



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Inquiry into Overseas Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing

Submission by the Department of Education, Science and Training

July 2005

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DEST submission to Joint Standing Committee on Migration July 2005

Background

On 19 April 2005 the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Senator Amanda Vanstone, asked the Joint Standing Committee on Migration to inquire into overseas skills recognition, upgrading and licensing in Australia. An information paper for this inquiry has been published at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/recognition/infopaper.pdf> .

The information paper states that assessing the skills of those who wish to migrate to Australia under the skills migration component of Australia's Migration Program is a key element of the migration system. Skills migration is the largest component of Australia's Migration Program and the skilled stream is designed to enhance the labour force by targeting migrants who possess skills or outstanding abilities that will contribute to the Australian economy. The information paper further states that:

- Skills assessment is a basic requirement for all prospective general skills migration (GSM) applicants and that prior to applying for GSM, an intending applicant must have his or her skills assessed by the relevant Australian assessing authority.
- In order to be granted a visa under GSM an applicant's skills must have been assessed as suitable by the assessing authority for the occupation nominated by the applicant. In addition, GSM applicants must also possess post secondary (such as university or trade) qualifications.
- Those applying for employer nominated/sponsored migration must have their qualifications assessed if registration, licensing or membership of a professional body is mandatory in the proposed field of employment. Requirements for professional recognition in Australia depend on the level of regulation governing the individual professions and on the assessment processes of the various Australian assessing authorities.
- Australian Education International (AEI) provides information and advice through the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) on professional recognition requirements and on the comparability of overseas qualifications with Australian qualifications. AEI-NOOSR also provides information on educational systems, guidance on assessing qualifications from other countries and is an Australian assessing authority of school teaching skills for GSM applicants.

The Committee had invited interested persons and organisations to make submissions addressing the terms of reference by 24 June 2005. The Department of Education, Science and Training wrote to the Chair of the Committee requesting an extension to 22 July and this was granted.

Summary

This submission addresses the following terms of reference:

1. Investigate and report on current arrangements for overseas skills recognition and associated issues of licensing and registration.
2. Consider how Australia's arrangements compare with those of other major immigration countries.
3. Identify areas where Australia's procedures can be improved.

The Australian Government recently announced the expansion of the Skill Stream of the 2005-06 Migration Program by providing an additional 20,000 places to help meet Australia's short and long-term labour force needs. This will bring the number of places in this program to 97,500. A primary aim of the increased skilled migrant intake will be to expand the numbers in the employer sponsored categories, as it is employers who are best placed to identify their skills needed.

DEST contributes to this Program by ensuring that the processes for skills recognition are in place and do not cause undue delays to the processing of migrant applications. DEST's primary contribution is to facilitate the recognition of overseas professional skills through:

- approving assessing authorities which assess the skills of professionals; and
- providing a qualifications recognition service.

DEST makes a contribution to improving outcomes from the recognition of trades skills through contributing to COAG initiatives to bring greater consistency to licensing arrangements across the States and Territories that impact on skilled migrants seeking to work in licensed occupations.

Professional bodies play an important role in maintaining and promoting quality professional practice in Australia. Professional bodies that also act as assessing authorities for skilled migration are also responsible for providing a qualifications assessment that is a prerequisite for migration to Australia under the General Skilled Migration Program.

DEST assists with the process by approving new assessing authorities. The approval process is designed to ensure that the nominated professional body has the capacity to deliver effective professional qualifications assessment that is consistent with Australia's quality and standards and labour market interests. DIMIA is responsible for gazettal of these authorities once they are approved.

DEST also works with professional bodies to facilitate recognition of overseas-trained Australian professionals who did not enter the country through the General Skilled Migration Program.

In this submission DEST

- outlines its current arrangements for overseas skills recognition; and
- identifies areas for improvement in terms of:
 - efficiency of processes and elimination of barriers;
 - achieving greater consistency in recognition of qualifications for occupational licensing; and
 - alternative approaches to skills assessment and recognition of overseas qualifications.

Term of Reference (1)

Investigate and report on current arrangements for overseas skills recognition and associated issues of licensing and registration

DEST's contribution to this submission will focus on the following:

1. approving professional bodies as assessing authorities;
2. recognising overseas qualifications;
3. skills assessment for overseas-trained professionals;
4. comments on the current process for trades skills recognition; and
5. new trades skills training visa.

1. Approving professional bodies as assessing authorities

This section describes:

- DEST's role in skills recognition for professional occupations;
- the role of the assessing authorities; and
- other factors affecting skills recognition for professional occupations.

By approving assessing authorities and recognising overseas qualifications, DEST provides support to the skilled migration program whereby overseas-trained professionals may apply to migrate to Australia under the General Skilled Migration Program. The Program targets individuals who have the necessary skills and abilities to quickly enter the labour market.

DEST's role

Overseas-trained professionals who wish to migrate under the Program must have their skills assessed by an approved assessing authority in order to make a valid migration application. Under the Migration Regulations 1994, DEST or the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs may approve assessing authorities. Approved assessing authorities are then gazetted by the Minister for Immigration. The legal power to confer upon a body the role of assessing the professional ability of an applicant for skilled migration is reserved to the Minister for Immigration.

Under agreed arrangements, professional occupations requiring an assessing authority that can conduct a specific occupational assessment are nominated by DIMIA in consultation with DEWR. The process of then identifying and approving new professional assessing authorities is shared between DIMIA and DEST, with assistance from DEWR. Advice may also be sought from other government agencies with knowledge of the relevant profession.

Attachment A to this submission contains further explanation of what is expected of potential assessing authorities.

The role of assessing authorities approved by DEST

Assessing authorities approved by DEST and gazetted by the Minister for Immigration conduct assessments of skills and qualifications gained overseas for professional purposes to determine whether an applicant has suitable qualifications to be recognised and to work as a professional in Australia. Should they be accepted for migration, any further licensing or registration with a regulatory body is not a matter for DEST, but rather a matter for the professional body representing the industry. Assessing authorities approved by DEST undertake assessments for the purpose of skilled migration only.

As of 1 July 2005 there were 34 assessing authorities listed in the DIMIA document that contains the Skilled Occupations List (SOL) as well as details of relevant assessing authorities (Form 1121i). Details of the assessing authorities required for individual professions are also listed on the DEST AEI webpage at

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/RecognisingProfessionalQualifications/GuideToProfessionalRecognition/Individual%20Professions>

The only professional occupations which are currently assessed through AEI-NOOSR for migration purposes under the General Skilled Migration Program are :

- Pre primary school teacher;
- Primary school teacher; and
- Secondary school teacher.

Full information about the process of skill assessment and professional recognition for teachers is available at

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/RecognisingProfessionalQualifications/TeachingInAustralia/Default.htm>

In order to approve a person or body as an assessing authority, DEST:

- assesses the capability for properly discharging the role of an assessing authority (including ensuring that the assessing authorities require the same assessment level for overseas applicants as those required for people trained in Australia or who are Australian citizens);
- monitors the assessment activities of gazetted bodies; and
- provides qualifications assessment and related advisory services to assessing authorities to help them establish the equivalence of overseas qualifications in relation to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

DEST does not provide support for the assessment of the skills of persons who are not members of the professions. Nor does DEST directly recognise (either formally or informally) the skills of professionals – ultimately this is a matter for employers, professions and regulatory bodies.

Attachment B to this submission provides further explanation of what is involved in professional assessment.

Other factors affecting skills recognition for the professions

Professions in Australia can be divided into four groups: regulated, partially-regulated, self-regulated and unregulated. Each profession has its own processes by which individuals can gain recognition in order to practice their profession.

An individual seeking to practice in a regulated profession must be registered with the appropriate registration board established under State/Territory law. Legal practice, architecture and a number of health-related professions are regulated professions in every Australian State and Territory.

An individual seeking to practice in a partially-regulated profession must be registered with the appropriate registration board established under State/Territory law where such a registration board exists; or practice their profession in accordance with the regulation of relevant professional activities under State/Territory and/or Commonwealth law. Where no such legal requirements exist, partially-regulated professions are otherwise considered self-regulated. Accountancy, engineering, surveying, teaching and a number of health-related professions are partially-regulated professions.

2. Qualifications recognition services provided by DEST

This section describes:

- the nature of the qualifications recognition service; and
- the limitations to this service.

The nature of the qualifications recognition service

The Department of Education, Science and Training provides authoritative advice and guidance on the recognition of overseas qualifications for a range of organisations, including those responsible for the pre-migration skills assessment such as professional assessing authorities and the Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services (VETASSESS), and also those who provide settlement services for migrants such as the Overseas Qualifications Units based in the State and Territory Governments.

VETASSESS is the assessing authority appointed by DIMIA which is responsible for assessing qualifications in a range of management, administrative, professional and associate professional occupations for the Skilled Migration Program. VETASSESS is the commercial arm of the Kangan Batman TAFE.

The qualification recognition service provided by DEST involves:

- production of publications which provides comprehensive information on country education systems and providing assessment guidelines on the comparability of overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications. These publications are called Country Education Profiles – available for purchase at <http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/PublicationsAndResearch/CEP/CEPs.htm>;
- provision of a free advisory service on qualifications recognition to professional assessing authorities;
- support for organisations responsible for the provision of settlement services by each of the State and Territory governments by providing a free advisory service;
- undertaking assessments on a fee-for-service arrangement for permanent residents who want their overseas qualifications recognised; and
- provision of a training, mentoring, auditing and qualification assessment service on a fee-for-service arrangement to VETASSESS.

Attachment C to this submission provides further information on the Assessment Guidelines used by DEST.

Limitations to the qualifications recognition

There are some qualifications which DEST does not assess. The following list describes the main types of qualifications or documents DEST does not assess, but there may be other instances where DEST is not able to undertake an assessment. This occurs when:

- insufficient documentation has been provided by the applicant;
- there is insufficient information available about the qualification to make an informed assessment judgement; or
- there are inconsistencies in the documentation provided by the applicant, or other grounds, to suggest that the qualifications/documents may be fraudulent.

DEST does not assess the following:

- **Short course or single-subject certificates or diplomas.** Such qualifications do not lend themselves to comparison with qualifications on the AQF.
- **Incomplete studies** (however substantial) in terms of an Australian qualification. The most that DEST can say in these circumstances is that the studies in question could

be regarded as comparable to the educational level of completion of Year 12 in Australia, with some further studies at tertiary level. In some cases it is not possible to comment.

- **Qualifications awarded by professional bodies.** With some exceptions, DEST has not normally regarded the qualifications (including membership) of professional bodies, obtained by passing examinations conducted by the professional bodies, as constituting educational qualifications which it could properly compare to Australian educational qualifications. DEST currently considers such qualifications on a case-by-case basis, where evidence can be obtained concerning their status in the country of origin and where the qualification was made on completion of a coherent educational program.
- **Licences, permits or other employment-related documents** entitling the holder to work [at a specific level] in an occupation or profession, as DEST does not regard such documents as lending themselves to educational comparison.
- **Trade qualifications.** Responsibility for the assessment of trade qualifications rests with the relevant Australian state or territory trade skills assessing authority. Persons with trade skills can seek to have their skills assessed by Trades Recognition Australia either on shore or offshore.
- **General or academic secondary school qualifications.** While DEST may provide comments on such qualifications at the end of the assessment guidelines, such qualifications are formally assessed by the relevant Australian state or territory educational authority.

3. Skills assessment for Australian overseas-trained professionals

Overseas-trained professionals who are Australian residents and have not entered Australia under the General Skilled Migration Program need their skills recognised for registration and employment purposes. DEST manages two programs that assist Australian overseas-trained professionals to gain recognition of their qualifications and skills:

- the Assessment Fee Subsidy for Overseas Trained Australians (ASDOT) covers the cost of fees for approved assessments required for entry into their profession for eligible Australian overseas-trained professionals (**Attachment D**); and
- access to bridging studies under FEE-HELP, a loan scheme open to eligible fee-paying undergraduate or postgraduate students. Overseas-trained professionals who are citizens or permanent residents of Australia are eligible for FEE-HELP to cover the cost of bridging studies required for entry into their profession. (List of professions and the relevant assessing authorities that are approved for identifying bridging study **Attachment E**).

4. Comments on the current trade skills recognition process

Under the Skilled Stream of the Australian Migration Program, prospective migrants must have their trades skills assessed prior to lodging a migration application. The skills assessment is undertaken by Trades Recognition Australia (TRA), which is a part of DEWR. TRA is the relevant authority for setting standards and assessing a range of trade and associate professional occupations for migration purposes. It is empowered to do so under Regulation 2.26B of the *Migration Regulations 1994*. The standards are determined in consultation with the Department of Education, Science and Training and other stakeholders.

Since 1 January 2005, TRA has adopted the Uniform Assessment Criteria as the standards against which the skills of prospective skilled migrants are assessed. Under those criteria, TRA applies a benchmark of trade training and work experience equivalent to that of an Australian apprenticeship-trained tradesperson in assessing prospective skilled applicants. Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications issued under the Australian Quality Training Framework are accepted by Trades Recognition Australia as contributory evidence. However, the qualification by itself may not meet the full requirements for pre-migration skills assessment without evidence of relevant on-the-job experience.

This approach is well aligned with the national vocational education and training system and its quality assurance arrangements. It also ensures that successful migrants have the appropriate skills and experience to meet the needs of prospective employers.

Attachment F contains further information about the process of having skills recognised by TRA for pre migrant applicants, permanent residents and temporary residents.

5. The new trade skills training visa

As part of the Government's 2005-06 Budget measures, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) is progressing legislation to establish a Trade Skills Training Visa to allow regional employers to take on New Apprentices from overseas on a full fee paying basis from November 2005. The agreed additional four year cost of New Apprenticeships employer incentives is \$6.3 million. Visa applicants will pay a charge of \$3,300 as a contribution towards employer incentives.

On completion of the New Apprenticeship, the individuals will be able to apply for permanent residence through existing regional migration visas.

Some of the features of the proposal include:

- only New Apprenticeships leading to trades occupations in skill shortage will be able to be accessed under the new arrangements;
- there will be a test that an employer is not able to fill the New Apprenticeship locally before the vacancy can be filled by an overseas applicant;
- New Apprentices will be sponsored by an Australian organisation with potential sponsors including Group Training Organisations; employer peak bodies or large regional employers;
- New Apprentices will be full fee paying, including funding the cost of the training delivery; and
- incentives will be paid to participating employers under the New Apprenticeships Incentives Program.

On 14 April 2005, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the announcement of this initiative.

Following a stakeholder meeting chaired by DIMIA on 16 May 2005, a program of work leading to implementation of the measure on 1 November 2005 was agreed.

Term of Reference (2)

How Australia's arrangements compare with other countries

1. General comments on Australia's arrangements

In Australia each occupation or group of occupations has its own distinct pathway to recognition as a professional. Similarly other countries have differing processes determined by whether the profession is regulated, self regulating or unregulated. These arrangements are generally relevant to both domestically and overseas trained professionals.

Regulation is used to protect and promote standards and quality. However regulation can impede recognition and mobility. The differences in and complexity of skills recognition arrangements between countries is not only being addressed through multilateral and bilateral trade agendas, but also through mutual recognition arrangements negotiated between the professions themselves.

DEST supports the DEWR view that Australia's arrangements for overseas skills recognition compares favourably with countries. The legislation covering the recognition of professional qualifications can vary depending upon the State and Territory licensing and registration requirements. However subject to certain conditions, if a person is registered to practice an occupation in one Australian State or Territory they can carry out an equivalent occupation in any other Australian State or Territory after gaining registration with the relevant Registration Board (Mutual Recognition Act).

The table below provides an overview of Australia's approach to recognition of skills and qualifications.

Table 1: Australia's approach to recognition of skills and qualifications

| Authorities involved | Regulated occupations | Unregulated occupations | Professional Mobility Frameworks |
|--|--|--|--|
| Approved assessing authority Profession-specific registration boards established by State/Territory law Licensing authorities in the States/Territories Trades Recognition Australia VETASSESS | Professional skills qualifications recognised by approved assessing authority Trade skills and qualifications are recognised by Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) Educational qualifications recognised by AEI-NOOSR (academic) and TRA (trades) Registration by specific boards established by State/Territory law Note: there is some uncertainty about which bodies should recognise the skills and qualifications of some para professional occupations | Professional qualifications recognised by approved assessing authority Academic qualifications recognised by AEI-NOOSR Other qualifications recognised by VET Assessment Service (VETASSESS) | Australian Qualifications Framework Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangements (between Governments of Australia and NZ) Lisbon Recognition Convention UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (the Regional Convention) APEC Engineers Registers Washington Accord APEC Architect Project (currently underway) Bilateral trade agreements MOUs/MRAs by professional associations with overseas counterparts |

2. Mobility Frameworks

DEST has actively promoted and supported the development of mutual recognition agreements between professions to promote recognition and mobility. In particular the Department has played a lead role through APEC in establishing APEC Architect (being finalised) and APEC Engineer. These projects offer a framework to reduce barriers including recognition procedures preventing professionals from accessing work opportunities in the APEC region.

Participating economies include: Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

A range of frameworks which are of relevance to the professions are outlined in the table below.

Table 2: Mobility Frameworks

| Mobility Framework | Explanation of the framework |
|--|---|
| Washington Accord | The Washington Accord was signed in 1989. It is an agreement between the bodies responsible for accrediting professional engineering degree programs in each of the signatory countries. It recognizes the substantial equivalency of programs accredited by those bodies, and recommends that graduates of accredited programs in any of the signatory countries be recognized by the other countries as having met the academic requirements for entry to the practice of engineering. The Washington Accord covers professional engineering undergraduate degrees. Australia is a signatory to this agreement. |
| European Union Directive on mutual recognition of qualifications for regulated professions | The General System for Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications is operated by means of two European Directives: 89/48/EEC (the First Diploma Directive) and 92/51/EEC (the Second Diploma Directive). The General System is founded on the premise that an individual qualified in one Member State in a given profession, should be allowed in principle to act in that same professional capacity in another Member State without having to requalify. The General System requires mutual trust in the validity of professional training anywhere in the EU or in the European Economic Area (EEA). This entails that a qualification should be recognised in any Member State with the proviso that where there are substantial differences between the education and training to which the qualification attests and that required in another Member State, a migrant may be asked to compensate for these differences in accordance with the mechanisms laid down in the directives. |
| Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangements | The Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA), is a non-treaty arrangement between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments of Australia and the Government of New Zealand. It is a cornerstone of a single economic market and a powerful driver of regulatory coordination and integration. The Arrangement gives effect to two mutual recognition principles relating to the sale of goods and the registration of occupations. In terms of occupations it states that a person registered to practise an occupation in Australia is entitled to practise an equivalent occupation in New Zealand, and vice versa, without the need for further testing or examination. |
| Lisbon Recognition Convention | The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and adopted by national representatives meeting in Lisbon on 8 - 11 April 1997. Most European countries have since ratified this Council of Europe/ UNESCO Convention – usually referred to as the Lisbon Convention. Among the main points of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention are the following: |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> holders of qualifications issued in one country shall have adequate access to an assessment of these qualifications in another country; no discrimination shall be made in this respect on any ground such as the applicant's gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic or social origin; and the responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment. <p>Each country shall recognise qualifications – whether for access to higher education, for periods of study or for higher education degrees – as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless it can show that there are substantial differences between its own qualifications and the qualifications for which recognition is sought.</p> |
| UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific | <p>The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific was adopted in Bangkok on 16 December 1983 (UN Treaty Series No. 32021), enabling the educational and research resources available to the signatory states to be used as effectively as possible in the interests of all the Contracting States. The convention has many purposes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) making their higher educational institutions as widely accessible as possible to students or researchers from any of the Contracting States; (ii) recognizing the studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees of such persons; and (iii) establishing and improving the system for the exchange of information regarding the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees. |
| APEC Architect | <p>The aim of this framework is to reduce barriers including recognition procedures preventing professionals from accessing work opportunities in the APEC region. Australia is a participating economy to this arrangement.</p> |
| APEC Engineer | <p>The aim of this framework is to reduce barriers including recognition procedures preventing professionals from accessing work opportunities in the APEC region. Australia is a participating economy to this arrangement</p> |

3. Examples of professional recognition pathways

The information in this section of the submission provides some examples of professional recognition pathways used in Australia, Canada and USA for the following industries: Architecture; Accountancy and Engineering.

Architecture – Australia

It is the law in Australia that if a person wishes to use the title of and offer services to the public as an architect, that person must be registered with a State or Territory Architects' Board.

Responsibility for the control of building activity in Australia rests with the individual states and territories, who each maintain legislation prescribing the technical standards required for building construction.

The common requirements for registration throughout Australia are an approved qualification from an accredited course conducted in Australia or overseas, plus two years practical experience working in Australia. If a person is trained overseas, an Architects Board may vary this depending on the length and type of overseas experience.

Recognition arrangements

Under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement architects registered to practise in New Zealand are eligible to apply for registration in Australia without having to repeat or

undergo further registration requirements. Recognition may also result from successful completion of competency-based assessment.

Architecture - Canada

The practice of architecture is controlled by provincial or territorial law and governed by professional organizations or regulatory bodies. The licensing authority governing the profession in each province or territory has the power to set entry requirements and standards of practice; to assess applicants' qualifications and credentials; to certify, register, or license qualified applicants; and to discipline members of the profession or trade.

If an architect wants to work in Canada, they must obtain a licence from, or be registered with, the appropriate provincial or territorial regulatory body. The Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB) assesses only the education of foreign-trained architects; the CACB assessment of academic qualifications needs to be obtained prior to an individual's arrival in Canada.

Recognition arrangements

Reciprocity Agreement of Canadian Architectural Licensing Associations allows for Inter-recognition Agreement between the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (USA) and the Committee of Canadian Architectural Councils.

Architecture - USA

Buildings for human habitation are designed by architects who are registered in the jurisdiction where the building is located. All U.S. jurisdictions have title and practice acts to regulate the profession of architecture. There is no self-regulation and registration is decentralized, at the state/territorial level.

Recognition Arrangements

An agreement between the United States and Canada allows Canadian architects to be registered in the United States without undergoing re examination. This applies to Canadian architects from all provinces except Newfoundland.

Accountancy - Australia

There is no legal impediment preventing persons, of whatever qualification and experience, from presenting themselves to the public as an accountant.

Accountancy is a co-regulated profession, ie members' activities are subject to the specific regulatory controls of statutory bodies such as the Australian Securities Commission, the Australian Taxation Office and the Insurance & Superannuation Commission.

Both the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (ICAA) and Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants (ASCPA) are self-regulating professional associations.

Recognition Arrangements

The ICAA has bilateral agreements in place with their counterparts in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, South Africa and the US.

Accountancy - Canada

The regulation of accountancy in Canada is decentralized. Professional bodies in each Canadian province or territory, operating under delegated legal authority from the relevant provincial or territorial government, are responsible for licensing and certification matters. The profession of accountancy has restricted and non-restricted activities or fields of practice.

Provincial or territorial associations, institutes or licensing bodies are responsible for setting the standards for entry into the profession and issuing licences to those who meet established standards of qualifications and practice. Foreign accountants seeking to work in Canada need

to apply to different organizations for permission to practise the profession in a province or territory (i.e., a licensing and certification matter) and, for assessment of foreign credentials for employment purposes (i.e., an immigration matter).

Requirements to practise may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Only some provincial or territorial associations or institutes provide assessments of foreign credentials prior to a person's arrival in Canada.

Recognition Arrangements

There are three types of accountants in Canada: chartered (CA), certified general (CGA) and certified management (CMA). Generally speaking, they plan, organize and administer accounting systems for individuals and establishments. They may also provide a variety of services for individuals or organizations, including audit, review, compilation, accounting, management consulting, financial and tax planning, bankruptcy and receivership.

For chartered accountants there are currently 8 foreign accountancy bodies with educational, experiential and examination requirements that have been deemed to be substantially equivalent to those of the Canadian CA profession. These foreign accountancy bodies are in Australia, England and Wales, France, Ireland, Japan, Scotland, South Africa and the US.

For Certified General Accountants and Certified Management Accountants there are no arrangements.

Accountancy - USA

The public practice of accountancy in the United States is primarily regulated by each state through an occupational licensing board. Each such board is created by state statute and authorized by the respective state accountancy act to establish requirements for certification, and to adopt and enforce rules of conduct and ethics applicable to certificate holders.

All states regulate to various degrees CPAs engaged in attest services. Many also license "public accountants" or "licensed accountants". A few states only directly regulate the use of the CPA title, while most still regulate the public practice of accountancy. In those states, only CPAs may offer to perform (hold themselves out as CPAs) certain attest services.

Recognition Arrangements

An agreement on Principles of Reciprocity exists between the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. A similar agreement was reached between the AICPA, NASBA, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia in 1996. The agreements are based on a detailed review of the education, examination, and experience requirements that must be met in order to be licensed as a CPA in the U.S., as a chartered accountant in Canada, and as a chartered accountant in Australia.

With respect to professional examination, the Agreement recommends to the respective regulatory authorities in the U.S., Australia, and Canada that Canadian or Australian chartered accountants seeking to use the title of CPA in the U.S., and U.S. CPAs seeking to use the title of CA in Canada or Australia, be permitted to qualify without taking the entire uniform accountancy examination for the jurisdiction in which licensure is sought.

Engineers - Australia

The main professional engineering body in Australia is The Institution of Engineers, Australia.

Recognition by the Institution of Engineers takes the form of various membership grades in each of the occupational categories. The framework of membership recognises a graduate as having demonstrated, through successful completion of appropriate tertiary study, that they

have achieved the enabling competencies required of their particular occupation. The membership grade postnominals are GradIEAust, GradTIEAust and GradOIEAust.

Successful completion of a three stage process involving completion of appropriate tertiary studies, work experience and competency based assessment allows the title of Chartered Professional Engineer, Chartered Engineering Technologist or Chartered Engineering Officer (Associate) to be granted and holders are deemed to be competent to practice independently.

Recognition Arrangements

IEAust has a number of bilateral agreements of co-operation and affiliation, including mutual recognition agreements, with overseas national engineering societies around the world. The IEA is a signatory to the Washington Accord that recognizes that the accreditation systems for engineering programs in the signatory countries are comparable and that the accreditation decisions rendered by one party are acceptable to another party.

Engineers - Canada

The profession of engineer is regulated in Canada in a decentralized manner. Foreign-trained engineers seeking to work in Canada need to complete the requirements of two separate processes:

- 1) entry to the profession (i.e., permission to practise the profession (a licensing or certification matter)); and
- 2) entry to Canada (i.e., an immigration matter).

Concerning entry to the profession, provincial and territorial associations of professional engineers are responsible for setting standards and issuing licences.

With respect to entering Canada, applicants may need to obtain an assessment of qualifications. For the purpose of immigration to a Canadian territory or province except Quebec, applicants an assessment of their engineering qualifications from the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) is required.

Recognition Arrangements

The CCPE has the following agreements, the implementation of which is the responsibility of the associations of professional engineers in the provinces or territories:

- Mutual Recognition Agreement between the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. and the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers ("ABET Agreement"), recognizes that the accreditation systems for engineering programs in Canada and the United States are comparable and that the accreditation decision letters rendered by one party are acceptable to the other party.
- Recognition of Equivalency of Accredited Engineering Education Programs Leading to the Engineering Degree ("The Washington Accord").
- Entente de reconnaissance mutuelle entre la Commission des titres d'ingenieur (CTI) pour la France et le Conseil canadien des ingenieurs (CCI) pour la Canada (Mutual Recognition Agreement between La Commission des Titres d'Ingenieur (CTI) for France and the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) for Canada or "France Agreement"). This agreement recognizes that the accreditation systems for engineering programs are substantially equivalent and sets out a procedure for recognition of individual engineers in each country.

The CCPE is also engaged in consultations in the "Engineers' Mobility Forum", a group composed of Washington Accord signatories. This group is working on a framework, similar to

the APEC Engineers' Project led by Australia, that could provide the basis for bilateral agreements.

Engineers - USA

The practice of engineering is regulated by the laws that individually exist in each of the 50 States of the United States and five territorial jurisdictions. These laws are administered and enforced by the independent licensing boards of each of those states and territories.

Recognition Arrangements

There are agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Washington Accord, which can provide mechanisms for the use of recognition attained in foreign jurisdictions. Under NAFTA, representatives of the engineering profession in the United States, Canada, and Mexico agreed to a document specifying the conditions for recognition of licensed engineers. The Washington Accord is an agreement among six signatories (U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and Ireland) which specifies institutions and programs in each country which are recognized as providing the basic engineering education for engineers.

However, the individual United States jurisdictions are the sole determinate of the acceptance of any or all qualifications, experience, licensure, etc. attained by a foreign professional in a foreign jurisdiction.

Term of Reference (3)

Identify areas where Australia's procedures can be improved

DEST is able to comment on the following areas where Australia's procedures can be improved:

- communication of processes to users;
- efficiency of processes and elimination of barriers;
- achieving greater consistency in recognition of qualifications for occupational licensing; and
- alternative approaches to skills assessment and recognition of overseas qualifications.

1. Communication of processes to users

Effective dissemination of information on skills pathways and services to new arrivals, potential new arrivals, case workers, policy makers, administrators and employers is important in offering access to skills recognition pathways.

The Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants released by DIMIA in May 2003 found that skills recognition was a major issue for new arrivals to Australia. In response DEST led a Working Party (including DIMIA, DEWR, PM&C and FaCS) to address the Report's recommendations regarding accessibility, consistency and complexity of skills recognition processes.

The Working Party's recommendations included a proposal for the development of a skills recognition services and pathways web portal. This initiative, which is currently being developed and funded by DIMIA, will provide professionals (and other potential skilled migrants) with an accessible, one-stop shop on skills recognition pathways and services. An appropriately resourced and well-designed website has the potential to improve access to skills recognition for overseas-trained professionals.

2. Efficiency of processes and elimination of barriers

Where a need is identified under the General Skilled Migration Program for a professional assessing authority but there is no existing professional body that can take on the role, consideration needs to be given to facilitating the establishment of such a body by the profession concerned. Alternatively regulatory authorities if they exist may be able to discharge this function. In addition, options are under consideration to expand the number of assessing bodies to cover professions that may be deemed to be in high demand and which may as a result be included on the Migration Occupation Demand List (MODL). DEWR is responsible for identifying occupations on this list.

3. Achieving greater consistency in recognition of qualifications for occupational licensing

In order to work in certain trades such as electrical, building and construction, and plumbing, an individual must register with and/or have a licence from a registration and licensing authority. This is required by the relevant State or Territory law. State occupational licensing agreements vary from state to state in terms of the occupations in which assessment is required and in terms of the requirements for particular occupations.

Industry regulators in each state and territory oversee compliance with industry licensing requirements. They manage and monitor the application of these requirements.

Licensing provides a safeguard for consumers and assists to ensure professionalism in a range of industries as licensed workers must comply with the relevant law and their occupations' prescribed code of conduct. It also provides a level of confidence to consumers on the competence and integrity of the person with whom they are dealing with or are intending to deal with in relation to the undertaking of certain activities.

Occupational licensing and other regulatory requirements apply to a range of industry sectors and in a variety of forms such as licences, registration, permits and certificates of competency. There is generally no uniform licensing system in operation across jurisdictions.

As a consequence of the present operation of licensing systems, individuals can find that after gaining a national vocational education and training qualification, they are required to undertake similar training and/or assessment with a regulatory and licensing body outside the national training system in order to gain a licence before taking up employment. A similar situation applies to skilled migrants seeking to work in licensed occupations. In some industries, individuals who move interstate to work, may find that they have to be assessed again in order to obtain a licence in that jurisdiction.

The complexity of the occupational licensing regimes in Australia and the lack of consistency between the national vocational education and training system and licensing are contributing to an unnecessary level of complication for people moving from training to work. It also results in less mobility of skilled workers across the nation and frustration for the users of the national vocational education and training system.

4. Harmonising licensing and training

Occupational licensing issues are broader than the training sector and involve other portfolios. The Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) meeting on 3 June 2005 considered occupational licensing in the broader context of achieving a national approach to apprenticeships. COAG agreed to set up a joint working group to iron out differences in occupational licensing and to make training more flexible and responsive to skills needs. The joint working group, which will report back to COAG in December 2005, will also examine the way Australia recognises overseas qualifications.

The COAG working group will build on the significant collaborative work to better harmonise training with licensing requirements already undertaken by the Australian Government, State and Territory governments, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and industry stakeholders.

There have been a series of round table discussions conducted by ANTA across a range of industries in each State and Territory since 2002 to explore the licensing issues that impact on implementing Training Packages and to identify cooperative strategies to resolve these.

At the March 2005 national licensing round table, participants agreed to an action plan which contains a set of principles that support a nationally focused, whole-of-government approach. The round table asked the National Training Quality Council to support the action plan and undertake projects aimed at harmonising licensing with training at the national level.

The National Training Quality Council supported this action plan at its meeting in May 2005.

5. Alternative approaches to skills assessment and recognition of overseas qualifications

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the assessment of an individual's existing skills, knowledge and experience against the competencies in Training Packages. RPL provides formal recognition of skills obtained through informal learning and work experience. It facilitates greater efficiencies in skills formation by allowing individuals and registered training organisations to concentrate training on those areas where skill gaps have been identified.

Registered Training Organisations are required to offer RPL prior to training commencing as a requirement of the Australian Quality Training Framework. RPL involves mapping an individual's experience, skills and knowledge to the unit for which RPL is sought, and then

compiling evidence to demonstrate competency. During the RPL process, provision must be made for language, literacy and numeracy support if required.

Attachment A to DEST's submission to JSCM July 2005

Further explanation of what is expected of assessing authorities

Overarching requirements of a potential assessing authority

The process of identifying and approving new professional assessing authorities is shared between DIMIA and DEST, with assistance from DEWR. Advice may also be sought from other government agencies with knowledge of the relevant profession. Under agreed arrangements, professional occupations requiring an assessing authority that can conduct a specific occupational assessment are nominated by DIMIA in consultation with DEWR. DIMIA considers whether an organisation can demonstrate that it represents the profession as a whole and its skills assessments will be recognised by the profession and employers.

Once identified the potential assessing authority is referred to DEST for further checking of capability and approval as an assessing authority including ensuring they have the financial capacity and administrative structures in place to take on this role.

Not all professions are represented by bodies that can meet these threshold requirements. In these circumstances, alternative arrangements need to be considered.

DEST's threshold criteria for bodies applying to be assessing authorities

DEST has established the following criteria for assessing an application for approval as an Authority. These criteria also form the basis for monitoring approved authorities:

- **Quality**
All activities associated with the assessment and recognition process are fair, reliable, timely and of a consistently high standard.
- **Professional standards**
Assessments will reflect the standards of the profession in Australia, as recognised both by practitioners and employers.
- **Legal requirements**
All standards and processes adhere to Australian law. Note that applicants for assessments have recourse to the Australian legal system.
- **Government policy**
Proposed assessment procedures have regard to the policy objectives lying behind the approval and gazettal of authorities.
- **Client service**
There is an easily understood, equitable and transparent process which includes review and appeal avenues offered to clients.
- **Financial sustainability**
The costs of assessments to clients should be determined on a not-for-profit cost-recovery basis.

Attachment B to DEST's submission to the JSCM July 2005
Further explanation of what is involved in professional assessment

An individual seeking to practise their profession by gaining registration with the relevant State/Territory registration board, when they have not previously been registered in any Australian jurisdiction, must be assessed by the profession before they can be considered for registration. An assessment will consider some or all of the following:

- qualifications;
- skills;
- English language ability;
- work experience;
- registration in other jurisdictions; and
- issues of "good character".

Skills can be assessed by examinations (written or practical), competency demonstration report or supervised professional practice.

Assessments for the self-regulating and unregulated professions will consider some or all of the following:

- qualifications;
- work experience;
- English language ability; and
- skills as assessed by examination.

In some professions, such as accountancy and law, knowledge specific to Australian conditions is usually required for practice, and overseas-trained professionals may require additional training in order to be admitted to practice and/or gain employment. Similarly, professionals moving from one area of Australia to another may have conditions placed on their registration until they have developed appropriate local knowledge, for example, a nurse without training in tropical medicine who has moved to northern Australia.

Attachment C to DEST's submission to JSCM July 2005 Further explanation of the Qualifications Assessment Guidelines

Background to the Qualifications Assessment Guidelines

It is important to emphasise that comparing the educational outcomes and products of very different education systems is an inexact process, and it is for this reason that DEST's educational assessments are made in terms of 'comparison' and not 'equivalence'. Given the different educational philosophies, objectives and course structures in the educational systems of the world, assessment in terms of direct equivalence to specific Australian qualifications is not possible.

Comparison of Australian and overseas technical and vocational qualifications is often even more complicated because of the enormous variation in this sector, and because of the way in which technical and vocational education systems are tailored to the needs of the countries concerned. Many overseas qualifications in the technical and vocational sectors are not competency-based.

Points of Comparison for Qualifications Assessments

Literal translations of the names of overseas qualifications are not assessments. Even when the overseas qualifications were awarded in an English-speaking country, similarity between the names of the overseas qualifications and the names of Australian qualifications does not necessarily imply similarity in the programs, course content, or standard.

The factors DEST considers when assessing overseas qualifications are the education system in the country concerned, the nature, educational level and recognition status of the awarding institution, and the level, length and structure of the program undertaken. In a minority of cases, the guidelines refer to the level of academic achievement, but this is only done when DEST cannot say with confidence that the qualifications can be assessed at the higher level. In other words, marks may be used to upgrade an assessment outcome.

DEST's guidelines assess many overseas qualifications at 'face value', for example, when an overseas Bachelor degree is compared to the educational level of an Australian Bachelor degree. However, in other cases, DEST may consider that comparison to a qualification at a different level may more accurately reflect the level of the qualification in Australian terms.

What are Qualifications Assessment Guidelines?

Assessment guidelines are intended as a guide to the general educational level of a qualification in comparison with qualifications on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The assessment guidelines are purely advisory in nature. There are no procedures in Australian law whereby an overseas qualification is formally 'recognised' in educational terms. However because of DEST's long history and recognition as an authoritative source of advice on overseas qualifications recognition these assessment guidelines are considered by many users to be definitive.

DEST advice is just one of the items of information which may be considered by universities, professional bodies, registration authorities and employers in evaluating an individual's qualifications, achievements and potential.

The guidelines, and assessment advice based on the guidelines, are intentionally general and are intended primarily for general employment purposes. They refer only to the minimum educational standards represented by the overseas qualifications covered by the guidelines.

Although the guidelines may be applied to overseas professional qualifications (such as degrees in engineering, medicine or accounting), a DEST assessment in terms of an Australian

qualification does not imply that the qualification meets the requirements for professional practice in Australia as these can only be determined by the relevant Australian professional body.

Similarly, DEST assessments of qualifications are not competency or trade-skills assessments. Comparison with an Australian vocational education and training qualification does not imply that the overseas qualification necessarily meets the specified competency requirements for AQF qualifications or National Training Framework Training Packages, as these can only be determined by the relevant Australian assessing authority. Information on obtaining formal skills assessments by an Australian assessing authority is available from Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) within DEWR.

As a general rule, the assessment guidelines apply only to qualifications obtained from institutions or official bodies that are legally authorised to award degrees, diplomas or certificates in their country of location or registration. In some cases, such authorisation may need to be supported by accreditation.

Attachment D to DEST's submission to JSCM July 2005

Further explanation of ASDOT: information for applicants

WHAT IS ASDOT?

The Department of Education, Science and Training, through **AEI-NOOSR**, seeks to help overseas trained professionals who are Australian citizens or permanent residents living in Australia to obtain recognition of their qualifications in Australia.

The AEI-NOOSR Assessment Subsidy for Overseas Trained Professionals (ASDOT) program is designed to assist overseas trained professionals who are eligible for Centrelink support gain entry into the Australian workforce in their chosen profession. The program works by paying the fees for some assessments of overseas qualifications which, for regulated professions, lead to full and unconditional registration or, in other professions, the fees for an examination required. Assistance is available for **ONE ATTEMPT ONLY** at each examination stage or assessment.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for assessment fee subsidy for one of the examinations or assessments covered by the scheme, you must be an Australian citizen or **permanent resident** living in Australia and hold, or be covered by, one of these **cards issued by Centrelink**:

- Health Care Card
- Pensioner Concession Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

You must also **NOT** have already received assistance under the program for the same examination stage or assessment.

You are **NOT** eligible for fee subsidy if you hold a Temporary Protection visa, a Provisional (temporary) Spouse visa or an Interdependent Partner visa.

Please note that the ASDOT officer must assess your application in accordance with program guidelines to determine eligibility.

WHICH PROFESSIONS ARE COVERED?

If you have overseas qualifications in any of the following professions, you **may** qualify for assistance under the scheme:

- Architecture (Review of Academic Equivalence only);
- Dentistry (examinations only);
- Dietetics (examinations only);
- General Medical Practitioner (Australian Medical Council examinations only);
- Medical Specialist (initial assessment and examinations by specialist medical colleges only) - based on referral by the Australian Medical Council as eligible for assessment as a specialist;
- Nursing (assessments by the Australian Nursing Council only);
- Occupational Therapy (assessment for registration purposes only);
- Optometry (examinations only);
- Pharmacy (examinations only);
- Physiotherapy (examinations only);
- Podiatry (examinations only);

- Radiography (assessments only);
- Veterinary Science (examinations only);
- Assistance for the Occupational English Test (OET).

Assistance is NOT available under the program for the following:

- Occupational licensing or registration fees;
- Examination and assessment fees charged by Commonwealth, State or Territory authorities;
- Activities connected to assessments or examinations, such as workshops for the Occupational English Test, Australian Medical Council workshops, or preparatory courses for written exams or clinical assessments;
- Preliminary eligibility assessments to undertake the examination process;
- Membership fees of professional associations;
- AEI-NOOSR general educational assessments;
- Assessment by specialist medical colleges without referral from the Australian Medical Council;
- Assessments or examinations in regulated occupations which do not lead to full and unconditional registration.

Attachment E to DEST's submission to JSCM July 2005
Further explanation of FEE-HELP

FEE-HELP

List of professions and the relevant assessing authorities that are approved for identifying bridging study

| PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATION | ASSESSING BODY | STATE OR TERRITORY |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| Accountants | Certified Practising Accountants Australia (CPA) | All States and Territories |
| Accountants | Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (ICAA) | All States and Territories |
| Architects | Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) | All States and Territories |
| Cadastral Surveyors | Institution of Surveyors, Australia (ISA) | All States and Territories |
| Dentists | Australian Dental Council (ADC) | All States and Territories |
| Dieticians | Dieticians Association of Australia (DAA) | All States and Territories |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Legal Practitioners Admission Board | NSW and ACT |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Legal Practitioners Admission Board | NT |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Solicitors' Board (Queensland) | QLD |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Barristers' Board (Queensland) | QLD |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Board of Examiners, C/- Legal Practitioners' Registry | SA |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Board of Legal Education | TAS |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | Council of Legal Education | VIC |
| Legal Practitioners (Barristers & Solicitors) | The Legal Practice Board | WA |
| Medical Practitioners (General) | Australian Medical Council (AMC) | All States and Territories |
| Nuclear Medicine Technologists | Australian & New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine (ANZSNM) | All States and Territories |
| Occupational Therapists | Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards Inc (COTRB) | All States and Territories |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Optometrists | The Optometry Council (OCANZ) ABN 38 074 875 111 | All States and Territories |
| Pharmacists | Australian Pharmacy Examining Council Inc. (APEC) | All States and Territories |
| Physiotherapists | Australian Council of Physiotherapy Regulating Authorities, Inc (ACOPRA Inc) | All States and Territories |
| Podiatrists | Australasian Podiatry Council (APC) | All States and Territories |
| Radiographers | Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR) | All States and Territories |
| Registered Nurses | Nurses Board of the Australian Capital Territory | ACT |
| Registered Nurses | Nurses Registration Board of New South Wales | NSW |
| Registered Nurses | Nursing Board of the Northern Territory | NT |
| Registered Nurses | Queensland Nursing Council | QLD |
| Registered Nurses | Nurses Board of South Australia | SA |
| Registered Nurses | Nursing Board of Tasmania | TAS |
| Registered Nurses | Nurses Board of Victoria | VIC |
| Registered Nurses | Nurses Board of WA | WA |
| School Teachers | Department of Education and Community Services | ACT |
| School Teachers | NSW Department of Education and Training ABN | NSW |
| School Teachers | Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training | NT |
| School Teachers | Board of Teacher Registration Queensland | QLD |
| School Teachers | Teachers Registration Board of South Australia | SA |
| School Teachers | Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania | TAS |
| School Teachers | Employment Assessment Centre, Department of Education and Training | VIC |
| School Teachers | Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Established under section 4 the Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 | VIC |
| School Teachers | Education Department of Western Australia | WA |
| Social Workers | Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) | All States and Territories |
| Speech Pathologists | Speech Pathology Association of Australia (SPAA) | All States and Territories |
| Veterinarians | Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc (AVBC) | All States and Territories |

Attachment F to DEST's submission to JSCM July 2005

Further explanation of Trade Recognition Australia (TRA) processes

Categories of applicants for skills recognition

There are two categories of applicants for consideration by TRA:

- pre-migration applicants; and
- permanent residents and some temporary residents.

Pre-migration applicants must have their trade skills assessed prior to lodging a migration application. They do so by obtaining an application from a TRA office. Applicants are required to submit documentary evidence of their trade skills with their application. Evidence of formal training, work experience or on the job experience can be assessed, however if the applicant has not completed formal training, they must have had at least 6 years experience (7 years for electrical trades) carrying out work ordinarily performed by a tradesperson. Occupations assessed by the TRA are derived from the Skilled Occupations List (SOL) issued by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

Applicants who are unsuccessful with their application can seek a review of the decision.

Permanent residents who have not undertaken a formal Australian apprenticeship or were trained overseas can apply for an Australian Recognised Trade Certificate (ARTC) which is the equivalent of the completion of an Australian apprenticeship. Applications can be obtained from a TRA office. A listing of the trade classifications for which an ARTC may be issued can be found in the Schedules to the *Tradesmen's Rights Regulation Act 1946* (TRR Act). An ARTC can not be sought for a vocation not on the listing. Applicants seeking recognition in vocations not on the listing are required to contact the relevant State or Territory assessment authorities. Some of the occupations listed in the SOL are listed in schedules to the TRR Act.

Permanent residents returning from overseas with an overseas qualification can have their skills assessed and receive an ARTC.

If temporary residents are allowed to work in Australia they can have their skills assessed and if successful, can receive an ARTC. By having their skills assessed, temporary residents on a holiday visa can use this assessment for the purposes of preparing a pre-migration application.