



Changes to the current Skilled Occupation List

Q 1 Why has the Australian Government decided to change the Skilled Occupation List?

The government is replacing the current Skilled Occupation List (SOL) with a more targeted list of occupations to better meet the medium and long-term future skill needs of the Australian economy. The new SOL will be based on advice from 'Skills Australia' and it will deliver a General Skilled Migration (GSM) Program more focused on high-value skills across the professions and trades.

Q 2 What is 'Skills Australia'?

Skills Australia has been established by the Australian Government to provide expert and independent advice to the deputy prime minister on matters relating to Australia's current, emerging and future workforce skills and workforce development needs.

Q 3 Which occupations are going to be listed on the new SOL?

Skills Australia will identify skilled occupations of high value to the economy that align with its national workforce development strategy. It is expected to include managerial, professional, technical and trade occupations.

Q 4 When will the new SOL come into effect?

It is expected that the new SOL will be announced by 30 April 2010 and placed on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website and take effect from mid-2010. Publication of the new SOL in advance of it taking effect is designed to assist clients.

Q 5 What is the effect of removing an occupation from the SOL?

The new SOL will have a more targeted list of occupations designed to meet the medium to long-term needs of the Australian economy. Applicants for GSM visas that are not state/territory government nominated will have to nominate an occupation on the new SOL if they apply after mid-2010.

Employers and state and territory governments will still be able to sponsor applicants who have nominated an occupation that is not included in the new SOL to meet the needs of a particular employer or state/territory if the occupation is included in a state migration plan.

Transitional arrangements

Q 6 Who will the new SOL apply to?

The new SOL will apply to all new GSM applicants from mid-2010, except those applicants who, at 8 February 2010:

- hold a Skilled—Graduate (subclass 485) visa, or had a pending subclass 485 visa application and had not yet lodged an application for a provisional or permanent GSM visa and who make an application by 31 December 2012, or
- had a pending GSM visa application.

Q 7 Does the new SOL apply to Skilled—Graduate (subclass 485) visa applications made after the new SOL commences in mid 2010?

Yes, unless the applicant held a student visa on 8 February 2010 in any of the following subclasses:

- Vocational Education and Training Sector (subclass 572)
- Higher Education Sector (subclass 573)
- Postgraduate Research Sector (subclass 574).

These subclass 485 applicants will not be subject to the new SOL, instead, the current SOL in effect on 8 February 2010 will apply to these visa applicants. However they will be subject to the new SOL if they apply for a permanent or provisional GSM visa.

A subclass 485 visa enables former international students to gain valuable work experience in Australia and provides them with the opportunity to secure an employer or state and territory government sponsorship.

Q 8 I intend to lodge an application for GSM once I complete my studies but I am not sure if my occupation will be on the new SOL.

International students will be unable to migrate to Australia under the GSM program unless their nominated skilled occupation is on the new SOL.

Students should not make educational choices solely on the basis of hoping to achieve a particular migration outcome as the GSM program will continue to change and adapt to Australia's economic needs.

People who wish to study in Australia may be granted a student visa that entitles them to come to Australia on a temporary basis for a specified period to undertake study at an Australian educational institution. While many overseas students make a decision to apply for permanent residence upon completing their studies, this is an entirely separate process and there is no guarantee that a person will meet the requirements to be granted permanent residence on the basis of having held a student visa.

The criteria for granting a GSM visa can change in response to changing economic circumstances of Australia. All applicants seeking a permanent GSM visa must meet the relevant criteria set out in migration legislation, regardless of whether or not they have previously been in Australia. It is important for student visa holders to note that any changes to the criteria for a GSM visa will not affect their student visa conditions.

Q 9 I have a satisfactory skills assessment for my nominated occupation which is currently on the SOL, but I do not wish to apply for a GSM visa until late 2010. Will the Department of Immigration and Citizenship accept this skills assessment?

Yes, provided the skills assessment is for an occupation that is on the new SOL which will start in mid-2010, and you are not required to complete the JobReady Program.

Q 10 Will state and territory governments be able to nominate applicants if their nominated occupation is not on the new SOL?

Yes, provided the nomination is in accordance with a state migration plan approved by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

Q 11 What are my options if my occupation is not on the new SOL?

If your nominated occupation is not on the new SOL you may wish to consider your eligibility for a permanent employer sponsored visa under the Employer Nomination Scheme, or the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme. More information can be found at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/skilled-workers/>.

Q 12 If I apply for a GSM visa in April 2010, will I be subject to the new SOL?

No, as the new SOL does not commence until mid-2010.

Useful documents

More information on the changes announced by the minister on 8 February 2010 is available on the following information sheets:

- [Revoking the Critical Skills List](#)
- [Changes to the General Skilled Migration Program](#)
- [Changes to offshore General Skilled Migration visa applications received before 1 September 2007](#)
- [Outcomes of the Migration Occupation in Demand List review – frequently asked questions](#)
- [General Skilled Migration Points Test Review](#)
- [Onshore international students – frequently asked questions](#)