



Australian Government
Department of Immigration and Citizenship

Information for General Skilled Migration Applicants in Priority Group 5

This information is provided to update applicants regarding the priority processing arrangements in place for General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa applications, including instructions on how to obtain the latest information about when their application is nearing assessment by a case officer.

Priority processing arrangements

A new direction from the minister came into effect on 1 July 2011 establishing new priority processing arrangements for Skilled Migration applications.

The arrangement determines the order in which the department considers applications. Applications accorded a higher priority under these arrangements are assessed ahead of lower priority applications, irrespective of when the application is lodged.

In line with these arrangements GSM has commenced assessing skilled migration applications which fall within its processing responsibility in the current order:

- Priority 1: Applications from people who have applied for a Skilled – Regional (subclass 887 visa)
- Priority 2: No GSM applications are included within this group
- Priority 3: Applications from people who are nominated by a state or territory government agency for an occupation specified on that agency's state migration plan
- Priority 4: Applications from people who have nominated an occupation on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) – Schedule 1 in effect from 1 July 2011
See: www.immi.gov.au/skilled/pdf/sol-schedule1.pdf
- Priority 5: All other applications.

The department does not anticipate that the creation of an additional priority group, will impact negatively on the processing of applications which were previously in priority group 4 and are now in priority group 5. This is because recent reforms have impacted on the volume of applicants waiting for a skilled migration outcome.

See: www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/24apriority_skilled.htm

2011-2012 Migration program year

On 10 May 2011, the Minister announced the Migration Program for 2011-2012 to be set at 185 000 places, 72 460 of which are allocated to the GSM program. Taking into consideration current application rates and the overall number of GSM places available the department expects to commence processing of some priority group 5 applications in this program year. When commenced, processing of priority group 5 applications will take place in date of lodgment order, after all applications of a higher priority have been allocated for assessment.

Priority will continue to be given to GSM applications in higher priority groups which will affect the overall number of priority group 5 applications assessed. It is therefore anticipated that many priority group 5 applicants will still have a long wait for visa processing.

Information about the status of your application

You can view updates on the status of your application at our website. The website contains information on current allocation dates, processing times and general information about GSM visa processing and can assist you to determine when your application is nearing assessment.

See: www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/lodged-information.htm

Comparing the published information about which applications are currently being allocated to case officers, to the lodgment date of your application, may give you an indication of when you can expect your application to be allocated.

Note: Allocation of applications in priority group 5 will continue to be affected by the number of applications received in higher priority groups.

We recommend that you monitor the status of your application via the department's website.

Options available to applicants in priority group 5

The options available if you were **outside Australia** when you made your application are to:

- continue to await a decision on your visa application
- consider your eligibility for an employer sponsored visa, which would require a new visa application;
- consider your eligibility for nomination by a state or territory government under a state migration plan, which would require a new visa application (unless the relevant application was lodged before 1/7/10)
- withdraw your application.

The options available if you were **in Australia** when you made your application are to:

- continue to live and work in Australia (if your visa permits) while awaiting a decision on your visa application
- consider your eligibility for an employer sponsored visa, which would require a new visa application
- consider your eligibility for nomination by a state and territory government under a state migration plan, which would require a new visa application (unless the relevant application was made before 1/7/10)
- apply for another substantive visa
- withdraw your application and depart Australia unless you hold another visa permitting you to remain.

If you have been granted another visa for migration to or permanent residence in Australia and no longer require your GSM application to be processed you can withdraw your application so that it can be finalised. Withdrawal letters, signed by each applicant aged 18 years or over, can be scanned and emailed.

Email: gsm.documents@immi.gov.au

Important: Applicants who withdraw their application due to extended processing times are not entitled to a refund of the Visa Application Charge or compensation for other costs incurred in making an application.

Contacting Us

Departmental officers must adhere to these priority processing arrangements and have no discretion to work outside of these arrangements.

Please limit your enquiries about your GSM application to essential matters. Unless a change to the priority processing arrangements is made by the minister, there is nothing further that the department can advise in relation to when your application will be assessed.

Please check regularly the information on allocation dates and processing time service standards.

See: www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/lodged-information.htm

In the event that the priority processing arrangements do change, you will be contacted about how this affects your application.
