



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Deputy Secretary
Kathryn Campbell

Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No. 53 (Overseas Trained Doctors) Date: 08/02/2011
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SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO REGISTRATION PROCESSES AND SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS TRAINED DOCTORS

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provides support for the recognition of overseas-trained doctors in Australia, and so offers the following information in relation to the second of the terms of reference for the inquiry:

Report on the support programs available through the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments, professional organisations and colleges to assist OTDs to meet registration requirements, and provide suggestions for the enhancement and integration of these programs.

Assessment Subsidy for Overseas Trained Professionals (ASDOT)

The Assessment Subsidy for Overseas Trained Professionals Program (ASDOT) is an ongoing administered funding program. It facilitates labour market mobility through integration into the workforce of unemployed or underemployed individuals with professional qualifications obtained overseas who are financially disadvantaged. ASDOT is administered jointly by DEEWR and Centrelink. The program began operating in 1989.

Eligible applicants receive assistance to cover the cost of approved examinations and/or assessments which are necessary to qualify for employment in the relevant profession. Assistance is available for approved examinations and/or assessments in 15 professions, including General Medicine and Medical Specialties, and for the Occupational English Test (OET) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test (see **Attachment A**).

ASDOT assistance is available to applicants who can meet all of the ASDOT eligibility requirements. The full eligibility criteria are given in **Attachment B**, but the principal criteria are being an Australian citizen or permanent resident and experiencing financial disadvantage.

Overseas-trained doctors have consistently accessed this program, and as a profession they are amongst the most significant users of ASDOT. The program is of particular value to them because of the significant cost of the required exams.

Professions covered by ASDOT

Specific assessments and/or examinations for the following professions are approved for the purposes of ASDOT:

- Architecture
- Chiropractic
- Dentistry
- Dietetics
- General Medicine
- Medical Science
- Medical Specialties
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Radiography
- Veterinary Science.

Eligible applicants from approved professions may also receive ASDOT assistance for the costs of the International Language Testing System (IELTS) test or the Occupational English Test.

ASDOT eligibility criteria

Individuals seeking ASDOT assistance must satisfy the following criteria:

- possess qualifications obtained overseas in a profession which is approved for ASDOT purposes
- demonstrate they are a citizen or permanent resident of Australia or a New Zealand citizen living in Australia
- hold or be named on a Centrelink Concession Card which is valid at the time of application **or** meet the requirements of an alternative income means test applied by Centrelink. This requires applicants to prove that they meet the eligibility requirements for a Low Income Health Care Card, excluding the requirement to serve the 104-week newly arrived residents waiting period
- apply to undertake an ASDOT approved examination/assessment in Australia
- have not already received assistance under the program for the same examination/assessment stage that is being applied for, and
- apply up to three months in advance of the closing date for the examination or apply for reimbursement up to twelve months after completing the examination/assessment.

ASDOT approved applications and expenditure

Number of applications in General Medicine and Medical Specialties approved for ASDOT assistance*

Financial Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11 (YTD)
AMC - MCQ exam	180	107	118	56
AMC - Clinical exam	66	59	63	53
Medical specialist assessment	14	5	3	2
Total	260	171	184	111

*As both AMC and the specialist medical colleges have multiple-stage assessments, the number of applications approved for ASDOT assistance will be higher than the actual number of individuals.

Amount of ASDOT assistance expended on approved applications in General Medicine and Medical Specialties*

Financial Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11 (YTD)
Total assistance	\$537,902	\$360,997	\$383,116	\$270,370
Percentage of annual funding allocation	74% (of \$728,000)	49% (of \$743,000)	51% (of \$759,000)	35% (of \$772,000)

*For the AMC - MCQ exam and AMC - Clinical exam, and Medical specialist assessment.