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Dear Sir,

I am a physiotherapist, heading a department in an internationally renowned institution in the United Arab Emirates. Last October I have been invited for the skills expo in Chennai. It was an 'eye opener' for potential employees and migrants. I have put in considerable efforts to attend the expo.

I had been introduced to the various programs like 'STNI' and SIR visas promoted by the concerned regions. I had been given an advice to get myself evaluated by a regulating authority which would assess my credentials.

In my case, it was ACOPRA which would evaluate my credentials. I had done a lot of homework and posted my papers to ACOPRA which in turn handed it over to AECOP.

After a couple of months, I was told that I am eligible to sit for the written exam. I felt that there was a certain degree of communication gap from ACOPRA.

They had not mentioned the following aspects

- The validity of this assessment which led to the eligibility to sit for the written exams.
- The hard copy of the eligibility to sit for the exam.
- The break up of the evaluation work sheet
- The number of attempt(s) the individual is allowed to sit for the written exam.
- The validity period for the eligibility assessment

Although DIMIA takes considerable efforts to encourage the skilled employees and migrants to opt for Australia, it needs to ensure whether the assessing body facilitates the process, working hand in hand with DIMIA.

There are various facts which were not highlighted to the potential skilled migrant

- One year limited period registration.
- Physiotherapy conversion programme

If by chance a candidate lacks in a certain avenue related to one's profession, the regulating authority will need to advise regarding the various options

available to bridge the deficiency. It was with my own interest and continuous effort that I had come to know that a physiotherapist can get registered with the regional or the national board through the following methods. I had found that there are physiotherapy degree conversion courses available in Western Australia Perth and each regional board has a limited period membership. Why is it that the ACOPRA does not advise on the same?

One needs to remember that the individual who is applying as the skilled migrant is already a practicing clinician in his own country. So, the assessing body must not treat the individual as a candidate just out of the university.

It may be quite possible that the Australian physiotherapists possess a high competency level, but if experienced overseas physiotherapists are intending to migrate as a skilled migrant, they should not be assessed using such stringent methods of evaluation. If ACOPRA is intending to maintain a high level of competency whereby very few pass the exam, it is better that the individuals are informed about the poor passing rate, so that the physiotherapists do not waste their time and money. If there is so much of resistance from the assessing body to encourage overseas physiotherapists, then the government should not put this profession which is highly in demand. It is DIMIA which states the lack of physiotherapists in the country but ACOPRA is contradicting the very purpose of attracting people with such skills.

These are the practical obstacles a skilled migrant would encounter. I request you to look into the above issues in order that the regulating bodies assigned help you reach your holistic objective.

Regards
Francis Vijay
Physiotherapist