

ARE YOU A TRADESPERSON APPLYING FOR A GSM VISA?

By Atty. Imelda Argel, LLB (UP), LLM (University of Sydney)

Generally, before you may lodge your visa application under General Skilled Migration (“GSM”), you must obtain a suitable skills assessment for your nominated occupation from the relevant skills assessment body authorised by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (“DIAC”). The relevant skills assessment body for trade occupations is Trade Recognition Australia (“TRA”).

TRA has issued its new criteria for the skills assessment of tradespersons which took effect from 1 January 2010.

Onshore applicants

Under the new criteria, if you are an applicant for onshore GSM visa who nominates a trade occupation, based on your completion of Australian qualification obtained in Australia, you are required to undertake the Job Ready Program for your skills assessment to succeed. The Job Ready Program is a four step process, requiring:

- Step 1 – Application for a for Provisional Skills Assessment
- Step 2 – Completion of a Job Ready Employment
- Step 3 – Completion of a Job Ready Workplace Assessment
- Step 4 – Application for a Job Ready Final Assessment

You can apply under the Job Ready Program if:

- You are an international student graduate applying for a 485 or permanent residence visa through the GSM program from within Australia; and
- you have an Australian Qualification Framework qualification obtained on the basis of study in Australia; and
- you have relevant work experience performed in Australia relevant to your qualification, in an established commercial operation in Australia using current industry standard equipment and industry endorsed processes (during the two years that you have been in Australia on a student visa); and
- you have an IELTS score of 6 or greater in each sub-test of the one General Training test (unless you hold a valid passport from and are a citizen of the UK, Ireland, NZ, USA or Canada)

Offshore Applicants

Unless your apprenticeship and/or vocational traineeship is recognised by TRA, your skills must either be assessed based on Recognition of Prior Learning (“RPL”), or you must have had formal training, by an Australian Registered Training Organisation (“RTO”), resulting in qualifications comparable to AQF Certificate III in the field of study related to your nominated occupation and relevant work experience in order to qualify for a suitable skills assessment.

Although there is still no English test required as part of the skills assessment application, the period of relevant work experience required will depend on your Skill Pathway:

Skill Pathway A - Formal Apprenticeship: 4 years

Skill Pathway B - Informal Apprenticeship: 5 years

Skill Pathway C - Vocational Traineeship: 5 years

Skill Pathway E - Australian Qualification: 4 years

You will note that the work experience requirement has increased from 900 hours to 4 years even visa applicants, who have obtained formal Australian qualification by studying a CRICOS registered course conducted by a CRICOS registered provider, applying for an offshore GSM visa, under Skill Pathway E.

If the outcome of the skills assessment is successful, you may submit your TRA skills assessment letter with your visa application. However, bear in mind that there are other requirements for your visa application to succeed, other than meeting the passmark.

This information is of a general nature and should not be taken as authoritative legal advice for specific cases. Australia has a scheme that requires persons who give immigration assistance to be registered as migration agent. The writer, Atty. Imelda Argel is a practising migration solicitor 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, an Attorney at law in the Philippines and in the State of New York, USA. Her Registered Migration Agent no. is 9682957.

She is the author of TIPS on GSM visas, the recipient of the inaugural NSW FAWAA (Filipino-Australian Women's Achievement Award) for her outstanding achievements in corporate practice and entrepreneurship, and the University of the Philippines Alumni Association (NSW Chapter) Achievement Award for law and community service. More information is available at www.iargel.com.au. You can contact the author by email at info@iargel.com.au or by fax at (+612) 9699 3210 or by appointment at Suite 41, Ground Floor, 61-89 Buckingham St. SURRY HILLS NSW 2010.