



New Offshore Skills Assessments – Offshore Technical Skills Record

A new streamlined and robust service to assess people with trade skills wishing to migrate to Australia commenced operation on 1 September 2007.

Overseas skills assessments will be provided by a consortium of Victorian and Western Australian registered training organisations, led by VETASSESS. All prospective migrants from our key source countries of migrants with trade skills in key occupations will be tested to agreed Australian standards before coming to Australia.

The new service is a world first for skills recognition and means more certainty for migrants and more certainty for employers. It comes as a result of extensive consultation with industry and state and territory governments.

The new service will include an assessment of qualifications, skills and licensing requirements to make it easier for skilled migrants to work immediately upon arrival in Australia. This will also assist in meeting industry demands. It will ensure that the quality of the migrant assessment process is not only maintained, but significantly increased.

General electricians, cable jointers, electrical power line persons, general plumbers, motor mechanics, refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics, carpenters and joiners and bricklayers from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the Philippines will be able to access the service.

The initiative will benefit both the migrant, who will encounter a more streamlined, efficient process incorporating both skills and pre-migration requirements and who will not have to face further duplicate assessment, and Australia, which will welcome migrants with known skills, able to work in skills need areas and to contribute to Australia's productivity much earlier than has been the case until now.

Assessment will take place against standards set by Australian industry and regulators as part of the Council of Australian Government process agreed in February 2006. In most occupations, the standard will be at the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate III level except for the plumbing trade, where the migrant will be tested against nationally agreed specified units of competency. In all cases, the standard set will be higher than that presently used for assessment and migrants will be expected to meet the standard in full.

To ensure confidence in the new measures, VETASSESS has set in place a number of stringent quality measures in addition to existing requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007.

VETASSESS will also work closely with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to address questions of identity and document fraud and documentation will involve photographic identification.