupation in Australia for at least 12 months, points for both MODL and Australian work experience may be claimed and if the applicant has worked in the MODL occupation for at least three years, he or she can also be entitled to specific work experience points.

*The following table is our understanding of the points test application from 1 September 2007.*

<b>Recent work Experience</b>	<b>Points</b>
Paid employment for at least 20 hours per week in any occupation listed on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) for <b>at least 12 months out of the 24 months</b> preceding the day on which the visa application was made regardless of the number of points awarded to the nominated occupation	60/50/40
<b>Age - at time of Application</b>	
18 to 29	30
30 to 34	25
35 to 39	20
40 to 44	15
<b>English Language Ability</b> Equivalent OET exam as part of skills assessment or IELTS band score of at least 6 in <u>all four</u> components of the test: listening, reading, writing, speaking	15
For SIR visas 487/475- overall band score of 5.5 + payment of English tuition fees	
<u>For tradespersons only:</u> IELTS band score of at least 5 in each of 4 components of test: listening, reading, writing, speaking	15
Proficient English, that is, achieve IELTS band score of at least 7 in all four components: listening, reading, writing, speaking)	25
<b>Employment Experience</b>	
Employed in nominated skilled occupation where 60 points is awarded for at least 36 out of the 48 months immediately preceding the application	10
Employed in any skilled occupation for at least 36 months out of the 48 months immediately preceding the application	5
<b>Spouse Skill</b>	
Applicant's spouse is under 45, has vocational English, has nominated an occupation, has been assessed as having suitable skills and either has an Australian qualification obtained within the last 6 months or has work experience sufficient to score either 60, 50 or 40 points	5
<b>Australian Qualifications</b>	
You have completed full time study in Australia for a total of at least 2 years (2 academic years) towards the award of a degree, diploma or trade qualification	5

You have completed a total of three years study in Australia that has resulted in the applicant completing: 1. a Bachelor degree and a Masters degree; or 2. a Bachelor degree and Honours (at least second class); or 3. a Bachelor degree with Honours (at least second class)	15
You have completed an Australian doctorate at an Australian education institution while in Australia after a period of at least 2 years full time (2 academic years)	25
<b>Australian Work Experience</b>	
Employed in your nominated occupation, or a closely related skilled occupation in Australia for a total of at least 12 months in the past 48 months	10
Undertaken a “professional year”(Professional Development courses acceptable for migration purposes will be available on the Department’s website closer to the implementation date) specified by the Minister for a total of at least 12 months in the past 48 months	10
<b>Skill Targeting – MODL</b>	
Nominated an occupation in demand <b>AND</b> the applicant has <b><u>at least 12 months work experience (in the last 48 months) in their nominated occupation or one that is closely related</u></b>	15
Nominated an occupation in demand <b>AND</b> the applicant has <b><u>at least 12 months work experience (in the last 48 months) in their nominated occupation or one that is closely related AND has an offer of full time position by an organisation which has employed at least 10 full time workers over the last 24 months</u></b>	20
<b>Bonus Points (only 1 of the below)</b>	
Deposited \$100,000 in a nominated deposit for term of at least 12 months OR	5
Australian work experience for 20hrs/week paid employment for 12 months in any occupation on the Skilled Occupation List at skilled level within last 48 months OR	10
Is an accredited interpreter in a designated language OR	5
<b>Sponsorship</b>	
Sponsored by an Australian relative	15

**\*\* The Minister of DIAC has still to announce changes to the pass and pool marks, if any.**

*This information is of a general nature and should not be taken as authoritative legal advice for specific cases. The writer, Atty. Imelda Argel is a practising Filipino lawyer and a registered migration agent in Sydney, Australia. She is a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, the High Court of Australia, Attorney at law in the Philippines and in the State of New York, USA. Her Registered Migration Agent no. is 9682957. More information is available at [www.iargel.com.au](http://www.iargel.com.au)*

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