

IMMIGRATION NEWS

Volume 154



VETASSESS 50 points skill assessment changes ahead

Future Policy Changes Concerning International Students

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Dear Students

Welcome to the latest edition of IMMIGRATION NEWS and welcome to the new subscribers.

Major Changes to Vetassess skills assessment from 1 January 2010

From 1 January 2010, Vetassess will be changing its requirements for skills assessments for migration purposes. These changes are the most significant for Vetassess since they started the skill assessment procedures for DIAC back since 2001.

It used to be a fairly straight forward procedure to obtain a 50 point skill assessment as long you held a degree that was equivalent to an Australian degree. From the beginning of next year it will no longer to obtain it easily to suit a permanent residency application.

An exception will be made for applicants for the 485 Graduate Skilled visa but no word whether this will be made as well for 487 applicants but probably not.

The essential changes are that:

- the qualification must be relevant to the nominated occupation
AND
- that at least one year's relevant work experience will be required. This has to be work experience/on-the-job training completed in the five years before the date of application for a skills assessment.

- In some cases, one or two additional years of relevant employment may be required IF the qualification does not have enough content which is relevant to the nominated occupation.

Vetassess advises that “the new assessment process will help to ensure that applicant’s who meet the requirements under the new process are job ready and have the relevant skills and qualifications for employment in Australia in their nominated occupation”.

NOTE: Subclass 485 (Skilled - Graduate Temporary) visa applicants

There will be a Stage 1 skills assessment for Subclass 485 (Skilled - Graduate Temporary) visa applicants, which **will not** require one year’s work experience. The full skills assessment (which will require work experience) must be done for an application for a permanent GSM visa.

Subclass 485 applications can only apply for a Vetassess skills assessment if they have a nominated occupation in Vetassess’s new occupation Groups A and B (see below).

What will this mean to students?

For years there has been a major loophole in the skill assessment procedure for the 50 point skill level whereby the subject matter of the degree being assessed did not have to have any relevancy to the occupation chosen from DIAC skilled occupation list (SOL). This meant that if a student had a degree in Music they could contain a 50 point skill assessment as a Marketing Specialist.

Over the years students have used their overseas degrees to gain the 50 point skill level to lodge their permanent /temporary residency applications even though they had just completed a Diploma in Australia not relevant to the degree they did overseas. Sadly it seems this advantage is about to be lost if your overseas degree is not relevant to the occupation you wish to nominate.

It seems Vetassess are modeling themselves upon DIAC’s approach and bringing in the new relevancy component. How are they going to judge what it relevant? At the moment this remains a mystery but a subjective assessment like relevancy is bound to create the same headache for them as it has for DIAC in the past. Remember DIAC used to use the term “relevancy” when assessing a students

course of study and the occupation they nominated. The Federal Court of Australia understandably became full of applicants challenging DIAC's view of what constituted "relevancy". In fact it became such a problem that DIAC switched to "Closely Related" instead of "relevancy". It would not surprise me to see Vetassess going the same way in the not too distant future.

Choosing a 50 Point occupation?

It will become harder in the future to choose a 50 point occupation. I'll give you an example of what we have been able to do in the past;

Jenny studied a two year Diploma in Marketing at TAFE. Before she came to Australia she had completed a Bachelor of Religious Studies in the Philippines. The university in the Philippines was graded so as her Bachelor Degree was equivalent to an Australian Bachelor degree. Jenny used this degree to obtain a 50 point skill assessment as a Marketing Specialist. As Jenny had competent English and was under 30 years of age she successfully obtained her permanent residence using the 886 visa and her Aunty in Australia as the sponsor.

The new changes by Vetassess will not allow this approach next year. In the above example the Diploma in Australia was not a high enough level to pass with Vetassess to obtain the 50 point skill level so the overseas degree was used instead. However since her overseas degree was in Religious Studies Vetassess will soon not be allow a positive assessment as a Marketing Specialist.

If you are studying a Bachelor Degree or Masters Degree in Australia then the problem may not be so bad. However if you are studying a course leading to an occupation not on the SOL then you will have a definite problem. Another potential pitfall will be if you are combining two degrees, or a Degree and an undergraduate Diploma, or just two graduate Diploma's? It is possible this will create a major problem in trying to pass with Vetassess.

Applying for 485 or PR at the end of this year or next year?

My best advice for those international students looking to use a 50 point skill to lodge either PR or TR based upon your overseas qualifications; apply for your skill assessment straight away! If you have already used a 50 point skill in the past using your overseas degree for the 485 visa but you have not lodged your PR visa yet, get Vetassess to re-validate your assessment this year. DIAC often request 50 point Vetassess skill assessments to be re-issued if they are more than 12 months old.

Vetassess has placed particular occupations in particular groups:

Group A

[for example, Agricultural Scientist; Biochemist ; Chemist; Geologist ; Life Scientists [nec]; Teacher - Education Officer; Teacher - Vocational Educational Teacher (non trades); Urban and Regional Planner]

Requires:

- a qualification at least at an Australian bachelor degree level , with a major “highly relevant” to the nominated occupation,
- AND at least one year of relevant employment experience at “an appropriate level”.

Group B

[for example, Advertising Specialist; Construction Project Manager; Environmental Health Officer; Hotel or Motel Manager (Degree); Marketing Specialist; Production Manager (Manufacturing); Research and Development Manager]

Requires:

- a qualification at least at an Australian bachelor degree level , with a major “highly relevant” to the nominated occupation,
- AND at least one year of relevant employment experience at “an appropriate level”.
- AND either two or three years of relevant employment experience will be required IF the qualification/s is identified as having a shortfall in content relevance.

Group C

[for example: Architectural Associate; Building Associate; Financial Investment Adviser; Hotel or Motel Manager (Diploma); Office Manager; Project or Program Administrator]

Requires:

- a qualification at least at an Australian Diploma level, with a major “highly relevant” to the nominated occupation,
- AND one year of relevant employment experience at an appropriate level.
- OR (if the major is not “highly relevant”) two years of work experience AND another “highly relevant” major at least at Australian Certificate IV level.

Group D

[Building Associate Professionals (nec); Civil Engineering Technician; Metallurgical and Materials Technician]

Requires:

- a qualification at least at the level of an Australian Certificate IV, with a major “highly relevant” to the nominated occupation,
- AND at least one year of relevant employment experience at an appropriate level,
- OR (if the major is not “highly relevant”) two years of work experience.

Vetassess recommends that skills assessment applications under the current guidelines be submitted by 18 December 2009 and they will be allowing a three month grace period in order to complete these applications under the old rules.

You may read the entire 12 page document from Vetassess regarding these new changes including their new occupation lists. Link:

http://www.vetassess.com.au/download/qualification_assessment/vetassess_announcement_final_with_occ.pdf

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