

Are you affected by the new Skills Assessment Criteria of VETASSESS?

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A suitable skills assessment is required for visa applications under the General Skilled Migration (GSM) and Employer Nomination Schemes (ENS). VETASSESS is the skills assessing authority authorised by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to assess over 200 generalist occupations in the Managerial, Administrative, Professional and Associate Professional categories.

DIAC will accept all VETASSESS Skill Assessments from both the old and new criteria for a nominated occupation in the Skilled Occupation List where VETASSESS is the designated assessing authority.

However, if there is a significant gap between the date of assessment and the date of visa application, it may require a VETASSESS assessment under the new criteria.

Before 1 January 2010

Under the current criteria, if your nominated occupation is allocated 50 or 40 points in the Skilled Occupations List (SOL), and the skills assessing authority is VETASSESS, you would be able to obtain a suitable skills assessment from VETASSESS based on your Bachelors degree or diploma, being comparable to an Australian Bachelors degree or diploma respectively. This is the case even if your field of study is irrelevant to the nominated occupation.

In fact, you do not need any work experience at all to obtain a suitable skills assessment. Thus, if you are a registered nurse, doctor, teacher, pharmacist, accountant or engineer and you are not able to obtain a suitable skills assessment from the skills assessing authority for your profession, but you hold an overseas educational qualification that is comparable to an Australian Bachelors degree, you could nominate any occupation in the SOL which has been allocated 50 points and would be able to obtain a suitable skills assessment.

You would meet the passmark of 100 points if you qualify to apply for a skilled sponsored permanent resident visa if you are under 30 years of age, and you will have achieved a score of 7 in each of reading, writing, listening and speaking in the IELTS general module at the time of visa decision.

In fact, you could lodge your visa application upon achieving a score of at least 6 per component of the IELTS general module and you are likely to have 24-36 months to pass the score of 7 per component, at the current estimated visa processing time for 50 point occupations.

Changes from 1 January 2010

There are four categories under the new VETASSESS Assessment Process. To obtain a suitable skills assessment, the applicant must generally have:

An educational qualification or Australian degree, diploma or Certificate IV comparable to the required educational level for the nominated occupation;

with

A major or minor in the same or relevant field of study for the nominated occupation and/or relevant work experience in lieu of the shortfall and deficiency of subjects in the relevant field of study;

and

At least one year of work experience that is highly relevant to the nominated occupation, completed in the last five years before the lodgement of the skills assessment application.

If you are an international student who will complete your qualification in 2010, you will be assessed under the new assessment criteria and therefore will need to satisfy the work experience criteria to support your application for permanent resident visa. You have the opportunity to gain the relevant work experience during the validity of your visa, if you lack the relevant employment experience in your nominated occupation and you apply and are granted an 18 month temporary (subclass 485) visa.

In this regard, VETASSESS offers a two stage process for the skills assessment required for permanent resident visa under the General Skilled Migration Program or the Employer Nomination Scheme:

Stage 1 Skills assessment based on your qualification, if you apply for a 485 visa within 6 months from course completion of an Australian Bachelor degree or higher level, in a field of study that is highly relevant to your nominated occupation as specified under the new VETASSESS criteria.

Stage 2- Skills assessment of your work experience after at least 12 months of employment in a field that is relevant to your nominated occupation.

If you qualify for a suitable assessment before the change but you may have difficulty in meeting the new criteria, you should consider applying for skills assessment with VETASSESS before the change takes effect.

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.

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