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Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Trades Recognition Australia Migration Skills Assessment Program Applicant Guidelines

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The Migration Skills Assessment Program

Section 1. Program Information

1.1. Introduction to Trades Recognition Australia

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is a skills assessment authority within the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) for nominated occupations under the [Migration Regulations 1994](#).

TRA skills assessments are intended to ensure that a successful applicant is able to perform at the required skill level for their nominated occupation. The skills assessments also provide an assurance to government and to the individual that their training and experience is relevant and appropriate for the Australian labour market.

TRA operates a number of different skills assessment services which are based on an applicant's occupation, country of passport, where they studied and the type of visa they are seeking.

1.2. Program objective

The Migration Skills Assessment (MSA) Program is a documentary-based skills assessment of an applicant's qualifications and employment history to determine comparability with Australian standards for a skilled worker in the nominated occupation. The objective is to ensure successful applicants can contribute to Australia's skilled workforce.

The MSA Program is for people applying for a permanent skilled migration visa in occupations and countries that are not required to be assessed under other TRA programs (for more information on eligibility please refer to Section 2).

Note: TRA does not award Australian qualifications, provide occupational registrations or occupational licences. The applicant will need to make their own enquiries to determine whether they need to meet any employment, licensing or qualification requirements in order to work in the nominated occupation within Australia.

1.3. Applicant Guidelines

These Guidelines describe the MSA Program and outline the eligibility requirements in applying for a skills assessment under the MSA Program.

Before commencing an application:

- You must check with the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) (www.homeaffairs.gov.au) that your visa pathway requires a skills assessment and that TRA is the correct assessing authority for your nominated occupation.
- You must read the eligibility requirements for the MSA program (refer to [Section 2](#) of these Guidelines)

If you do not understand any part of the eligibility requirements, please contact TRA at traenquiries@dewr.gov.au

These Guidelines do not provide information on visas or points requirements for migration. All enquiries relating to visa and migration requirements must be directed to [Home Affairs](#).

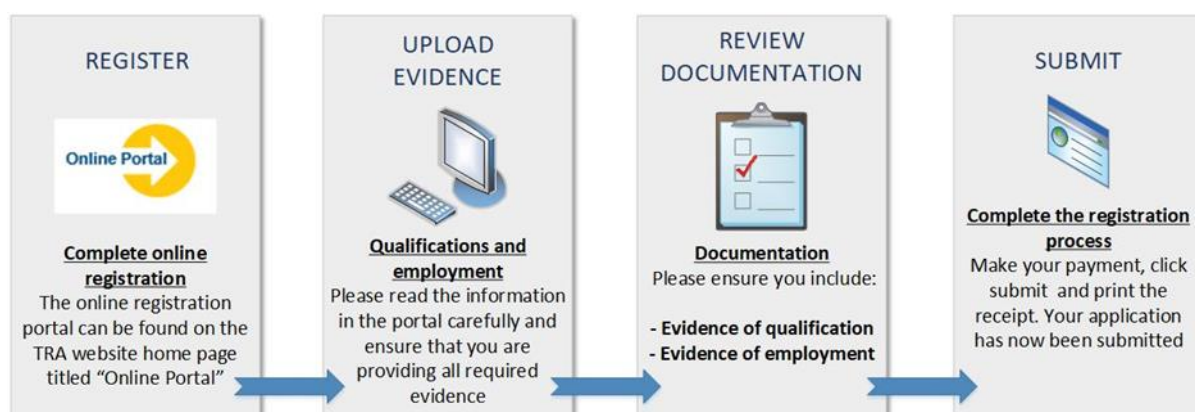
TRA reserves the right to amend these Guidelines as necessary. Information about changes will be documented in the Change History Table in [Section 5](#) and posted as a news item on the TRA website www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au

1.4. How to apply

To apply for the MSA you must register through the [TRA Online Portal](#) via the TRA website www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au. You will be asked to create a username and password.

Diagram 1 below provides an overview of the online application process.

Diagram 1 – MSA application process



An application can only be lodged online through the [TRA Online Portal](#).

You may nominate a migration agent or representative to act on your behalf during the skills assessment process. You do this by completing the 'Agent or Representative' section of the online application form.

All applications submitted to TRA must be decision ready. Decision ready means all the mandatory fields in the [TRA Online Portal](#) are completed, all documents uploaded as required under Section 2 of these Guidelines, and the mandatory application fee is paid.

1.4.1 Document requirements

Section 2 of the Guidelines provides a detailed overview of the program requirements and processes. Please note that if your application is not complete and decision ready, you risk your assessment being unsuccessful. It is your responsibility to make sure the application is decision ready.

Please ensure you have original colour scans of:

- passport identification page
- qualification/s
- academic transcripts for each qualification
- a completed *Employer Template* for each employment period claimed
- pay evidence for each period of employment claimed

- evidence of self-employment (if applicable)

Your documents must be scanned in full colour as a .pdf and the quality must be at least 150 dots per inch (dpi). The total maximum file size for each document must not exceed 10mb.

Please note, TRA cannot accept documents that are sent through file sharing platforms, such as Google Drive and Dropbox, and your application must not contain documents that are locked, or password protected.

Please read the instructions in the TRA Online Portal carefully to make sure you have met all requirements before submitting your documents.

1.4.2 Documents not in English

If your application documents are not in English, you must also provide an English translation of the documents.

- ***Translating documents in Australia***

Acceptable translations of documents in Australia can be obtained from translators accredited with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). A list of approved translators can be found on NAATI's website <https://www.naati.com.au/>. Translations must include the translator's name, NAATI identification number and accreditation status.

Please check the translator's accreditation by either calling NAATI on +61 2 6260 3035 or asking to see the translator's letter or certificate of accreditation in the language you need.

- ***Translating documents outside Australia***

If you have documents that were translated outside Australia, the translator must be approved by the authorities in the country where the translation was made. Contact your nearest Australian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for advice if you are unsure of the process.

Overseas translations must be on the organisation's letterhead and include an official stamp. The translator's name (all in block letters), signature and contact telephone number must be legibly printed below the signature. This information is required so that TRA can contact the translator if necessary to verify the translated documents.

1.5. Fees

Assessment Service	Fee
Migration Skills Assessment	\$795
Migration Skills Assessment Review	\$610

The fees that TRA charges under its programs are specified in a legislative instrument made under sub regulation 5.40(1) of the *Migration Regulations 1994* (see: [Migration \(Fees for assessment of qualifications and experience\) Instrument \(LIN 23/002\) 2023](#)).

Fee schedules are subject to change. TRA will give reasonable notice of any proposed fee increases. Notices regarding proposed fee increases will be published on the TRA website and in the relevant program guidelines.

Payment must be made when you complete the online application and may only be made using a Visa or MasterCard credit/debit card through the online portal. All fees are payable in Australian dollars and instructions on how to pay are provided online when you apply.

After payment, a printable receipt will be displayed and a copy will be sent to the email address nominated in your application. Please retain the email receipt as evidence of payment.

1.5.1. Fee refunds

Refunds will not be provided should you choose to withdraw your application after an assessment has commenced.

The circumstances in which TRA will refund a payment are detailed in the *TRA Fees, Payment and Refund Policy* under [Policy and Forms](#) on the TRA website www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au.

Section 2. Program requirements and processes

2.1. Eligibility

You are eligible to apply for the MSA program if your nominated occupation is:

- listed on the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL) or the Short-term Skilled Occupations List (STSOL) on the Home Affairs website www.homeaffairs.gov.au and TRA is the relevant skills assessing authority
- directly relevant to your qualification and/or apprenticeship
- directly relevant to your employment.

You are not eligible for the MSA program if you are:

- an applicant from a specified country of passport and occupation, which requires a skills assessment under the TRA [Offshore Skills Assessment Program](#)
- seeking an assessment for one of the following licensed occupations: Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician (General), Electrician (Special Class) and Plumber (General). Please refer to the TRA [Offshore Skills Assessment Program](#)
- applying for a Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485). Please refer to the TRA [Job Ready Program](#)
- applying for a Temporary Skill Shortage visa (subclass 482). Please refer to the TRA [TSS Skills Assessment Program](#)

The [Pathfinder tool](#) on the TRA website can help you determine if the MSA program is the correct assessment program for your nominated occupation.

2.2. Qualifications

2.2.1. Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single, comprehensive, national qualifications framework. TRA will determine whether your qualification is comparable to the relevant AQF qualification and level for your nominated occupation.

The relevant AQF qualification for occupations assessed by TRA can be found on the [Australian Qualifications by Occupation](#) document on the [TRA website](#).

2.2.2. Qualification documents

Your application must include evidence of formal training and training outcomes that can be considered comparable to the AQF qualification for your nominated occupation. The following documents must therefore be uploaded with your online application:

- final qualification/s or apprenticeship certificate/s or award/s
- a full academic transcript or other documents that include the start and end date of your training and details of the program of study
- apprenticeship documents such as the contract of apprenticeship, journal or any other relevant document from your employer, governing body or training institution relating to your apprenticeship (if applicable).

The following items will not be accepted as a substitute for a qualification:

- occupational licences
- trade tests not supported by comparable and verifiable formal training
- short course certificates such as single day or single subject training
- work experience.
- incomplete qualifications or statements of attainment

2.2.3. Qualification verification and assessment

When assessing and verifying your qualification/s TRA considers the quality, level and relevance of the qualification as outlined below.

- **Quality**

TRA will use various assessment sources to verify your training is nationally recognised, accredited and regulated by the appropriate governing body in the country of issue.

- **Level**

Australian qualifications are awarded at different levels on the AQF, therefore TRA must be able to determine that your qualification is comparable to the relevant AQF qualification and level for your nominated occupation. TRA uses various internal and external assessment sources to determine the comparable level of your qualification.

- **Relevance**

TRA compares the content of your training (transcripts, syllabus etc.) to the relevant AQF qualification level to ensure your training is directly relevant to your nominated occupation. If TRA is unable to verify your qualification/s meet all of these requirements, TRA will not be able to determine you hold a qualification that is comparable to the AQF qualification for your nominated occupation. You may be contacted to provide additional evidence or asked to obtain verification of the qualification from the training institution or authority that issued the qualification. The training institute or authority will need to provide the verification in electronic format directly to TRA.

Please note the provision of a document or other information does not guarantee that your qualification will be recognised.

2.3. Employment

2.3.1. Tasks and Duties

TRA refers to the Australian New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) to compare the tasks and skills undertaken in your employment experience with those expected in your nominated occupation in Australia. The ANZSCO is a skills-based classification system used to classify all occupations and jobs in the Australian and New Zealand labour markets.

Any claimed employment must demonstrate your ability to perform the full range of tasks and duties expected for the nominated occupation.

TRA may, at its discretion use other publicly available authoritative sources to verify your duties and tasks align with Australian industry standards.

2.3.2. Employment with an employer

An *Employer Template* must be completed for each employment period you wish to claim in support of your application. For example, if you have employment with two employers, you are required to provide two *Employment Templates*. The template/s must be completed by your employer or manager and include contact details that allow TRA to confirm the business exists and operates as claimed.

TRA must be able to independently confirm the contact information provided in the *Employer Template* is linked to the business. TRA must also be able to confirm the business functions in a way that supports the duties and tasks you undertake in your nominated occupation.

Tasks and duties listed in the *Employer Templates* must not be copied from external sources such as ANZSCO or other third-party sources.

The *Employer Template* can be downloaded from the online portal and on the [Policy and Forms](#) page of the TRA website.

2.3.3. Self Employment

If you are self-employed, you must select the '*Self-Employment*' option in the employment type field in the TRA online portal. You must complete this section for each period of self-employment you are claiming. TRA must be able to confirm the contact information provided in your application is linked to the business. The business must be able to be verified as functioning in a way that supports the duties and tasks you undertake in your nominated occupation. Each period of self-employment must be supported by sufficient supporting evidence outlined at Section 2.3.6 of these Guidelines.

Tasks and duties listed in your application must not be copied from external sources such as ANZSCO or other third-party sources.

2.3.4. Employment time periods

You are required to demonstrate **3 years** of full-time or equivalent part-time paid employment. This employment must be directly relevant to your nominated occupation and can be completed before, during or after your comparable qualification.

TRA considers full-time employment as ongoing employment working the required number of hours considered full-time in the country where the employment was undertaken. Fair Work Australia considers full-time employment in Australia as 38 hours per week unless a particular industrial award specifies otherwise.

Employment completed on a part-time basis will be considered on a pro-rata basis. For example, if you have completed 20 hours of employment per week over a 2-year period, you will be considered to have completed 12 months of full-time paid employment.

2.3.5. Currency of your skills

To ensure your skills are current to Australian industry standards, your evidence must demonstrate you have worked for 12 months full-time (38 hours per week), or the equivalent part-time in your nominated or directly related occupation within the last three years prior to applying to TRA.

2.3.6. Pay evidence

You are required to provide pay evidence to support your employment claims. The requirements for pay evidence vary and depend on the type of employment undertaken, as specified in the table below. Please note TRA may request additional evidence if your claims cannot be verified.

You are required to upload full colour scans of documentary pay evidence.

Employment Type	Pay Evidence Required
Employment not completed in Australia (<u>excluding</u> self-employment)	<p>At least two verifiable sources of documents for each year of employment claimed from the categories below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • official government tax records. This may include payment summaries, group certificates or notices of assessment • official government documents that show your employers name and periods of employment. Such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ work permits/visas, ○ social Insurance records ○ official contract documents from the Ministry of Labour etc. • three payslips citing both the name of the applicant and employer • superannuation documents citing the names of the applicant and employer • bank statements citing the name of the applicant and employer and showing income deposited
Employment completed in Australia (<u>excluding</u> self-employment)	<p>At least two verifiable sources of documents for each year of employment claimed from the categories below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Statements and Notices of Assessment for each period of employment being claimed.

Employment Type	Pay Evidence Required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three (3) pay slips citing the name of the employer and employee • Superannuation documents citing the name of the applicant and employer. • Bank statements citing the name of the applicant and employer and showing income deposited.
Self-Employment <u>not</u> undertaken in Australia	<p>The following lists the types of evidence that can be submitted for each year of self-employment claimed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business registration documents • relevant trade or business licences • annual business returns • Invoices to clients and invoices from suppliers • bank statements showing income and expenses • statement from a registered/certified accountant if applicable • taxation documents citing the name of the business
Self-Employment in Australia	<p>The following lists the types of evidence that can be submitted for each year of self-employment claimed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your Australian Business Number (ABN) • financial statements • invoices to clients and/or from suppliers • bank statements showing income and expenses • Business Activity Statement/s (BAS) • Income Tax returns (including Business Schedule) • Notice of Assessment • statement from a registered/certified accountant if applicable

2.3.7. Verification of employment

If TRA cannot verify your employment claims, you may be contacted to provide additional evidence or be asked to obtain further verification of employment from the nominated employer. The employer will need to provide the verification in electronic format directly to TRA.

Please note the provision of a document or other information does not guarantee that your employment will be accepted by TRA.

2.4. Assessment outcome

You will receive notification of the outcome of your MSA application by email following the assessment and verification process.

If your assessment is successful, the outcome letter can be presented to Home Affairs as part of your

visa application.

If your assessment is unsuccessful, the outcome letter will provide you with the reasons for the outcome and information regarding the review process (see [Section 2.6](#)).

MSA applications are generally finalised within 120 days from your online submission. Processing time may vary and are dependent on the volume of applications received and the complexity of the verification processes. In some cases, the processing time is extended due to the time taken by external sources to respond to our request for verification.

Applicants are requested to allow sufficient time for assessment as visa deadlines are not a reason for expedition of an application.

A news item will be published on the TRA website if there is an increase to estimated timeframes.

2.5. Review

If you disagree with the outcome of your assessment, you have 90 days from the date of your assessment outcome to apply for a review. A review will consider information submitted in your original application and any additional evidence provided in the review application to support your claims.

Your outcome letter will contain information about how to apply for a review and the associated review fee. Please read the [TRA Assessment Review Policy](#) on the TRA website before applying for a review. Note:

- An applicant is eligible for a refund of the review fee when a skills assessment outcome of the original application has been substituted with a favourable outcome as a result of the review application, where the review was conducted solely based on the evidence provided in the original application.
- An applicant is not eligible for a refund of the review fee where the applicant provided additional evidence to be assessed in the review application that was not provided in the original application.

You will be notified of the outcome of the review application by email.

Applicants who wish to apply for a new skills assessment following an unsuccessful outcome of a review must lodge a new application for a skills assessment.

In submitting a new application, you must resubmit all evidence previously supplied and include any additional evidence you wish to claim. Any new application will require payment of the associated application fee. A new application can be lodged at any time through the [TRA Online Portal](#).

Information outlining the review application including eligibility requirements and review fees are outlined in the Trades Recognition Australia Assessment Review Policy on the TRA website.

Section 3. Program Administration

3.1. Roles and responsibilities

TRA is responsible for:

- ensuring the objectives of the MSA program are met (see page 5)
- providing up-to-date information about program processes and procedures
- responding to enquiries about the program
- developing policy and providing program advice
- developing and maintaining an appropriate IT system to support the program
- liaising with the Department of Home Affairs and relevant stakeholders about the program
- accepting program payments from applicants
- managing evaluations of the program
- undertaking compliance and investigative measures as required.

3.2. Applicant roles and responsibilities

As an applicant to the MSA program you must:

- accurately and honestly complete the required skills assessment application and declaration requirements
- provide authentic and current evidence to TRA to enable the skills assessment to be conducted
- ensure the application submitted to TRA is complete and decision ready. Decision ready means all the mandatory fields in the [TRA Online Portal](#) are completed, all documents uploaded and you have paid the required skills assessment fees.

3.3. Use of agents or representatives

TRA will not correspond with, or speak to, another person on your behalf about your assessment without your written approval.

You may nominate a migration agent or representative to act on your behalf during the skills assessment process. You do this by completing the 'Agent or Representative' section of the online application form.

A *Nomination of a Migration Agent or Representative* form must be completed and submitted to TRA if you change a migration agent or representative. Information provided on the form will replace any previous migration agent or representative details held on your TRA file. This form is located under [Policy and Forms](#) on the [TRA website](#). You can email the completed form to traenquiries@dewr.gov.au.

For more information about the use of migration agents in Australia, visit Home Affairs website <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/who-can-help-with-your-application/using-a-migration-agent>

3.4. Privacy

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information by TRA is subject to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act). Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act contains the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which prescribe the rules for handling personal information.

The Privacy Act defines 'personal information' as:

'information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and
- (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not'.

3.4.1. Privacy information

Under the Australian Privacy Principles, the Department is required to have a clearly expressed and up to date policy about the way the Department manages personal information. This policy contains information about how you may access the personal information the Department holds about you, and how you may correct any inaccuracies in that information. We will correct your personal information if it is inaccurate (subject to restrictions on such access/alteration of records under the applicable provisions of any law of the Commonwealth).

It also includes information as to how you may make a complaint about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles, and how the Department will respond to such a complaint.

A copy of the Department's privacy policy is available on the Department's website at www.dewr.gov.au/privacy.

More information about the Privacy Act, including a copy of the full text of the APPs, can be obtained from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website www.oaic.gov.au.

3.4.2. Collection

TRA collects personal information from you for the purposes of:

- processing and assessing your application for a skills assessment or review, under any of the TRA programs, as the relevant assessing authority for skilled occupations as specified in the Instruments made under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.
- confirming authorisation by an applicant of his or her representative or migration agent, and to provide details to that representative or migration agent
- allowing you to make payment of fees to TRA so you can lodge an application
- allowing TRA to confirm payment and process refunds, as applicable
- conducting investigations and ensuring compliance with relevant laws, awards or standards
- ensuring compliance with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines (2011) through the investigation of fraud and implementation of fraud prevention strategies.

3.4.3. Disclosure

TRA may give some or all of the information it collects from you or third parties to Home Affairs, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Australian Federal Police, your employer/s, your supervisor/s, your nominated agent or representative, the organisations that issued your qualifications, TRA-approved registered training organisations, agencies providing advice to TRA on qualifications, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the Reserve Bank of Australia, contractors, the Fair Work Ombudsman and other Australian and state/territory government agencies.

TRA may disclose your personal information to these entities for the reasons that are listed above in the collection section.

Personal information collected by TRA will not be disclosed to any other third party without your

consent, except where authorised or required by law.

3.5. False or misleading information

You are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and validity of all information provided to TRA.

TRA will take reasonable steps to verify the validity of all information supplied throughout the MSA skills assessment. However, if at a later date TRA believes that information previously supplied for an application with a successful outcome may be false, misleading, non-factual, or simply incorrect, TRA may undertake further investigation and/or immediately revoke the outcome. This may include a mandatory reassessment of your evidence, experience and skills.

If you refuse to participate in a mandatory reassessment or TRA determines that information previously supplied is false, misleading, non-factual or simply incorrect, and that in reliance on that information TRA has incorrectly assessed an application as successful, TRA will write to you to advise the assessment is no longer considered successful and advise Home Affairs accordingly.

TRA may refer such matters to the appropriate authorities for investigation where information or documentation provided to support an application is known or believed to be false or misleading. No fees will be charged for a mandatory reassessment of this type.

TRA may refer such matters to the appropriate authorities for investigation where information or documentation provided to support an application is known or believed to be false or misleading.

Note: Penalties may apply under the *Crimes Act 1914* and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* for making false or misleading statements and providing false or misleading information or documents.

3.6. Relevant legislation

TRA is the designated relevant assessing authority for a range of trade and associate professional occupations under the [Migration Regulations 1994](#).

Under Subregulation 2.26B (2) of the *Migration Regulations 1994*, TRA sets the standards against which a person's skills are assessed.

3.7. Complaints

Complaints about breaches of privacy should be referred to:

Privacy Officer

Legal Services

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

GPO Box 9880

CANBERRA ACT 2601

AUSTRALIA

Email: privacy@dewr.gov.au

Section 4. Contact Details

Enquiries traenquiries@dewr.gov.au

Website www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au

Section 5 Document change history

Version	Date published	Summary of change	Authorised by
1.0	March 2020	Changes reflect the new online application process and self-employment evidence requirements.	Belinda Campbell Assistant Secretary, Tuition Assurance Taskforce and Trades Recognition Australia
2.0	May 2021	Changes reflect the new TRA Assessment Review Policy and clarification of employment and qualification evidence requirements.	Jane Hayden Assistant Secretary, Trades Recognition Australia
3.0	August 2021	Updates to Fee Schedule in line with approved Cost Recovery Impact Statement	Jane Hayden Assistant Secretary Trades Recognition Australia
4.0	August 2022	Removal of 2.4 “Skilled date”. Update to employment period requirements. Updates to reflect the recent Government changes including department name and brand changes as TRA transitions to the new Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.	Jane Hayden Assistant Secretary Trades Recognition Australia
5.0	April 2023	Updates to reflect fee changes and minor edit to employment requirements	Jane Hayden Assistant Secretary Trades Recognition Australia