

**Are you a skilled worker or tradesperson who is disadvantaged
by the change in the TRA Uniform Assessment Criteria?**

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Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is a designated skills assessing body for over 170 trade and non trade occupations (non-graduate) in the Skilled Occupations List (SOL) for purposes of migration. It has a sole discretion to determine the standards against which skills of an applicant are assessed.

On 04 September 2007, TRA advised that from that date Skill Pathway D, which previously recognized 6 or 7 years of relevant work experience, even without formal training for the purpose of suitable skills assessment, has been removed from the Uniform Assessment Criteria.

Applications for TRA skills assessment from then onwards can only be assessed against the remaining four Skill Pathways of the Uniform Assessment Criteria which are formal or informal apprenticeship, vocational training or Australian qualification.

This means that it will be more difficult for most skilled workers outside Australia to pass the skills assessment other than that under “Australian qualification”.

Cooks (commercial cookery, Asian cookery & Patisserie) with at least four years experience may also be assessed by a private provider from Australia, on a case to case basis. This may be done either outside Australia (for example, in the Philippines) or in Australia. If successful, the applicant will be granted an Australian qualification and have access to Skill Pathway E, under the TRA guidelines.

Another avenue is to study the relevant NSW TAFE course outside Australia to obtain an Australian certificate or diploma to have access to Skill Pathway E. Several courses are being considered by TAFE NSW for offering in the Philippines. With additional 900 hours of relevant work experience, the relevant courses would see the graduate eligible for TRA skills assessment under pathway E, that is, as a cook, baker, hairdresser, welder, motor mechanic, landscape gardener, greenkeeper, nursery person and general gardener, if and when the relevant courses for these occupations are offered by TAFE outside Australia.

To this end, five (5) Memoranda of Understanding were signed between TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute and five Philippine partner educational institutions namely; University of Northern Philippines (UNP) in Vigan City signed by its President, Dr Lauro Tacbas; Northwestern Visayan Colleges (NVC) in Aklan, signed by its President, Atty Allen Quimpo; Jose Rizal University (JRU) in Mandaluyong Metro Manila, signed by its President, Dr Vincent Fabella; Joji Ilagan Career Centre Foundation Inc in Davao signed by its President, Joji Ilagan Bian. Five other educational institutions across the Philippines are being considered to provide better access to TAFE NSW qualifications outside Australia.

Saint Dominic College of Arts and Sciences in Bacoar, Cavite not only signed the MOU but also has signed the first implementing contract with TAFE NSW SWSI in Sydney on 14 September 2007. This was followed by Joji Ilagan Bian Careers Center (JIB) in Davao City, Mindanao Islands, and Northwestern Visayan Colleges (NVC) in Aklan, Visayas Islands. This enables the Philippine partner institutions to deliver and teach selected TAFE NSW courses in its Philippine

campus, under the supervision of an Australian Director of Studies. Graduates will receive a NSW TAFE certificate or diploma as though they had attended the NSW TAFE course in Australia.

Both Saint Dominic College and JIB Careers Center are now accepting enrolment for Commercial Cookery courses to commence from June 2008, and NVC, from November 2008. They may also offer Diploma in Nursing in 2009. Readers may contact them to commence courses from the website link on our homepage on www.iargel.com.au.

Those who are residents in the Philippines, UK, India, Sri Lanka, or South Africa, intending to migrate to Australia and have experience in certain occupations have the option of obtaining an Australian qualification as a means of passing the pre-migration skills assessment.

From the 1st of Sept. 2007, the VETASSESS led Consortium has been authorized by DIAC to assess and issue Australian qualifications in the five countries for nine occupations: General Electricians, Cable Jointers, Electrical Powerline Tradespersons, General Plumbers, Motor Mechanics, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Mechanics, Carpenters, Joiners and Bricklayers. The VETASSESS Consortium will assess tradespersons supervisors who have work experience in any of these nine trades, and are residents of the five countries intending to migrate to Australia.

Applicants for assessment with the VETASSESS Consortium will initially be provided with a self assessment tool to determine if they have the required skills to pass the assessment before they apply for skills assessment. The applicant may then move on to the actual assessment which is a two stage process: first, a paper based Competency profile assessment analyzing work experience, trade qualifications and other relevant evidence. Second, technical interview and practical assessment will take place in the Philippines or in the four other countries and will be conducted by a qualified assessor from the VETASSESS Consortium.

Successful applicants will receive an Australian Qualification (for non licensed trades such as bricklayers, carpenters, joiners and motor mechanics) that demonstrates that they have the full range of skills for the trade. These documents can be presented to employers, registered training organizations and regulatory authorities in Australia.

Licensed trades such as general electricians and plumbers, refrigeration and airconditioning mechanics, cable jointers and electronic powerline tradespersons will receive an Offshore Technical Skills Record that entitles the holder to a provisional license. It is important to note that these occupations may be required to be licensed in some States, but not all.

In all cases, those who pass the VETASSESS Consortium assessment will be issued a letter stating that they have met the pre-migration skills assessment requirements and will not need to obtain the same from TRA.

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

Readers of the Philippine Community Herald Newspaper are invited to send their

comments to "The President, Filipino Migrants Forum" c/o Imelda Argel & Associates, Solicitors & Attorneys, by email at info@iargel.com.au or by fax at (+612) 9699 3210 or by post to Suite 41, Ground Floor, 61-89 Buckingham St. SURRY HILLS NSW 2010.