



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education and Training**

# **Trades Recognition Australia Migration Skills Assessment Program Applicant Guidelines**

January 2017

## Document particulars

<b>TRIM ID</b>	ED11/017630	<b>File</b>	TRA Migration Skills Assessment Applicant Guidelines.doc
<b>Content last updated</b>	December 2016	<b>Document status</b>	FINAL
<b>Due for review</b>	December 2017		
<b>Point of contact</b>	Trades Recognition Australia		
<b>Approval authority</b>	Mr Kevin Brahim Branch Manager, State Network and TRA		
<b>Date of first approval to publish</b>	13 July 2011		
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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 business unit located within the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. For the purposes of the *Migration Regulations 1994*, it has been specified by the Minister for Home Affairs as the “relevant assessing authority” for approximately 130 technical and trade occupations. TRA operates a number of different skills assessment services, which vary depending on the circumstances of the applicant.

### 1.2 Program objective

The Migration Skills Assessment Program (MSA) is for applicants applying for a permanent skilled migration visa in occupations and countries that are not required to be assessed by other TRA programs (for more information on eligibility please refer to section 1.4).

MSA is a paper based skills assessment of your qualification/s and employment history to determine comparability with Australian standards for a skilled worker in your nominated occupation.

**Note:** TRA does not award Australian qualifications and does not provide occupational registration and does not issue occupational licences. Under the MSA Program, TRA only provides an opinion as to whether it believes an applicant has the skills to work in their nominated occupation in Australia. If an applicant receives a successful MSA outcome, they 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 their 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. They do not provide specific information on migration or visa requirements. All enquiries relating to visa and migration requirements must be directed to the Department of Home Affairs website <http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au>.

TRA reserves the right to amend these Guidelines as necessary. Information about changes will be included in the document particulars table and posted as a news item on the TRA website.

### 1.4 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 Department of Home Affairs website with TRA as the relevant skills assessing authority (see <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Work/Work/Skills-assessment-and-assessing-authorities/skilled-occupations-lists>)

- relevant to your qualification and/or apprenticeship
- relevant to your employment.

You must check with the Department of Home Affairs before submitting your application to ensure your visa pathway requires a skills assessment, and that TRA is the correct assessing authority for you nominated occupation.

## IMPORTANT

**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 **Offshore Skills Assessment Program**
- ❖ applying for the **Job Ready Program**
- ❖ applying for a **Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485)**
- ❖ applying for a **Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457)**.

## 1.5 Fees

Service	Fee
Migration Skills Assessment	\$1000
Migration Skills Assessment Review	\$900

Payment must be made when you lodge your 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, an email containing the receipt will be automatically sent to the email address you nominated on your application. It is important to retain the email receipt as evidence of payment.

Once you have submitted your payment through the TRA online portal, a payment summary containing a customer reference number and receipt number will be generated. You must print the payment summary and include it with your application form.

No fees will be refunded if you decide to withdraw your application after TRA has commenced your assessment.

## Section 2 Program Requirements and Processes

### 2.1 Application process

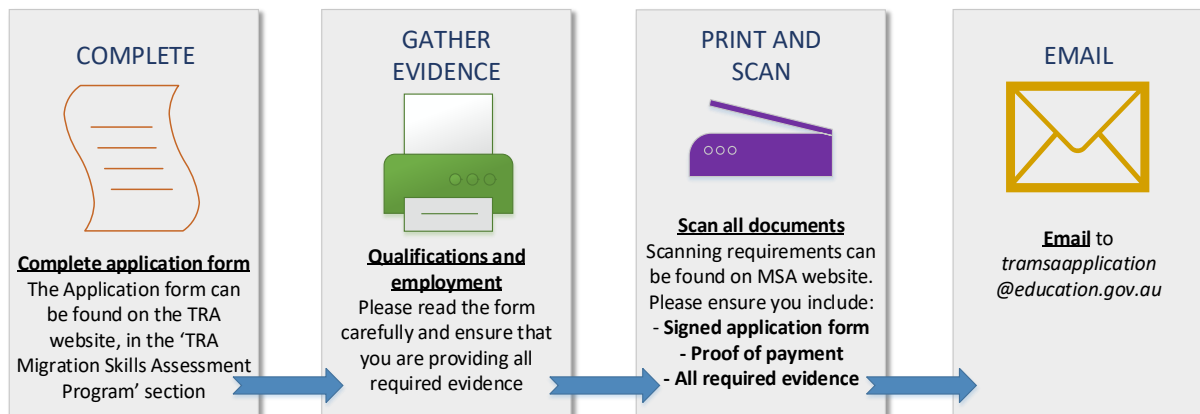
The application form for the MSA program can be found on the TRA website under *Programs, Migration Skills Assessment*.

All applications submitted to TRA must be decision ready. This means you are required to complete the application form, ensure you supply all evidence as required by the application form and these guidelines, attach your proof of payment and email the complete application to TRA as indicated in Diagram 1.

Full colour scans of your original documents must be supplied with your application. Please read the website carefully to make sure you have met all requirements before submitting your documents.

TRA will provide you with an acknowledgement letter by email upon receipt of your application.

**Diagram 1**



## 2.2 Assessment outcome

You will receive notification of the outcome of your application by email within 90 days of the date your application was received by TRA.

A news item will be posted on the TRA website if exceptional circumstances prevent TRA from meeting the 90 day requirement.

If your assessment is successful, the outcome letter can be presented to the Department of 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 2.4).

## 2.3 Translating documents

If your application documents are not in English, they must be accompanied by an English translation.

### 2.3.1 Translating documents in Australia

Acceptable translations of documents in Australia may be obtained from translators accredited with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). Details of translators can be found in the Yellow Pages or the telephone directory under *Translations* or on NAATI's website at [www.naati.com.au](http://www.naati.com.au).

Please check the translator's accreditation by either calling NAATI on 1300 557 470 or asking to see the translator's letter or certificate of accreditation in the language you need. Translations by NAATI must include the translator's name, NAATI identification number and accreditation status.



### 2.3.2 Translating documents outside Australia

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

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.

## 2.4 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. Your outcome letter will contain information about how to apply for your review. You cannot supply any additional information with a review application.

Please note, TRA will only conduct a review where you are able to demonstrate TRA has incorrectly assessed the information you supplied in your original application. You cannot supply any additional evidence to support your original application, nor can you ask TRA to consider factors not set out in your original application during a review application.

If you wish to supply additional evidence or wish to ask TRA to consider other factors, you must apply for a new assessment. In submitting a new application, you only need to supply the additional evidence – you do not need to resubmit all evidence previously supplied.

## Section 3 Qualifications

### 3.1 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. The relevant AQF qualification for specific occupations can be found on the Frequently Asked Questions page of the MSA website.

### 3.2 Qualification documents

For your application to be registered by TRA, it must include evidence of formal training and outcomes that can be considered comparable to the AQF qualification for your nominated occupation. Therefore, the following documents **must** be included with your application:

- final qualification/s or apprenticeship certificate or award
- 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 **cannot** be used 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.

## 3.4 Qualification verification and assessment

When assessing your qualification TRA considers quality, level and relevance.

### 3.4.1 Quality

TRA will use various assessment sources to verify your training was accredited and regulated by the appropriate governing body in the country of issue. Your qualification/s must also be nationally recognised in the country of issue.

### 3.4.2 Level

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

### 3.4.3 Relevance

The relevant AQF qualification for Australian occupations assessed by TRA can be found on the Frequently Asked Questions page of the MSA webpage. TRA compares the content of your training (transcripts, syllabus etc.) to the relevant AQF qualification to ensure your training is directly related to your nominated occupation.

If TRA cannot verify your qualification claims, you may be contacted to provide additional evidence.

## Section 4 Employment

### 4.1 Overview

You are required to submit evidence for the periods of employment you wish to claim in support of your MSA application. This evidence will be used to determine if your skills and experience are of the standard necessary to work in your nominated occupation Australia.

Your employment documents **must** include:

- descriptions of the tasks and skills undertaken in your nominated occupation
- pay evidence to support all periods of employment being claimed.

## 4.2 Employment verification

### 4.2.1 Tasks and skills

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.

### 4.2.2 Paid employment

TRA requires sufficient evidence of paid employment to verify your employment was full-time or equivalent part-time, and that your pay is commensurate with the skill level for your position.

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

TRA may also compare the amount you are paid with award rates or other similar instruments to verify claimed employment is at the required skill level.

## 4.3 Employment documents

### 4.3.1 Employment template

You are required to provide a separate *Employer Template* for each period of employment you wish to claim in support of your application, which must be completed by your employer. If you are self-employed, you must complete the *Self-Employment Template* for each period of self-employment you wish to claim. These Templates are located on the 'How to Apply' page on the Migration Skills Assessment webpage and must be completed in full by your employer or manager, and include contact details that allow TRA to confirm the business exists and operates as claimed.

TRA will not accept cut-and-paste employment statements such as a list of tasks and duties copied from an occupation described in ANZSCO.

### 4.3.2 Payment evidence

You are also required to submit full colour scans of documentary pay evidence so TRA can verify the paid employment claims in your application.

These requirements vary depending on employment type and are specified in the table below. Please note TRA may request additional evidence if your claims cannot be verified.

To claim Australian employment, you must submit a *Payment Summary Information* statement from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). This can be obtained by contacting the ATO on 13 11 42.

Employment Type	Pay Evidence Required
Employment <b>not</b> completed in Australia (excluding self-employment)	Sets of documents for each year of employment claimed from <b>two</b> of the categories below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• official government tax records or documents that may include payment summaries, group certificates or notices of assessment</li> <li>• three payslips citing names of the employer and employee</li> <li>• superannuation documents citing the names of the applicant and employer</li> <li>• bank statements with the employer’s name and clearly showing income has been deposited</li> </ul>
Employment completed in Australia (excluding self-employment)	Payment summary information statement from the ATO (If you wish to claim employment for the current financial year you must provide 3 payslips from the current financial year citing the name of the employee and employer)
Self-Employed <b>not</b> undertaken in Australia	For each year of self-employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business registration documents</li> <li>• relevant trade or business licences</li> <li>• annual business returns</li> <li>• statement from a registered/certified accountant if applicable</li> <li>• taxation documents citing the name of the business</li> </ul>
Self-Employed in Australia	For each year of self-employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your Australian Business Number (ABN)</li> <li>• payment summary information statement from the ATO</li> <li>• Business Activity Statement (BAS)</li> <li>• Notice of Assessment</li> <li>• statement from a registered/certified accountant if applicable</li> </ul>

#### 4.4 Employment evidence

The employment evidence you are required to supply is dependent on how you obtained your qualification i.e. awarded internationally, in Australia through a course of study, or an Australian Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. Please refer to the table below to determine how many years of employment evidence you are required to provide with your application.

Qualification	Employment Requirement
Qualification/Award issued internationally or Australian qualification issued via study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3 years</b> full-time or equivalent part-time</li> <li>• employment must be after qualification issuance date</li> </ul>
Australian qualification issued by RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6 years</b> full-time or equivalent part-time</li> <li>• employment can be before and after qualification</li> </ul>

#### 4.4.1 Currency

To ensure currency of skills, you are required to provide evidence you have worked for 12 months full-time, or the equivalent part-time in your nominated or directly related occupation within the last three years.

#### 4.5 Skilled date

To assist the Department of Home Affairs, TRA will provide a 'skilled date' on your outcome letter as part of your assessment. Your skilled date is determined through an assessment of the employment evidence supplied with your application and how you obtained your qualification. This means if you have a qualification issued internationally or gained an Australian qualification by study, the 'skilled date' will be the date the qualification was issued. If you obtained an Australian qualification through RPL, your 'skilled date' is when you completed your first three years of verifiable, eligible employment in your nominated occupation. TRA considers the first three years as being an informal training period.

## Section 5 Program Administration

### 5.1 Roles and responsibilities

TRA is responsible for:

- managing the objectives of the program
- 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
- managing evaluations of the program
- undertaking compliance and investigative measures as required.

## 5.2 Applicant roles and responsibilities

As an applicant you must:

- accurately and honestly complete the required skills assessment application and declaration forms issued by TRA
- provide authentic and current evidence to TRA to enable the skills assessment to be conducted
- ensure the documentary evidence submitted to TRA is complete and decision ready
- pay the required skills assessment fees.

## 5.3 Use of agents or representatives

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

The *Nomination of a Migration Agent or Representative* form must be completed and submitted to TRA each time 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 Forms & Policy* on the TRA website.

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

For more information about the use of migration agents in Australia, visit the Department of Home Affairs website <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Usin>

## 5.4 Privacy

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information by Trades Recognition Australia (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'.*

### 5.4.1 Privacy information

Under the APPs, the Department of Education and Training (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 APPs, 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 <https://www.education.gov.au/privacy-policy>.

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 at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au).

#### **5.4.2 Collection**

TRA collects personal information from you for the purposes of:

- processing applications, verifying evidence provided with applications, and assessing whether an applicant has suitable skills in a nominated occupation
- 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 a 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.

#### **5.4.3 Disclosure**

TRA may give some or all of the information it collects from you or third parties to:

- the Department of Home Affairs
- the Migration Review Tribunal
- the Australian Federal Police
- your employer/s, and /or supervisor/s
- nominated agent or representative
- organisations that issued your qualifications
- TRA approved registered training organisations
- agencies providing advice to TRA on qualifications
- Australian Skills Quality Authority
- the Reserve Bank of Australia
- contractors
- the Fair Work Ombudsman
- 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.

#### 5.4.4. Complaints

Complaints about breaches of privacy should be referred to:

Privacy Contact Officer  
Legal and Compliance Group  
Department of Education and Training  
GPO Box 9880  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
AUSTRALIA  
Email: [privacy@education.gov.au](mailto:privacy@education.gov.au)

### 5.5 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 TRA determines at a later date 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 may write to you to advise the assessment is no longer considered successful. TRA will advise the Department of Home Affairs accordingly.

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

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

### 5.6 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.

## Section 6 Contact Details

**Phone** Monday to Friday: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm and 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm  
Australian Eastern Standard Time, excluding public holidays (GMT +10 hours)  
Outside Australia: +61 2 6240 8778  
Within Australia: 1300 360 992

**Email** [traenquiries@education.gov.au](mailto:traenquiries@education.gov.au)

**Web** [www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au](http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au)



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